

Module Seven Group Process

More Ways to Stress Less

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Everywhere you look, in every moment, you can find something to be grateful for, even in the hard times. Gratitude helps you feel closer to God, enhances well-being, and increases joy. So, let's dive into the study of gratitude.

Here are some ways to practice thanking God and being more grateful. One of the most important ways to increase gratitude is to slow down and begin noticing things.

Activity #1 (Materials needed: enough blueberries or chocolate chips for the group to have two each)

Pass out the blueberries and invite each group member to take two. Instruct each person to eat one of them. Then have several people share what they experienced, what it tasted like, and what they noticed. Now invite the members to place the other blueberry in their hand and look at it, then place it in their mouth but not eat it. Have them take their time to feel it, to smell it, and to experience it. Have them think about how it was grown, and all the people needed to bring it to market. Then invite the group to slowly eat it.

Now have the group share the difference between both experiences. Share the following thought: by slowing down, our capacity to notice details, to be present, and to experience gratitude increased.

It is true in every area of our lives, our relationships, and our time with God. Each moment of life is filled with things to be grateful for: colors, shapes, sensations, smells, faces, people, love, wisdom, nature, relationships, our bodies, and our minds. As you begin to look at things to be grateful for, you become a hunter for joy on an amazing God adventure. The more you look for things to be grateful for, the more you find.

Activity #2: Write a Gratitude Letter (Materials needed: pens and paper)

As a group or individually, sit down and write a gratitude letter to someone important in your life. Ask the group members when they are finished if anyone would like to share theirs out loud.

Scriptures

Have group members read the following scriptures about gratitude. (Before the group meeting, you may wish to write each of these references on a separate piece of paper to pass out among the group members.)

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6–7)

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57)

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. (2 Thessalonians 1:3)

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)

For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.
(Romans 11:36)

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. (Colossians 4:2)

I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. (Psalm 9:1)

After reading the Scriptures, spend a few minutes going on a “rampage of gratitude.” Have each member call out things they’re grateful for and thank God for them.

Questions for Reflection

1. What insights did you take away from this lesson?
2. How different did you feel being present and thanking God for the blessings in your life?
3. What is something beautiful that came out of a challenge for which you can be thankful?
4. How can you incorporate gratitude into your life daily?
5. As you wrote your gratitude letter, how did you feel before and after writing it?

Homework

Go on your own gratitude hunt, writing down each day the things that you're grateful for. Notice how different you feel when you're practicing gratitude.

Closing Prayer