



DELIGHT IN THE LORD: GIVE THANKS!

OBJECTIVE: Women will be reminded that an integral part of "delighting" in the Lord is giving him thanks and praise.

SCRIPTURAL EMPHASIS: *Psalm 107:1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: Retreat on cultivating an "attitude of gratitude."

DECORATIONS: Decorate with an autumn theme using fall colors, leaves, bales of hay, pumpkins, etc. Decorate one wall with a huge tree made out of brown packaging paper. Ladies will adorn it with colorful leaves as one of their activities.

FAVOR: Bookmark. See attached sheet.

SESSION SUGGESTIONS: Adjust to fit your schedule.



Friday PM:

- **Give Thanks Unto the Lord:** *Psalm 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.* Opening Mixer: Have women share a humorous "tonight I'm thankful I'm NOT..." (naming what they might be otherwise occupied with if they were not at this restful retreat!) Praise and Worship: "Give Thanks," "Forever," "Shout to the Lord," "Count Your Blessings," "We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise," "I Will Enter His Gates," "I Just Want to Thank You, Lord," "To God Be the Glory," "My Tribute." Devotion: Short teaching on thankfulness. (You might want to emphasize the ACTS model of prayer stressing that Adoration, Confession and Thanksgiving are to precede our Supplications. Could highlight scriptural examples of such prayers.) Remind women that we worship the Lord when we give him thanks for all he has done in our lives. Have women "count their blessings" and list one particularly meaningful one on a colorful paper leaf.

Then have each woman attach her leaf to the tree on the wall and give a short explanation of its significance in her life. Encourage ladies to take their leaves home as visual reminders to count their blessings. Closing Prayer: Thank God for his goodness and let participants offer up "popcorn" praises to the Lord.



Saturday: Divide the day into three sessions:

- **Give Thanks in Difficulties:** Give each participant a miniature Almond Joy bar with this verse attached: *James 1:2-3 Consider it pure JOY, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.* Discuss how a circumstance which seems "dark" on the outside (like the candy bar!) and contains "hard" parts (the almond) can still be "sweet" (the coconut) due to the Lord's presence in our lives. Line up someone in your group who has an uplifting testimony regarding how the Lord has seen them through adversity to share at this time.
- **Give Thanks for Fellowship:** *Philippians 1:3-6 I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.* Discuss all that the Lord provides in our lives through the body of Christ. Have women break into small groups to share testimonies regarding a particular person that God has placed in their life who has impacted them in a powerful way. Craft: Bring women back together and have them do stenciling or rubber stamping artwork on stationery or note cards with Philippians 1:3 already printed (by computer) on it. Encourage them to take the time to write the person they shared about in the small groups a brief note of thanks. Could close out this session by asking ladies to hold that note in their hands while someone sings Ray Boltz's song "Thank You."
- **Model Thanksgiving for our Children:** *Deut. 6:6-7 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.* Stress that children learn what they live. Discuss some of the challenges military children face. Discuss some of the benefits of the military lifestyle and ways we can point our children towards them. Discuss

modeling a positive attitude of gratitude for our children, especially during moves, etc. Craft: Share this idea that they could use to encourage their children to give thanks. Have each participant trace their right hand on a piece of paper. Draw a turkey's eyes and gobbler on the thumb. If you feel it's safe for your child (because of its size), glue a googly eye onto the turkey's eye to give it personality. Paste feathers on top of the four remaining fingers and have the child name something he/she is thankful for as each feather is attached.

- **Closing:** Close with an uplifting praise and worship time. Have large leaves on the wall with each woman's name on it and the words "I'm thankful you came this weekend because..." Have everyone sign them before leaving.

NOTE: We realize that some PWOC chapters are not able to have a fall retreat. Here are some ideas to help you rework this one for YOUR chapter.

1. If you like the idea AS a retreat but want to have it in the spring, change the decor to cultivating – as in "cultivating an attitude of gratitude." Use gardening items and flowers instead of leaves. Change the children's craft to a suitable seasonal one.
2. If you want to change the retreat into a program, pick out which session and, if you have time, craft that you want to use. You may want to make more than one program out of this.
3. One way to have a retreat without retreating is to have an extended day program. Have a morning session, break for lunch, then return for a second session, ending at 1:30 or 2:00. You will have to clear the extended watch care with your chapel system as it will mean more costs in that area.