

# Grow



HELPING GIRLS GROW IN JESUS

*"Let your roots grow deep into Jesus."*

Colossians 2:7

# Module 10: Grow Your Gratitude



## Girls Will learn

You can choose to be thankful. Your attitude matters.

## Key Verse

“Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT

## Module Components

Create Energy	Get Hands-On	God’s Word	Application	Talk About It	Life Skills
<i>Gratitude Game</i>	<i>Modern Psalm</i>	<i>Attitude of Gratitude</i>	<i>Cycle of Gratitude</i>	<i>Bullying</i>	<i>Self Care</i>
Play a classic game of Pick-Up-Sticks with a gratitude twist!	Using Psalm 136 as an example, write your own Psalm of praise.	Paul was able to give thanks, even during difficult times. You can too.	What goes around comes around, even with gratitude.  <i>Gratitude Journaling</i>  Decorate your own journal and begin keeping a list of things you are thankful for.	How can a faith-based perspective shape our response to bullying?	Explore some tools for taking care of your mental health.

## Suggested four-week schedule

**Week 1:** Create Energy, Get Hands-On

**Week 2:** God’s Word, Application

**Week 3:** Talk About It

**Week 4:** Life Skills



## Message to Leaders



It's been two years since my friend went to be with Jesus. It's been four years since her breast cancer returned—metastatic, stage 4. In those two years between her diagnosis and death, my friend demonstrated a resiliency in the face of personal pain and tragedy that inspired all who knew her. She knew there was no medical cure for her disease. And yet, she chose to practise gratitude. She chose to be thankful to God for each moment of each day. She chose to live.

The power of gratitude has been celebrated for some time. It was three decades ago when Dr. Martin E.P. Seligman launched the discipline of positive psychology and began the scientific study of emotions such as optimism and gratitude. Up until that time, psychologists had focused predominantly on negative emotions such as anger, disappointment and shame. Subsequent findings are striking. Psychologists have learned that practising optimism and gratitude in times of success and stability strengthen us during times of adversity and turmoil.

The Apostle Paul knew this firsthand. He wrote Philippians, often called “the letter of joy,” from prison. Despite his uncomfortable present and uncertain future, Paul begins his letter with thanksgiving: “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy” (Philippians 1:3-4). The church in Philippi was growing, and it is natural that Paul would give thanks for the ministry there.

Paul goes on to discuss his imprisonment, and those who were taking advantage of his situation. Yet Paul still responds with gratitude, saying, “I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:18-21). Even in light of death, Paul is able to respond with gratitude, and this results in joy—for him and for those to whom he writes.

My friend was also grateful in light of death. Gratitude was a rhythm she established in her life before her cancer diagnosis, and it made her resilient in the face of disease and loss. Nothing, not even cancer, could steal her joy. Brené Brown writes that “joy, collected over time, fuels resilience—ensuring we’ll have reservoirs of emotional strength when hard things do happen.” By teaching girls the practice of gratitude, they will build resilience for tomorrow, and they will be reminded that, regardless of what circumstances come their way, they can give thanks to God for his presence, provision and faithfulness. ~Laura<sup>1</sup>

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## Gratitude Game



### What You Need

- One game of Pick Up Sticks per group of 4 girls (minimum)

OR

- Create your own Pick Up Sticks game by colouring wooden skewers, chopsticks, or paper straws.\*

AND

- One copy of Appendix 10-A, “Gratitude Game,” per group.\*

\* You may need to change the colours on Appendix 10-A to correspond to the colours of your homemade game if not playing with a classic Pick Up Sticks set.

### What To Do

1. Ask – What is gratitude? (Being thankful, being ready to show appreciation and kindness in all circumstances.)
2. Divide girls into groups of two to four.
3. Distribute a Pick Up Sticks game to each group, along with a copy of Appendix 10-A
4. Play Pick Up Sticks according to the regular rules, except this time when a stick is picked up you must name what you are grateful for according to the colour of the stick.
5. You may choose to play several rounds, or switch up the groups, if time allows.

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## Modern Psalm



### What You Need

- A Bible for each girl, or a printed copy of Psalm 136
- A whiteboard, chalkboard or chart paper
- Appropriate markers
- Optional: Blank paper and pens/pencils for each girl if choosing to have girls write their own Psalm rather than as a group.

### What To Do

1. Ask – What is a Psalm? (A sacred poem or song.)
2. Explain that there are many Psalms in our Bible that focus on gratitude. Read through Psalm 136 together.
3. Make a list together of each of the things the writer of this Psalm is grateful for. Can you group these into any broad themes?
4. Explain that we will be creating our own modern Psalm of gratitude, based on Psalm 136. You have two options for how to do this. 1) Create one together as a group or, 2) Have each girl write their own Psalm.

#### OPTION 1

Go around the room, giving each girl an opportunity to think of something they give God thanks for. Write it as one line of the Psalm, followed by the line “His love endures forever.” Allow each girl to contribute at least two lines to the Psalm.

Once the lines of the Psalm have been compiled, work together to amend the order of the verses into an order that flows nicely.

Re write your Psalm and read it out loud together.

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You may want to take a photo of the Psalm and/or take a video of the girls reciting the Psalm and share it with the girls. If you have permission from their parents, you could also post the video to your ministry unit's social media site.

## **OPTION 2**

Distribute blank paper and pens or pencils to each girl. Provide time and space for each of them to write their own Psalm of gratitude by writing down one thing they are thankful for, followed by the line "His love endures forever." Encourage girls to write at least 10 verses for their Psalm.

They may wish to type out their Psalm and decorate it. Encourage them to read their Psalms out loud to the group, if they are comfortable. They could also post a copy of their Psalm to social to encourage others to be thankful.

## Attitude of Gratitude



Philippians 3:17-4:9



### FLIPPING COMPLAINTS INTO GRATITUDE

#### What You Need

- Index cards, two per girl
- Pens and pencils

#### Before You Begin

1. Remove the spring from the ballpoint pen. Keep it handy (In your pocket, perhaps) for later.

#### What To Do

1. Ask – What is a complaint? Close your eyes and think back: Have you complained about anything today? This week?
2. Hand out two index cards to each girl. Ask them to write two complaints they can recall making recently, one on each card. Some examples might be: “I hate having to study for the math test!” or “I can’t believe we are having that disgusting meal for dinner again.”
3. Explain that we are going to practice changing our attitudes by flipping complaints into gratitude statements.
4. Have the girls form pairs and exchange one of their complaint cards. Explain that the person who receives the complaint card must flip it over and write a gratitude statement, turning the negative attitude into a positive one. For example, “I hate having to study for the math test!” could be, “I’m grateful that I get to learn” or “I’m thankful that I will be able to show how much I’ve learned this year.”
5. Have girls pass the cards back to their original owner. In their groups, allow a few minutes to discuss the suggested “flips.” Do they make sense? Is this something you agree with? Is there any other way you could think of flipping the complaint?
6. Have girls spend a few minutes flipping their second complaint on their own.
7. Bring the girls together. As a large group, ask for a few girls to share their thoughts on how the exercise made them feel, what they learned, and if they think they could put this into practice in real life.

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## PAUL IN PRISON

*Have girls open their Bibles to the book of Philippians. Explain to girls that this passage of scripture is a letter written by a man named Paul to the early Christians in a city called Philippi in modern day Greece. Share that Paul wrote this letter from prison. He had been arrested for preaching the good news about Jesus and risked an unfair trial and/or execution.*

*Ask* – What would your attitude be like if you were in Paul’s situation? What might you complain about?

*Say* – Let’s read a portion of his letter to see what his attitude was like while he was in this difficult circumstance.

*Read Philippians 3:17-4:9 together.*

*Ask* – What was Paul’s attitude like while in prison, according to this letter? (hopeful, grateful etc.)

*Ask* – How did Paul flip his complaints into gratitude?

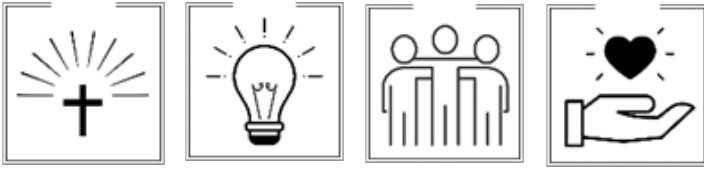
*Ask* – How was he able to have such a positive attitude? You can direct their attention towards Philippians 3:20-21, which shares Paul’s belief that he is a citizen of heaven, and that his hope for the future is in Jesus, and to Philippians 4:6-7 where Paul shares how praying about his ‘complaints results in a peace from God, among other verses.



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## Cycles of Gratitude



### What You Need

- A whiteboard, chalkboard or chart paper
- Appropriate markers
- Blank paper
- Pens and pencils

### What To Do

1. Say – Paul gives thanks throughout this letter, not just in the portion we read together. At the beginning, in 1:3, Paul gives thanks for the people he is writing to, saying, “Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God.” (NLT) At the end in 4:10-19, Paul thanks the Philippians for their tangible gifts and shares that at the present moment he has everything he needs.
2. Ask – If you had received this letter, how would it make you feel to know that someone was so thankful for you? (Really good, positive.)
3. Ask – How would knowing someone is so grateful for you and your actions change the way you act? (I might continue to be generous, because it makes me feel good.)
4. Say – Gratitude and generosity go hand in hand. If we receive gratitude, it makes us feel good and often makes us more generous. Think of it this way:
5. Ask – Do you agree with this or not? Why?  
Ask – Can you think of any examples of how this might play out in real life?
6. Say – The University of California, Berkeley gives this example in their resource “Nurturing Gratitude from the Inside Out.”
7. Divide girls into groups of two to four. Distribute blank paper and pens or pencils to each group. Give girls five to ten minutes to create a realistic gratitude cycle scenario.
8. Bring the girls back together. Have one representative from each group share their gratitude cycle scenario.

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# Gratitude Journaling



## What You Need

- One blank journal or notebook for each girl
- Various craft supplies to decorate the cover of the journal, such as scrapbook paper, Mod Podge, stickers etc.

## What To Do

1. Share 1 Thessalonians 5:18 with the girls. Ask - What does it mean that “giving thanks” is “God’s will for those who are in Christ Jesus?”
2. Review everything you have discovered about the importance of gratitude. You may want to share some other benefits of cultivating an attitude of gratitude that we have not yet discussed, such as:
  - Gratitude promotes physical health
  - Gratitude enhances healthy sleep patterns
  - Gratitude strengthens relationships
  - Practicing gratitude in good times can help you stay positive in bad times
3. Distribute one blank journal to each girl. Explain that these journals are meant to be Gratitude Journals. Encourage girls to write down at least three things they are grateful for every day. By the end of the year they will have listed over 1000 things they are grateful for!
4. Allow time for the girls to decorate and personalize their journal covers using the craft supplies provided.

## OPTION

Author Ann Voskamp has gratitude journaling prompts for each day of the year available as free printouts. You may want to print these for your girls to tuck into their journals to help them “count 1000 gifts.” These are available at [www.annvoskamp.com/joy-dares](http://www.annvoskamp.com/joy-dares).

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## Prayer



*God, thank you for all of the reasons that I have to be grateful. You are a good God and have given me so many good gifts. But God, I confess that sometimes I am not grateful, and I complain more than I should. Forgive me for the times that my attitude is not modelled after you. Always help me to have an attitude of gratitude and may that attitude lead to generosity in myself and those around me. Amen.*

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## Self Care



### What you Need

- One copy of Appendix 10-B for each girl
- Pens or pencils
- Whiteboard, chalkboard or chart paper
- Chalk or markers

### What To Do

1. Discuss – What is self-care? Think of your life as a rechargeable battery – like the kind in a smartphone. Every time we turn the phone on, use an app, make a call etc. the battery is depleted somewhat. If we don't plug our phones in, the battery will eventually die and the phone won't work. It's the same with us. Self Care is about keeping our emotional, mental, physical and spiritual “batteries” charged up. Every day we need to do things that can deplete us – or drain our batteries. Because of this, we need to be intentional about taking time to refill those batteries, and this will look different for different people. For example, whether you are an introvert or an extrovert will determine if social interactions (spending time with friends) drains or charges your battery.
2. Distribute one copy of Appendix 10-B to each girl. five to ten minutes for them to complete the survey. Once girls are done, have them share whether they are an introvert or an extrovert. Explain that introverts will find that social interactions drain their batteries, while extroverts will find that social interactions.
3. Discuss Before we start looking at some specific self care tools, it can be helpful to understand the difference between self care and coping. Self Care is preventative, while coping is reactive. You can use a car analogy to explain the difference: self care is putting gas in the car, getting the oil changed, inflating the tires; coping is hitting the brakes, changing a flat after running over a nail etc. There will be times when, no matter how much effort we've put into recharging our batteries, we will need to cope in a stressful situation.

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4, Using the white board or chart paper, brainstorm: When we are stressed, what can we do to help us feel better?

Examples may include:

- Breathing deeply and slowly
- Drinking some cold water
- Ignoring people who are annoying us
- Hugging a friend or family member
- Writing down your feelings/journaling
- Going for a run, shooting some hoops, or doing some other form of exercise

### **OPTION: GROUNDING EXERCISE**

You may wish to pause in the discussion here to demonstrate an effective coping technique that you can easily teach the girls: grounding.

Explain that while depression pulls us into the past, and anxiety pulls us into the future, grounding brings us back to the safety of the present.

Two grounding methods are LABELING and BOX BREATHING.

#### **Labeling**

1. Take a deep breath in and out.
2. Look around your environment and name four things you can see.
3. Repeat this several times.

#### **Box Breathing**

1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Breathe in for a count of 3
3. Hold that breath for a count of 3
4. Breathe out for a count of 3
5. Hold for a count of 3
6. Repeat cycle as necessary. Focusing on the rhythm of your breath can be grounding as it brings you into the present reality.

5. Discuss – While you will need to use coping skills from time to time, you should be focusing on self-care all the time. Using the white board or chart paper, brainstorm: What are some things we can do that charge your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual batteries, even when we aren't feeling overly stressed, anxious or depressed?

Divide your whiteboard or chart paper into four quadrants, one for each of the following: physical, emotional, mental and

<b>Physical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Eat healthy food</i></li><li>- <i>Exercise regularly</i></li><li>- <i>Take a nap on weekends</i></li></ul>	<b>Emotional</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Visit with a good friend</i></li><li>- <i>Do your homework right after school instead of procrastinating</i></li><li>- <i>Say 'thank you' for something</i></li></ul>
<b>Mental</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Do something that makes you happy</i></li><li>- <i>Read a book</i></li><li>- <i>Unplug from technology</i></li></ul>	<b>Spiritual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Listen to some worship music</i></li><li>- <i>Read the Bible or a devotional book</i></li><li>- <i>Go for a walk in a park</i></li></ul>

Explain that, while everyone's ideas of self care may look different based on what specific activities charge their personal batteries, there are some self care non-negotiables:

- Make appointments with professionals (Doctor, dentist etc.) and keep them
- Find an exercise program that works for you
- Learn to say "no" more often (when appropriate)
- Get enough sleep and get on a schedule.
- Take your medication (if that applies to you)

#### OPTION: SELF-CARE CHECKLIST

You may want to invite girls to use Appendix 10-C to create a personal self-care checklist.

Girls could include items such as:

- Get 8 hours of sleep
- Eat veggies at 2 meals
- Write in my gratitude journal

If you do this, you could encourage girls to share these lists with a mentor or other trusted adult. You could also provide Appendix 10-C to a mentor and invite them to fill it out with the girl they are mentoring.

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## THE GRATITUDE

Red	Name a person you are grateful for
Green	Name a place you are grateful for
Blue	Name a food you are grateful for
Yellow	Name an object you are grateful for
Black	Name a memory you are grateful for

# Extrovert or Introvert?

Answer the following True or False statements, choosing the answer that applies to you most often:

T

F

☐☐

1. I prefer one-on-one conversations to group activities.

☐☐

2. I often prefer to express myself in writing.

☐☐

3. I enjoy solitude (time by myself.)

☐☐

4. People tell me that I am a good listener.

☐☐

5. I enjoy work that allows me to "dive in" with few distractions.

☐☐

6. I like to celebrate birthdays on a small scale, with only one or two close friends or family members.

☐☐

7. I prefer not to show or discuss my work with others until it's finished.

☐☐

8. I tend to think before I speak.

☐☐

9. I prefer sports I can play on my own (hiking, swimming) to team sports.

☐☐

10. I don't really like team projects at school

The more TRUE answers you gave, the more introverted you probably are.





# Self-Care Checklist

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Weekly



Reflections

