

Lesson

Engaging Introduction

Hello, everyone! Today, we're going to take a journey back in time to learn about a special chapter from the Bible called Deuteronomy 26. Imagine this: You're with a big group of people in the middle of the desert. With you are families, friends, and even animals. You're all traveling together, and you've been on this journey for a long, long time. It's hot, and the sun is shining down on you.

The people on this journey are the Israelites, and they are God's chosen people. They are walking through the desert on their way to a new land that God has promised them. This land is supposed to be wonderful, filled with everything they can't get in the desert, like delicious food and cool water. They're excited about reaching this land, but there's one thing they must do when they get there—they need to remember to thank God for all the blessings He gives them.

In Deuteronomy 26, God talks to the Israelites and tells them about a very special way they can show their thankfulness. The passage talks about bringing the "firstfruits," or the very first and best things they get from their new land, as a gift to God. How exciting! But why do they need to do this, and how can it help us understand the importance of being thankful today? Let's explore this chapter to find out how the Israelites were taught to show gratitude and how we can do the same in our own lives.

Main Teaching Points

1. The Importance of Thanksgiving

In Deuteronomy 26, the Israelites learn that thanking God is more than just saying "thank you." God asks them to bring their firstfruits to Him in the Temple. Firstfruits are the first crops harvested from their farms—their best fruits and grains. This sounds a bit like how we might give someone a present for their birthday or a special occasion. Think about when you create a present for a family member. You don't just pick any toy from your toy box; you try to give them something that you know they will love—maybe a picture you've drawn or a toy that you know is special to them.

God wants the Israelites to understand that good things come from Him. For us, this teaches a valuable lesson: being thankful means recognizing the good things we have and showing appreciation for them. The act of bringing something valuable to God is a way of saying "Thank you for all you have done for us."

2. Remembering Where Blessings Come From

As the Israelites enter the promised land, God wants them to remember that everything they have comes from Him. This is an important teaching moment. Imagine you've spent time planting seeds in a garden. You water them every day, and finally, they start to grow. You might feel proud of your work—and you should be. But the Israelites were reminded to remember that God created the seeds, the rain, and the soil—and without these, their plants wouldn't grow.

God gave the Israelites a story to tell when they brought their firstfruits. This story reminded them of their ancestors, who were slaves in Egypt, and how God had rescued them and brought them to a better place. By telling this story, the Israelites would always remember that God was the source of their blessings, just as He is in our lives today.

3. Obedience and Blessings

Bringing firstfruits was not just about thankfulness; it was also about obedience. God gave His people specific instructions, and they needed to follow them carefully. This can be relatable to us when we think about following rules. For example, if your parent or teacher asks you to clean your room or complete your homework, they are asking to obey because it helps you learn responsibility and keep your environment tidy.

Obedying God's commands to bring the firstfruits was a way for the Israelites to show they trusted Him. And when they obeyed, God promised to bless them. When we follow God's guidelines, we too can experience His blessings even in ways we might not expect.

4. Sharing with Others

Another important part of Deuteronomy 26 is sharing. The Israelites were instructed to bring their gifts to the priests and to also share with those who didn't have as much—the needy, the strangers, and the Levites (who helped with God's work but didn't own farms). Sharing what we have is an important way to show love and kindness to others.

This idea can be understood by thinking about sharing your lunch with a friend who forgot theirs. It might be hard to give away some of your favorite snacks, but imagine how happy your friend will be. Sharing shows that you care about them and that you're grateful for what you have.

Personal Application for Elementary Students

Now that we've learned about the Israelites' journey and their practice of bringing the firstfruits, let's see how we can apply this in our own lives. We might not have a farm or crops to bring as an offering, but we have so many other things to be thankful for and to share.

First, think about the times when someone does something nice for you, like when your parents buy you a lunch or your friend lets you play with their toys. A simple "thank you" goes a long way in showing gratitude. But also think about how you can share what you have. Maybe next time, you can invite that friend over to play with your toys. This is a way to mirror the Israelites' sharing of their blessings.

Furthermore, we can think about how we can give back to God, not necessarily with firstfruits but by using our talents and time to serve others. If you're good at drawing, maybe make a card for someone who's feeling down. Or perhaps spend some extra time helping at home or participating in community service along with your family.

Remember, being thankful is not just about words; it's about actions. When the Israelites brought the firstfruits, they didn't just display gratitude—they acted on it. Just like them, you have the opportunity every day to show your thankfulness through actions and share from your heart, reflecting God's love to everyone around you.

Interactive Discussion Questions

Now, let's talk about some questions that can help us understand Deuteronomy 26 even better. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers—your thoughts are important!

1. What is one thing you are really thankful for today?

Encourage the students to think deeply and share something specific. This question helps students begin each day with gratitude and recognize the blessings around them.

2. Can you remember a time when you gave someone a gift or shared with someone? How did it make you feel?

Guide students to reflect on their feelings about giving something special and seeing how it positively affects others. It reinforces the notion of sharing, just as the Israelites did.

3. Why is it important to remember where our blessings come from?

Have the students discuss why it's crucial to recognize God's role in their lives, similar to the Israelites' story. This helps them connect the biblical lesson to their personal lives.

4. What is one way that you can show someone you're thankful for them this week?

Encourage creativity while considering actions more than words. This question enables students to put thankfulness into practice, similarly to how the Israelites put their firstfruits into practice.

In closing, as you think about these questions and your own life, remember that thankfulness and giving are more than just actions—they are ways we can show love to God and others. Just as the Israelites learned to express their gratitude, you can too, in your own special way.