

# Waves of Gratitude

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Reviewed by Molly Herman-Gallow

# Waves of Gratitude: Snapshot

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[Waves of Gratitude](#) is a United Thank Offering original curriculum and focuses on the themes of water and gratitude. Created to be a traditional five-day VBS (either half-day or full-day), children experience a gratitude-based theme accompanied by a scripture passage. Additional activities are also included in this curriculum, and it's available for all to use at no additional cost. Each of its resources are available to download. This curriculum presents a down-to-earth and engaging VBS experience for children, youth, and adults alike that reminds them of the importance of gratitude in the life of a Christian.

# Waves of Gratitude: The Basics

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- **Theme:** “Waves of Gratitude”
- **Publisher & date:** [United Thank Offering](#), 2023 ([The Episcopal Church](#))
- **Intended ages/grades:** grades K – 5
- **Format:** onsite
- **Number of sessions:** 5
- **Types of activities:** big group gatherings, water activity, music, movement station, crafts station, STEAM projects, gratitude station
- **Cost:** free

# Waves of Gratitude: Scope & Sequence

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## **Day 1: Grateful for Connections**

Matthew 25, Connecting with Jesus by Caring for Others

## **Day 2: Grateful for Creation**

Genesis 1, The Creation Narrative

## **Day 3: Grateful for Baptism**

Matthew 3, Jesus's Baptism

## **Day 4: Grateful for Everyday**

Jonah 1–4, Story of Jonah

## **Day 5: Grateful for Water**

Matthew 8, Jesus Calms a Storm

# Waves of Gratitude: Where It Shines

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## **Inclusive language for God**

This curriculum does a great job of characterizing God's relationship with us. It presents God as healer, provider, and caretaker and includes open and affirming language for God without using masculine pronouns. The way in which God is presented in the context of this curriculum is in a way that many can relate to and resonate with while being firmly rooted in scripture-based passages as well.

## **Grounded in Episcopal tradition**

It is evident this curriculum is rooted in The Episcopal Church tradition because it makes specific reference to the Book of Common Prayer and the Baptismal Covenant. Because it's grounded in this denomination, children who are familiar with The Episcopal Church will grow further rooted in the ways and life of this denomination; however, it's written so all might be comfortable with its content.

# Waves of Gratitude: Where It Shines

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## **“I Wonder” questions promote curiosity**

This curriculum often uses “I Wonder” questions during the small group setting to encourage curiosity and conversation. Children are reminded that it is okay if they might not have all of the right answers and that part of having faith is being curious and growing more with God through new discoveries and conversations.

## **Variety of ways for children to learn**

Included in this curriculum are a variety of activity stations that allow for learners of all ages to engage with each day’s content. There are arts and crafts, a science-based station, a station solely dedicated to water, a gratitude practice station, and time for singing and fellowship. Having these many options to participate in creates a learning environment for children of all ages and with all different learning styles that meets them where they might learn best.

# Waves of Gratitude: Where It Shines

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## **Includes an entire lesson on creation care**

This curriculum is unique because it includes a full day's worth lesson on creation care. The Creation Story is told and children are encouraged to think about how they can care for creation around them in loving and impactful ways. This lesson also does a great job of tying gratitude to creation and how children can think about how creation brings them joy.

## **Simple and easy set-up**

Set-up for this VBS is incredibly simple and easy. There aren't a lot of demands for each station, and every station can be set-up and broken-down with minimal effort and in ample time. This VBS is very cost-effective and affordable. There is an included Director's Guide that walks the Director through what each station's set-up requires for incredibly easy planning and week-of implementation.

# Waves of Gratitude: What We Miss

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## **Potentially too denominational-focused**

Due to this curriculum being so heavily focused in the Episcopal denomination, children with an experience in a different denomination or in non-denominational church settings might have a bit of a hard time engaging with this curriculum's content.

## **Connection between stations and daily scripture passages**

Though each day features a different scripture passage or Bible story that relates to gratitude and/or water, there is not a lot of connection between the various stations' activities and the daily scripture. The only time in which the scripture passage is really visited is during the opening big group gathering. It would have been nice to see more connections built between what the children hear in the big group gathering regarding the day's Bible story and the stations they visit.



# Waves of Gratitude: What We Miss

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## **Lack of content surrounding diversity of human identities and experiences**

Not much is found in this curriculum surrounding the topic of diversity of human identities and experiences. Though it has great themes of loving God, loving others, serving others, and being grateful for God's many gifts and blessings, there is nothing specific that touches on the diversity of human identities and experiences, potentially affecting the way in which this curriculum might be experienced by some participants.

# **Waves of Gratitude: Overall Assessment**

**A traditional  
5-day VBS  
curriculum for an  
engaging  
approach to  
learning about  
gratefulness and  
gratitude**