

**GIVING THANKS IS
A WAY OF LIFE**

by Janet Litherland



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by JANET LITHERLAND

PRODUCTION NOTES**STAGING DIAGRAM**

CHORUS stands on risers arranged in a semi-circle.

CHORUS is divided into two groups: CHORUS A (light voices) and CHORUS B (dark voices). Groups are mixed on the risers. When A or B is not indicated, CHORUS speaks in unison.

VOICES 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are members of the Chorus.

SCRIPTS & COSTUMES: All parts are read from scripts contained in plain folders. Chorus wears robes.

Suggested Lead-in to Presentation

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PASTOR: “Thanksgiving.” One word with many meanings. “Thanksgiving” to many is the word signifying a special holiday — a holiday of good food and family togetherness. “Thanksgiving” to others is a historical day representing a turning point for our forebears in the battle for survival on a new continent. “Thanksgiving” for us today should, perhaps, carry still another meaning. Let us transpose its parts and say that Thanksgiving means “giving thanks.” Now to honor this event it is my privilege to introduce _____ who will present a special program of celebration called “Giving Thanks Is a Way of Life.”

CHORUS: It has been a long time since God created us, since Adam and Eve first stood in the Garden of Eden; and of all the ages spanning that time, *we* are the result.

CHORUS B: How do we like us?

VOICE 1: (*To CHORUS*) How do we *like* us?

CHORUS B: Yes. Are we thankful for what we are?

CHORUS A: Or do we mourn what we are not.

CHORUS B: Are we thankful for what we have?

CHORUS A: Or regretful for what we have not.

CHORUS B: Are we thankful for what we are able to do?

VOICE 1: Are you saying we should be self-satisfied?

CHORUS: No! We are not discussing pride, egotism, arrogance — self-glory.

VOICE 1: Then we must be discussing self-love. That’s sinful!

VOICE 2: (*Indignantly*) I thought we were here to praise the Lord. Let’s get on with it.

VOICES 3, 4 & 5: Yes, let’s!

CHORUS: Just a moment. We must clarify our position on self-love. Proper self-love is not sinful. Instead, it shows respect for the highest of God’s creations.

CHORUS B: For the highest of God’s creations.

- 1 CHORUS A: For us.
- 2 CHORUS B: All of us want —
- 3 CHORUS A: Need —
- 4 CHORUS B: To be loved by others.
- 5 CHORUS: But if we don't love ourselves, or have respect for
6 what we are, how can we possibly ask others to love and
7 respect us?
- 8 CHORUS A: How *can* we!
- 9 CHORUS: Therefore, let us give thanks for all things,
10 including ourselves, for this is the will of God.
- 11 VOICE 3: (*Steps out in front of CHORUS and turns to face them.*)
12 I can't take any more of this. Yes, it would be nice if all
13 of us were completely happy with ourselves and our
14 accomplishments, but we aren't . . . I'm not . . . I just can't
15 be thankful for what *isn't!* (*Exits Right.*)
- 16 VOICE 4: (*Moves out of CHORUS and exits Left while speaking.*)
17 And I lost my job last week. All this talk of giving thanks
18 is depressing.
- 19 CHORUS: We aren't doing very well. Let's try again. "Bless
20 the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his
21 holy name." Thank you, Lord, for now and for the future.
- 22 VOICE 5: (*Moving out of CHORUS*) Excuse me. Move, please,
23 and let me pass. As you know, I'm going through a divorce
24 that I don't want. How can I be thankful for "now" and
25 for an empty future? (*Exits Right.*)
- 26 CHORUS A: That's a tough question.
- 27 CHORUS B: Yes, but it evades the purpose of Thanksgiving,
28 which is, to develop a spirit of gratitude. The question
29 is not what would we *be* thankful for, but what *are* we
30 thankful for?
- 31 VOICE 1: Health.
- 32 VOICE 2: Shelter.
- 33 CHORUS B: Loved ones.
- 34 CHORUS A: Nature.
- 35 VOICES 1 & 2: Memories.

- 1 CHORUS A: Freedom of country!
- 2 CHORUS B: Freedom of mind.
- 3 CHORUS: Freedom from the guilt of sin!
- 4 CHORUS A: We could be thankful for people, too — not only
- 5 those who have helped us love, but those who through
- 6 carelessness, indifference or animosity have helped us
- 7 grow.
- 8 VOICE 2: (*With sudden awareness*) Yes! Instead of reaching for
- 9 the aspirin when things go wrong, we could try giving
- 10 thanks for the things that are right, and then work to
- 11 correct the wrong.
- 12 CHORUS A: Many of us are bitter without even remembering
- 13 what we are bitter about.
- 14 CHORUS: How does bitterness look?
- 15 CHORUS A: Is it becoming?
- 16 CHORUS B: Do we like us?
- 17 VOICE 1: Here we go again with that same question.
- 18 CHORUS B: Do we like us?
- 19 CHORUS: Let us consider Rip Van Winkle.
- 20 VOICE 1: Rip Van Winkle?
- 21 CHORUS A: He slept.
- 22 VOICE 1: (*Wryly*) I know he slept.
- 23 CHORUS A: He slept through the changing life around him.
- 24 CHORUS B: Is this what we are doing?
- 25 CHORUS A: Some of us are.
- 26 VOICE 2: Maybe most of us.
- 27 CHORUS B: By sharpening our awareness, we could find
- 28 many things for which to be thankful.
- 29 CHORUS A: Like the singing of birds.
- 30 CHORUS B: The baying of a hound.
- 31 VOICES 1 & 2: The patter of rain.
- 32 CHORUS B: The clap of thunder.
- 33 VOICE 1: A playing child.
- 34 VOICE 2: Sunshine and shadows.
- 35 CHORUS B: Changing leaves.

- 1 **CHORUS A:** Pretty flowers.
 2 **VOICES 1 & 2:** Bright eyes.
 3 **CHORUS:** And smiles. (*During next 12 lines, VOICES 3, 4 & 5*
 4 *reappear at sides of stage, one at a time.*)
 5 **CHORUS B:** The wind.
 6 **CHORUS A:** A baby's soft skin.
 7 **VOICE 2:** The cold snow.
 8 **CHORUS B:** A warm fire.
 9 **CHORUS A:** A kiss.
 10 **CHORUS:** Joy!
 11 **VOICE 1:** Solitude.
 12 **CHORUS A:** Peace.
 13 **CHORUS B:** Love.
 14 **CHORUS:** Life!
 15 **VOICE 1:** (*Suddenly aware*) Then this is what the thankful life
 16 is all about — being grateful for what *is*, not what *isn't*.
 17 **VOICE 2:** And, being aware of the goodness of creation and
 18 the encompassing presence of the Creator.
 19 **CHORUS A:** Not just being aware.
 20 **CHORUS B:** But reacting accordingly.
 21 **CHORUS:** That is, by giving thanks. It's a way of life. Let the
 22 redeemed of the Lord say so!
 23 **VOICE 3:** I couldn't help overhearing.
 24 **VOICE 4:** Nor could I.
 25 **VOICE 5:** Nor I.
 26 **CHORUS:** Come, stand with us. We've missed you.
 27 **VOICES 3, 4 & 5:** We're sorry we spoiled your discussion.
 28 **CHORUS A:** You didn't spoil it.
 29 **CHORUS B:** You improved it.
 30 **CHORUS A:** You made us think.
 31 **CHORUS:** We had prepared empty words of praise, but
 32 because of you, they were never spoken. You gave us a
 33 new direction.
 34 **CHORUS A:** Thank you.
 35 **VOICES 3, 4 & 5:** And you made *us* think. We know now that



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