

Dear Club Coordinator,

Hello! The ACTS Training Program developed a year-end tool to help you and your GEMS Counselors strengthen your relationships with the parents and siblings of your GEMS. The resource is called The Family Banquet.

Because parents are the primary faith nurturers of your GEMS, it's critical that you team up to bring their daughters into a living relationship with Jesus Christ. This fun-filled, theme-focused event will provide you with an effective way to engage your club in family ministry!

Within this packet is all the information you'll need to host The Family Banquet. You'll find . . .

A Planning Guide for Club Coordinators:

In table form, you'll see what is all involved (and the approximate time frames needed) to host The Family Banquet. You'll notice that the segments of the banquet are fairly independent of one another so feel free to pick and choose the options that will work best for your GEMS Club.

Optional Activities to add to The Family Banquet:

If you choose to delete some of the recommended options, here are a few more choices for you. Or if you'd simply like to lengthen your banquet, add one or more of these options to your schedule. Again, you have the freedom to create an event that best serves your individual GEMS Club and the families it serves.

The Family Banquet Checklist!

Maximize the success of your event by working your way through this list, checking the items off one by one! Be sure to organize a planning committee to work on this with you. Cover it in prayer and don't hesitate to delegate.

A Sample Family Banquet Invitation:

Send personal invitations to each of the GEMS and their families. If you need to send it through the mail in order to ensure that everyone gets an invitation, do that. It'll be well worth the postage expense rather than wondering if everyone received an invitation.

The Family Banquet:

The text for the entire banquet is included for you! Encourage your girls to practice, practice, practice! As Club Coordinator, be sure to know your part so well that you need to only glance at your notes occasionally. From welcome to closing, giving your very best will point families to Jesus!

As you plan and prepare, be quick to call us if you have questions! We'll be praying for you!

*Area Coordinator Name
Contact Information*

*Leadership Trainer Name
Contact Information*

The Family Banquet

A Planning Guide for Club Coordinators . . .

Time Frame	Portion of Banquet	Ideas
Pre-Banquet . . .	Families arrive and take their places around the tables. Serve punch. Have Counselors warmly welcome families!	Have “Photo Opt” places and a GEMS Photographer willing to take pictures of families. Play GEMS music quietly in the background.
30-45 minutes – you insert in schedule at the time that works best for you. The time needed will depend on what you are serving for a meal, dessert, or snack.	Meal/Dessert/Snack – whatever works best for your size club! This can be as elaborate as a banquet or simple as crackers and cheese with punch and coffee.	Use paper tablecloths that kids can write on, put colors and markers on the table for this purpose. Have booster seats or high chairs available for families with small children.
5 minutes	Welcome and Opening Prayer	Club Coordinator (Optional: have a GEM pray)
12 minutes	<i>A Thankful Heart Lesson from a Leper</i>	GEMS Girls needed: 1 narrator, 10 GEMS or volunteers from the families
15 minutes	<i>The Breakfast Table</i>	GEMS Girls needed: 1 narrator, 6 actresses
12 minutes	<i>A Thankful Heart Reading</i>	GEMS Girls needed: 1 narrator, 5 girls who only act, (no speaking parts)
8 minutes	<i>I’m so thankful that you . . .</i>	Club Coordinator
5 minutes for litany and theme song 10 minutes, plus dependent on size of your GEMS Club. The time needed for every counselor to introduce herself, name the girls in her small group and list five things she is thankful for in her group.	<i>A GEMS Litany for their Families!</i>	ALL GEMS are involved with 5 individual speaking parts. The entire group reads the litany and sings the theme song, <i>Living the Secret</i> . All GEMS Counselors
3 minutes	<i>The Family Banquet Closing</i>	Club Coordinator

Optional Activities to add to *The Family Banquet*:



Open Mic: Invite GEMS and their families to come forward and list something that they're thankful for. If you had a Gratitude Wall, Open Mic time, or some other way that you thankfully opened each GEMS Club meeting with, incorporate that into the banquet by inviting *everyone* to participate.



Praise and Worship: Invite your church's Praise Team or your GEMS Club's music coordinator to lead the group in a time of praise and worship.

Special Music: During *A GEMS Litany for their Families* the GEMS sing their theme song, *Livin' the Secret*. Feel free to add other songs that are your girls' favorites! It doesn't need to be limited to one song!



PowerPoint Presentation: Put together a slide show or PowerPoint presentation using pictures to highlight the different things the girls did throughout the year.



Badge and Craft Displays: Be sure to display different projects, badges, or crafts that the girls completed throughout the year. The girls will love showing what they've made and explaining the things they learned.

The Family Banquet Checklist!

- _____ Pray! Ask God to lead, guide, and bless.
 - _____ Determine the date for banquet and tell the parents about it *as soon as possible*.
 - _____ Send invitations to *The Family Banquet* to the GEMS and their families. (This is for parents and siblings – boys included!) See sample invitation.
 - _____ Decide on a menu for the event and determine who will prepare and serve the food.
 - _____ During a GEMS Club meeting **before** *The Family Banquet* takes place, have the girls write out thank you cards to their families. The thank you notes will then be given to their families at *The Family Banquet*. To prevent them from getting misplaced, have the girls write them out, give them to the Club Coordinator, and have the Club Coordinator take them to *The Family Banquet*.
- Decorate the banquet hall as follows . . .
- _____ Use tables, round tables if at all possible. There are often assignments for the family or table groups and it promotes something that is scarce in some homes . . . gathering around a table!
 - _____ Use paper tablecloths that kids can write on. Have a cup with markers and/or crayons so they can “write” on the table. This will be especially helpful for families with young children. Provide high chairs and booster chairs for little ones, as well.
 - _____ Along the borders of the banquet hall have tables set up where the girls’ badge work, crafts, and projects can be displayed.
 - _____ Create a fun “Photo Opt” place and assign a Counselor or other volunteer to serve as GEMS Photographer for the families.
 - _____ Hang your GEMS Theme Banner in a prominent place near “stage” area.
 - _____ Depending on the size of your group, determine if you need a microphone.
 - _____ Have the girls create centerpieces for the tables.
- Assign the following leadership rolls to your GEMS Girls . . . Have the girls practice ahead of time!
- _____ Opening Prayer – GEM or Club Coordinator
 - _____ *A Thankful Heart Lesson from a Leper* – one GEM to narrate, ten GEMS to participate (or use 10 family members if you do not have a very large GEMS group). The part for the ten GEMS would be a great way to incorporate younger GEMS since their participation is as easy as standing and sitting.
 - _____ *The Breakfast Table* – one GEM to narrate, three actresses (dressed in PJ’s) to be the Grateful Family, three actresses (dressed in PJ’s) to be the Ungrateful Family.
 - _____ *A Thankful Heart Reading* – one GEM to narrate, five GEMS to act (no speaking part).
 - _____ *A GEMS Litany for their Families!* – All GEMS participate by reading the litany and singing the theme song. Five GEMS have reading parts. All the counselors are involved in this portion.
- _____ When banquet is finished, thank God in prayer!

A Sample *Family Banquet* Invitation . . .

You are invited to

The Family Banquet!

_____ GEMS Club invites its GEMS and their parents (or guardians) and siblings to a special event that focuses on our GEMS theme, *Livin' the Secret! Having a Thankful Heart* and celebrates the relationships between GEMS and their families.

Date: _____

Place: _____

Time: _____

Please RSVP the number of people attending from your family by contacting _____ (Club Coordinator), _____ (phone number) or _____ (e-mail).



The Family Banquet

Welcome/Opening Prayer

Club Coordinator (CC):

Welcome! I'm so glad you're here tonight! My name is _____ and I'm the Club Coordinator for the _____ GEMS Club.

What a delightful treat it is to invite our GEMS and their families to *The Family Banquet*, a special event that focuses on our GEMS theme, *Living the Secret! Having a Thankful Heart* and celebrates the relationships between GEMS and their families.

Before we begin, let's open with a word of prayer . . .

Club Coordinator prays or invites a GEM to come forward and lead in prayer.

CC or GEM:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for each GEM and family member that has gathered in this place to focus on *Living the Secret! Having a Thankful Heart*. Thank you for the relationships that You've given us within our families. Thank you for the ways You have been present in our GEMS Girls' Club, as we've studied the Bible, sang your praises, learned and experienced new things, and had tons of fun together. Please bless our time together at *The Family Banquet*. Open our eyes to what You would have us to see in our relationship with You and our family members. Open our ears to hear what You would have us to hear about having a thankful heart. Open our hearts to all that You have planned for us during this time together and when we return to the places we call home. Receive this evening as a night of praise to Your name. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

CC:

We've invited Jesus into this place, now let's warmly welcome one another. Please introduce yourself to everyone at your table by telling them your name and the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word, "Thanks!"

When people are finished say . . . You're going to hear the word "Thanks" a lot during our time together at The Family Banquet because our GEMS theme for the 2006-2007 season is Living the Secret! Having a Thankful Heart.

I would now like to invite _____ (A GEM or GEMS Counselor) forward and her ten volunteers to read, *A Thankful Heart Lesson from a Leper*.

GEM or Counselor: *Reads a Thankful Heart Lesson from a Leper . . .*

A Thankful Heart Lesson from a Leper

Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Object Lesson: You will need ten 8" x 11 " pieces of paper or poster board. On nine of the sheets write, "Ungrateful leper". On one piece of paper write, "Grateful leper". You will also need ten GEMS (or if not enough GEMS, volunteers from the families). Have the volunteers sit in ten chairs in front of the room. Assign one to be the grateful leper and the other nine to be the ungrateful lepers by distributing the pieces of paper for them to hold in front of them. When you refer to the "ten lepers", they should all stand or sit (depending on if they were standing or sitting when it's read). When you refer to the "nine lepers" nine stand and the one sits, and when you mention the "one leper" the one stands and the other nine sit. Begin with everyone sitting down.

Message (based on Luke 17:11-19):

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem when ten lepers (ten stand) met Him. The ten lepers (ten sit) had a dreaded disease that left white patches and lumps in their skin. The numbness from nerve damage robbed the feeling from their fingers and toes. Their faces were disfigured, their vocal chords ruined. The Bible says the ten lepers (ten stand) cried out in a loud voice, but I wonder how loud their pitiful voices really sounded.

We know the ten lepers' (ten sit) voices were loud enough to get Jesus' attention. Heal us the ten lepers (ten stand) cried! Jesus answered the ten lepers (ten sit) "Go show yourselves to the priests." As the ten lepers (ten stand) ran to the priests their bodies began to heal. Suddenly the white patches disappeared from their skin! Feeling returned to all their fingers and toes! Their vocal chords were healed! Can you picture the ten lepers (ten sit) screaming and skipping with joy?

Nine of the lepers (nine stand) ran like excited children to the priests. They were well again! Healed and happy, those nine lepers (nine sit) never looked back.

One leper (one stand) stopped in his tracks and turned around. He ran to Jesus! He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him! Can you begin to imagine the things He thanked Jesus for . . . an opportunity to go back and live with his family, the joy of returning to a normal life, and the blessing of being healed by Jesus through this miracle! The one leper (one sit) looked up at Jesus and said, "Thank you."

There were ten lepers (ten stand) who called out to Jesus. There were ten lepers (ten sit) that He healed. Jesus asked, “Where are the other nine lepers (nine stand)? Why didn’t the other nine lepers (nine sit) return to give thanks to Me?”

Only one leper (one stand) returned to say thank you to Jesus. That’s only 10% who lived the secret by having a thankful heart. I wonder if the statistics are the same today? Are you part of the 90% (ask the one to sit and the nine to stand) who rush off to enjoy God’s gifts, but don’t stop to thank God, the Giver of all things? Or are you part of the 10% (ask one to stand and nine to sit) that thanks God for every blessing – the good stuff and the bad stuff that God turns to good? (Ask everyone to sit)

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.* Giving thanks to God is not a suggestion; it’s a command!

Let’s give thanks to God together right now.

At your tables, please have each person complete this sentence “I’m thankful to God for _____.” Simply list a person, place, thing, or event that you’re thankful for right now. When you’re finished going around the table have everyone at your table stand.

When everyone is standing say . . . It’s great to see 100% of this group giving thanks to God! That’s a statistic that honors God! Thanks so much. You may be seated again.

CC or GEM: Thank you, _____ (name of the person who read *A Thankful Heart Lesson from a Leper* and her volunteers). *Applaud!* Now we’re going to watch a skit that some of our GEMS have prepared for us. It’s called, *The Breakfast Table*.

The Breakfast Table

You will need: seven actresses (all wearing their pajamas except the Narrator), two breakfast tables (on one side of the stage set as follows: a table with three chairs, a pitcher of milk, three cereal bowls, three spoons, six boxes of cereal on the Ungrateful table, one box of cereal on the Grateful table), two poster boards: one reads, “Breakfast with the Ungratefals” and one reads, “Breakfast with the Gratefals”. Post these by each table. The “Ungrateful” table also needs a newspaper for the mother to read.

The Narrator enters and stands between the two tables . . .

Narrator: Tonight (today) you are invited to peek into the morning breakfast routine of two families, the Ungratefals and the Gratefals. Let’s enter the kitchen of the Ungrateful Family first. *Point to the Ungrateful family and the drama begins (If you have the option of a spotlight, shine it on the Ungrateful’s portion of the stage.)*

Mom is sitting at the table reading her newspaper. Nobody smiles! Whenever Mom speaks, she makes no eye contact with her daughters. Her eyes never leave her paper. Annie walks into the room rubbing her eyes and sits at the table.

Mom: Morning, Annie.

Annie: Morning, Mom.

Jill walks into the room yawning and stretching and sits at the table.

Mom: Morning, Jill.

Jill: Morning, Mom.

Annie: Morning.

Jill: Morning.

Annie: Where's the Captain Crunch?

Mom: It's gone.

Annie: *Drops her spoon into the empty cereal bowl with disgust.* We're out of Captain Crunch! Ugh. We NEVER have anything good to eat in this house.

Jill: Where's the Honey Nut Cheerios?

Mom: Ran out.

Jill: I don't believe it! All we have to eat is . . . (list the six boxes of cereal that is on the table). We might as well be living with Old Mother Hubbard. Our cupboards are as bare as hers!

Mom: If you don't like what we have on the table then you better not eat.

Annie: Fine by us! *Annie and Jill stand up.*

Mom: Have a good day.

Annie: Yeah, right. *Annie walks away.*

Jill: Whatever. *Jill walks away.*

Narrator: *Cringe.* Oh, oh, oh, that was downright ugly. I won't ask you to raise your hands, but think about this question: Have you ever had a breakfast

that looked like the Ungrateful Family? Those kind of ugly mornings seem to jump start a day of disaster. Let's peek into the kitchen of the Grateful Family and check out their breakfast routine. *Point to the Grateful family and the drama begins (If you have the option of a spotlight, shine it on the Grateful's portion of the stage.)*

Mom is sitting at the table. Everybody smiles! Annie walks into the kitchen . . .

Mom: Good morning, Esther. How are you today?

Esther gives her mom a hug then sits by the table . . .

Esther: Good morning, Mom. I'm doing great, how about you?

Mom: I'm feeling wonderful, honey. Thanks for asking.

Melanie walks into the kitchen . . .

Mom: Good morning, Melanie. How are you on this beautiful morning?

Melanie gives her Mom a hug then sits by the table . . .

Melanie: I'm just peachy, Mom. How about you?

Mom: I'm doing well, thank you. Before we eat, let's bow our heads, join hands, shut our eyes, and pray. "Thank you, Heavenly Father, for a new day to serve You. Thank you for a good night's sleep, for food to strengthen our bodies, and minds that we can use at school and work. Thank you above all for our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. It's in His name we pray, Amen."

Esther & Melanie:

Amen!

Everyone pours herself a bowl of cereal . . .

Mom: Girls, I've been thinking about your GEMS theme, *Living the Secret! Having a Thankful Heart*. What do you think about creating some sort of family mantra that reminds us to give thanks to God?

Esther: A family mantra? What's a family mantra?

Melanie: It's a family expression that you keep repeating so that you don't forget its truth.

Esther: You mean something like "Always remember to wear clean underwear in case you're ever in an accident"?

Family giggles!

- Mom:** Not exactly. I don't think our family mantra should focus on our underwear.
- Esther:** Why not? I'm thankful for my underwear!
- Melanie:** Be serious, Esther! Let's think of something that has to do with a thankful heart.
- Esther:** Hmmmmm . . . How about, "Be the one!"
- Mom:** Be the one! I love that, Esther. Be the one! It will remind us to be the one who gives thanks even when everyone else is complaining.
- Melanie:** Be the one! It will remind us to be the one who says thank you to God in all circumstances.
- Esther:** It will also help us to remember to be the one who is thankful for all the good stuff that God gives us and the bad stuff that He turns to good.
- Mom:** You did great, girls! Before we leave the house each morning, we'll remind each other to "Be the one!"
- Esther:** Let's start now!

The family puts their hands together above the table (like a team does before leaving a huddle) and says, "Be the one!"

- Narrator:** Did you notice the Gratefuls only had one box of cereal on their table? I think it's better to eat one box of cereal with a grateful family than six boxes of cereal with an ungrateful one. Hmm . . . I think I just created a new proverb!

Now it's time for you to get creative! I'm going to give you five minutes to create a family mantra of your own that will remind the members of your family to give thanks to God. You may work with your family or your entire table group.

You may use the Grateful's family mantra, "Be the one!" or our theme for this year, *Living the secret! Having a Thankful Heart* or you can come up with a unique family mantra of your own. In five minutes, we'll have each family (or table group) stand up and share their family mantra! Go ahead!

After five minutes have the families or table groups stand up and give their family mantra. Applaud each group and thank them for sharing!

CC or GEM: Thank you to our actresses, _____ (name the actresses).
Applaud! Now I'd like to invite the girls to the front who have prepared A Thankful Heart Reading.

A Thankful Heart Reading

You will need: a narrator and five actresses who mime what the narrator says. The five actresses should line up across the stage from left to right (GEM #1 through GEM #5) and "freeze". The narrator walks back and forth across the stage. When she walks by "GEM #1" that GEM acts out what the narrator is talking about. When she walks by "GEM #2" that GEM performs the appropriate actions etc. All the GEMS are "froze" except the one whose turn it is to mime.

Narrator stands to the left of GEM #1. As she reads, GEM #1 wraps her arms around her stomach in pain and rubs the temples because her head hurts.

LT - Narrator:

Giving thanks in all circumstances is a lot easier to say then it is to do. I find it especially difficult to give thanks when my stomach is tied in knots with worry and my head is pounding from the stress of the day.

Narrator walks to the left of GEM #2. GEM #2 silently cries, blows her nose, and wipes her tears.

LT - Narrator:

When I think about sad times in my life I really question that command to give thanks in all circumstances! How can I give thanks for the doctor's news that I have cancer, for a phone call that there's been an accident, or for bills that I'm unable to pay?

Narrator walks to the left of GEM #3. GEM #3 smiles, jumps with joy, and throws her arms in the air!

LT - Narrator:

Of course, I have no problem giving thanks to God for the happy times. How easy it is to say thank you God for an A on a math test, a new baby brother, or a weekend away!

Narrator walks to the left of GEM #4. GEM #4 stomps her feet and pounds her fist in disgust.

LT - Narrator:

Sometimes I face situations that are no fair! Those circumstances get me grumbling and whining. Why do I always get picked on at school? Why am I the only kid who has to make her bed every morning? Why can't I get good grades like my older sister? I have a hard time giving thanks when my sentences start with why.

Narrator walks to the left of GEM #5. GEM #5 is tapping her finger to her head trying to remember. She looks puzzled.

LT - Narrator:

Sometimes my whole problem with giving thanks to God is that I forget! Life is good for me. I love my family and my friends. I'm healthy and I have all that I need plus much more. Life becomes so comfy that I take God and His gifts for granted. I forget that He is the Giver of all things!

Narrator walks to the other side of the stage and stands to the left of GEM #1. GEM #1 throws her worries to God and lifts her hands in thanks to her God!

LT - Narrator:

As I pace back and forth with my wonderings, I go to God's Word for answers. 1 Peter 5:7 says, *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.* God invites me to take every worry and stress and give it over to Him! What joy to know that God has everything under control. In stress and times of worry, I'm so thankful that God cares for me!

Narrator walks to the left of GEM #2. GEM #2 goes back and forth between wiping her tears and folding her hands in prayer.

LT - Narrator:

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, *Give thanks in all circumstances.* The truth of this verse centers on one little word – IN. We don't give thanks *for* all circumstances; we thank God *in* all circumstances. I don't give thanks for a doctor's report that I have cancer, but I do give thanks that in cancer God will never leave me or forsake me (Hebrews 13:5). I'm so thankful that even in tears, I can give thanks to God IN all circumstances.

Narrator walks to the left of GEM #3. GEM #3 smiles, counts her blessings "on her fingers" and lies prostrate (flat on her face or bowed low) in thanks to God.

LT - Narrator:

1 Chronicles 16:34 says, *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.* When God is good to me I need to remember to give thanks to the Giver of all gifts! I must never forget to count my blessings, naming them one by one! I'm so thankful for God's goodness and love that has no end.

Narrator walks to the left of GEM #4. GEM #4 bows down on her knees and folds her hands in prayer.

LT - Narrator:

Philippians 2:14 says, *Do everything without complaining and arguing.* When I grumble and complain about my life, I'm telling God that I'm ungrateful for His plan for me. How it must sadden Him when I tell Him that He's got it all wrong! I'm thankful that God uses every circumstance in my life, even the ones that I don't understand or like, and uses it for my good.

Narrator walks to the left of GEM #5. GEM #5 pretends to write in a journal, looks at her watch, and bows her head and folds her hands in prayer.

LT - Narrator:

Psalms 30:12 says, *O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.* With God's help I'll give thanks to Him every day. I'll write my thanks in a journal and use ordinary things to help me remember to give thanks to God. For example, when I put on my shoes, I'll thank God that He is with me wherever I go. When I look at my watch, I'll thank God for the time He has given me. God will help me make giving thanks to Him a holy habit!

Narrator walks back to GEM #1 and says . . .

To close our *Thankful Heart Reading* we have another five-minute assignment for your table group. Go around the table and have each person think of an ordinary object that will remind them to give thanks to God. For example you could say that each time you open your school backpack, you'll give thanks to God for the opportunity to learn! Share your ideas with the people around your table.

When five minutes is finished, the Club Coordinator comes to the front and says . . .

CC: Thank you to _____ (list the participants in *A Thankful Heart Reading*) for teaching us about a thankful heart. *Applaud!*

I'm so thankful that you . . .

The Club Coordinator leads this activity. You will need quiet worship music playing in the background when families are telling each of their members, "I'm so thankful that you . . ."

These precious girls have been looking forward to this evening for a long time because it's so fun to unite people that mean so much to them. If I asked the GEMS girls if they love their families, I'm certain that everyone

would say, “Yes!” If I asked the parents if they love their children, I’m sure that everyone would say, “Yes!” Parents and kids express their love by valuing and honoring each other. They start and end their day with warm hugs and butterfly kisses!

Yet how many of you know why your family is thankful for you? We often say, “I love you!” But how often do we express sincere, authentic thanks for one another? Girls, when is the last time you’ve looked at your dad or mom and said, “I’m so thankful that you . . .” You fill in the blank.

Parents, when is the last time you’ve looked at your daughter and said, “I’m so thankful that you . . .” You fill in the blank.

Tonight we’re going to bless one another with our words. It’s a great thing to do when we’re sitting around tables like we are this evening. It’s hopefully something that you’ll continue to put into practice around the kitchen table in the place you call home.

Here’s what I’d like you to do. I’d like each person to complete this sentence for each of his or her family members that are here this evening. Here’s the sentence you need to complete: “I’m so thankful that you . . .” Go ahead!

Allow the necessary time for families to be able to bless each of their members. Play quiet worship music during this activity. When finished say . . .

CC: Now I’d like to invite all the GEMS and their counselors up to the front. We have a special presentation that we’ve created for our families!

A GEMS Litany for their Families!

Girls line up in front. Have the litany printed out on poster board where everyone can read it or on individual sheets of paper. Assign leaders parts before the event so the girls can practice!

You will need a piano or CD so the girls can sing their theme song. If you’re going to have the families sing along with you, you’ll need photocopies of the music or will need to put the lyrics up on the screen.

Each counselor will need: 1) a list of the names of the girls that are in her small group 2) Five things she is thankful for about her group 3) Badge presentations, optional

Leader #1: This year our GEMS theme is *Livin’ the Secret! Having a Thankful Heart*. We learned that God is generous, loving, and good. He is the Giver of all things!

Leader #2: Our gratitude to God should not be measured in comfortable circumstances or earthly possessions. When we have Jesus we can be content because we have all that we need!

GEMS: *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*
Philippians 4:12

Leader #2: When we complain and grumble about God's gifts we snub God. Instead we should accept every one of God's gifts – whether a good gift or a bad gift that He turned to good – with a thankful heart. We are commanded to give thanks to God no matter what our circumstances!

GEMS: *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Leader #3: It's important that we cultivate the holy habit of giving thanks and praise to God for everything!

GEMS: *Give thanks to the LORD: for he is good; his love endures forever.*
1 Chronicles 16:34

Leader #4: We can give thanks to God in our prayers. We can write down things we're thankful for in a journal. We can also give thanks to God in song. We're going to do that right now! Please listen to our GEMS theme song this year, *Livin' the Secret*.

GEMS sing their theme song, Livin' the Secret! Optional: Have the girls sing it the first time and have the families sing with them the second time. You'll need the song up on the screen or photocopies of the song.

Leader #5: When we think about our GEMS season we give thanks to God!

GEMS: Thank you God for our parents, family members, and GEMS Counselors. Above all, we give thanks that God is good and His love for us lasts forever!

When finished have Counselors take turns stepping up to the microphone. Each Counselor:

- 1. Introduces herself.*
- 2. Introduces her small group.*
- 3. Presents her girls the badges they've earned that year (OPTIONAL!)*
- 4. Lists five reasons that she's thankful for the girls that God put in her small group this year.*

The Family Banquet Closing

Girls will need the thank you notes they wrote to their families at a previous GEMS Club meeting. May be wise for their Counselors to store their notes after they're written until this point in The Family Banquet.

CC: As Club Coordinator, I'm so thankful that you have entrusted these dear GEMS into our care every week (or twice a month). Thank you for faithfully bringing them to GEMS Club. Thank you to those of you who volunteered your time, have given to this ministry, brought lunch, carpooled, or whatever special way you helped these girls in this place. Let's thank the families with our applause of appreciation!

A huge thank you also goes to our Counselors! Thank you so much, dear sisters in Christ, for the preparation, prayers, and love you've poured into your position as a GEMS Counselor. You are invaluable to the life of this GEMS Club. I appreciate each one of you! Let's thank the Counselors with our applause of appreciation!

Give thanks to others that helped in the life of your GEMS Club as well . . . pastor(s), volunteers, the international ministry of GEMS Girls' Clubs, and all those who made The Family Banquet possible!

The GEMS wrote special thank you notes to their families. At this time, they'll give you their thank you notes and hugs of thanks for being here tonight!

I sincerely hope that you enjoyed *The Family Banquet* that your daughters prepared for you. Before you leave to return to your homes, let's pray together.

Father God, our hearts burst with gratitude for Who You are and all that You have done for us. Thank you for this special time at GEMS to celebrate. Thank you so much for our families. Please help us here at GEMS and in our homes to always give thanks to You. You are good and Your love lasts forever. Please grant safe travel to these families as they return home. Bless and keep each family gathered here. Be honored and glorified in our homes. In Jesus' Name, Amen.