

# Thanksgiving

## Gratitude Activities

Thanksgiving quickly brings to mind thoughts of savory turkeys, sweet pies, and other beloved holiday side dishes. With all the delicious dishes on the table aside, most people would agree that this holiday is about more than the food. It's really all about gratitude.

When the family gets together for a special holiday like Thanksgiving, there is often a blessing or special grace said before the meal begins. Why stop there? Add another tradition or two from the lists below that focuses on gratitude. Maybe this new tradition will become as special and anticipated as the pumpkin pie.

## Family Activities That Demonstrate Gratitude

### THANKSGIVING SHOW AND TELL

Ask everyone to bring along something that reflects what they are thankful for that year. Then each person, in turn, can share it with the group and tell their story. It might be an item, a photo, a song, or any other item that illustrates their point.

### PASS THE GRATITUDE BASKET

Give everyone a sheet of paper and a pencil. Then ask each person to write down one thing that makes them feel grateful and put it into a basket. Pass the basket around the table and have everyone read another person's paper, followed by the group guessing who wrote it.

### SAY GRACE WITH THANKS

If your family always says grace before beginning Thanksgiving dinner, you can easily create a gratitude-focused tradition by asking each person around the dinner table, in turn, to express their thanks for something that has occurred over the past year.

### READ A STORY ABOUT THANKSGIVING

Read a Thanksgiving book as a group. You can choose whether to read a historically accurate retelling of the original Thanksgiving, fictional stories about the day, or a book about ways for families to give thanks. This could be done as everyone waits for the meal to finish cooking. Or it could be a fun activity in between courses to give everyone a chance to digest. You can take turns reading the story and allow even the younger children a chance to show off their developing reading skills.

### HAVE A THANKSGIVING SING-ALONG

Download and sing some kid-friendly songs about Thanksgiving that include old favorites as well as songs sung by contemporary artists for children.

### PLAY A THANKSGIVING MEMORY GAME

Go around the table and ask each person to name something that makes them feel thankful, but with a catch. Each individual must repeat the thanks of all the people who preceded them before adding their thanks to the list.

### EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR EACH OTHER

Assuming your Thanksgiving table is filled with close friends and family, and not guests who are meeting one another for the first time, go around the table and invite each person to say why they're thankful for the person sitting next to them. It can be the person on their right, left, or even both sides.

### MAKE A THANKSGIVING SCRAPBOOK

Create a holiday scrapbook that will become more cherished as the years pass. Take a blank scrapbook and each year put in photos of the family and friends gathered that year; photos of all of the food served; add notes about special things that happened that day; recipes for the dishes and notes about who created each dish. Ask each person to write in the book what they are thankful for that year.

### REMINISCE ABOUT PREVIOUS YEARS

Take out the Thanksgiving scrapbook and leave it within easy reach for everyone to enjoy reading and discussing favorite memories from past years.



## Kids' Gratitude Activities

### DRAW WHAT YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR

Give the children paper and crayons and invite them to draw pictures of the things that they feel most grateful for this year.

### CREATE A MURAL FULL OF GRATITUDE

Cover a wall with a large piece of kraft paper. Give the children crayons and ask them to draw pictures and words for those things which they are grateful.

### TRACE HAND TURKEYS

Help the children create turkey pictures using their hands. Tell them to write what they are thankful for on each feather, followed by coloring in the turkeys. When the turkeys are finished, the children can stand up and tell the group what's written on their feathers. Put these in your scrapbook as one of the memories for that year.