

THE THANKSGIVING STORY



History • Activities • Literature

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The Thanksgiving Story

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Introduction

In the United States, the fourth Thursday in November is traditionally a time for food and family gatherings. America's Thanksgiving commemorates the Pilgrims' first harvest feast, part of the story of the settling of Plymouth Colony. This was an important period in American history as well as Christian history. The Pilgrims were Bible-reading, praying Christians. They were passionate about their faith and unafraid to voice their beliefs.

The Pilgrims' holy day of thanksgiving was based on a long established religious tradition of giving thanks to God. The feast itself was patterned after the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, a thanksgiving feast in which the Jewish people celebrate the autumn harvest and acknowledge God's provision for them. This feast also remembers Israel's deliverance from Egypt and their subsequent wandering in the wilderness for forty years.

Every autumn in ancient Israel, Jews would gather in Jerusalem for a week-long celebration to commemorate the time God had spent with them in the wilderness, and to give thanks for a good harvest. All year they saved up their tithes, the first born of their flocks and herds, the first sheaves of grain, the first grapes, figs, olives and other crops. Then they brought it all to Jerusalem where everyone cooked and ate in a national celebration of praise.

After surviving an extremely difficult first year in the wilderness of the New World, the Pilgrims of New England had a similar, though much smaller, thanksgiving feast with the intent of expressing their gratitude to God for a bountiful harvest. Like the traditional Jewish festival, it was a time of rejoicing and praise.

The Pilgrims were a courageous group who had strong convictions and determination. They were willing to risk their lives to follow God's Word and not the dictates of the official Church of England. They led the way for a great wave of religious immigrants who came to these shores, and set the stage for freedom of religion in what would one day become the United States of America.

The Pilgrims' Thanksgiving

The Pilgrims weren't the first British colonists to arrive in North America. A permanent English settlement at Jamestown, Virginia had already been founded in 1607. That was preceded by several earlier failed attempts, including the Lost Colony of Roanoke. The Virginians were entrepreneurs and adventurers, but the Pilgrims weren't looking for riches. The Pilgrims wanted religious freedom.

On September 16, 1620, about one hundred Pilgrims left England after several delays in getting started. They sailed across the Atlantic Ocean on the *Mayflower* – a small, uncomfortable cargo ship. The Pilgrims landed at the tip of Cape Cod on November 11.

The land there was unsuitable for farming, so they moved on. The Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth on December 21. The cold and snow interfered with the workers as they tried to construct their homes in the wilderness. Half of the Pilgrims died over the long winter.

On March 16, 1621, an Indian brave walked into the Plymouth settlement. The Pilgrims were surprised to hear him say "Welcome" in English! His name was Samoset and he had learned English from ship captains who explored along the east coast.

Samoset soon returned with another Indian named Squanto, who also spoke English and became a good friend. Squanto showed the Pilgrims which plants were poisonous and which had medicinal powers. He taught them how to grow corn, how to use fish as fertilizer, and how to tap the maple trees for sap.

The Pilgrims had a successful first harvest and they had enough food to put away for the coming winter. A Pilgrim leader, Edward Winslow, recorded: "Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruits of our labors."

The Pilgrims had much to celebrate. They had built a settlement, they had raised crops, and they were at peace with the native people. Pilgrim Governor William Bradford announced that they

would have a harvest feast, and the Pilgrims invited their Indian neighbors to join them.

Chief Massasoit came with ninety of his braves. The Indians showed off their skills with the bow and arrow, and the Pilgrims demonstrated their musket skills. They also played games, ran races, marched, and played drums. Exactly when the festival took place is uncertain, but it is believed to have taken place in mid-October, and it lasted for three days.

The feast had to be eaten outside since the Pilgrims didn't have a building large enough to accommodate so many people. The main course would have consisted of venison (deer meat) and wild fowl (ducks, geese, and turkeys). Additional menu items may have included fish, lobsters, mussels, scallops, clams, corn, beans, squash, pumpkin, crab apples, wild grapes, berries, and nuts.

The following year's harvest was not as plentiful, and the Pilgrims ran short of food after sharing some with newcomers. The third year, spring and summer were hot and dry with crops dying in the fields. Governor Bradford ordered a day of fasting and prayer, and rain came soon afterwards. To celebrate the end of the drought, November 29th of that year was proclaimed a day of thanksgiving, which in this case was actually a formal religious service.

Since the Pilgrims' original feast was never repeated, it can't be called the beginning of a tradition, nor did the Pilgrims call it a Thanksgiving feast. Nevertheless, the 1621 feast has become a model for our own Thanksgiving celebration. An annually celebrated thanksgiving held after the harvest gradually became a custom in many cities and states. This event eventually became an official holiday.

President George Washington proclaimed the first Thanksgiving Day designated by the federal government. New York State made Thanksgiving a legal holiday in 1817. However, it wasn't until 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving Day to be a permanent national holiday.

The Mayflower Compact

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord, King James, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern Parts of Virginia; do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid; And by Virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the General good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due Submission and Obedience.

In Witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, King James of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini, 1620.

<i>John Carver</i>	<i>Stephen Hopkins</i>	<i>John Goodman</i>
<i>William Bradford</i>	<i>Edward Tilley</i>	<i>Degory Priest</i>
<i>Edward Winslow</i>	<i>John Tilley</i>	<i>Thomas Williams</i>
<i>William Brewster</i>	<i>Francis Cooke</i>	<i>Gilbert Winslow</i>
<i>Isaac Allerton</i>	<i>Thomas Rogers</i>	<i>Edmund Margesson</i>
<i>Myles Standish</i>	<i>Thomas Tinker</i>	<i>Peter Brown</i>
<i>John Alden</i>	<i>John Rigsdale</i>	<i>Richard Briterige</i>
<i>Samuel Fuller</i>	<i>Edward Fuller</i>	<i>George Soule</i>
<i>Christopher Martin</i>	<i>John Turner</i>	<i>Richard Clarke</i>
<i>William Mullins</i>	<i>Francis Eaton</i>	<i>Richard Gardiner</i>
<i>William White</i>	<i>James Chilton</i>	<i>John Allerton</i>
<i>Richard Warren</i>	<i>John Crackston</i>	<i>Thomas English</i>
<i>John Howland</i>	<i>John Billington</i>	<i>Edward Dotey</i>
	<i>Moses Fletcher</i>	<i>Edward Leister</i>

Continental Congress Thanksgiving Proclamation (1777)

STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

THE COUNCIL and Assembly of said State, have ordered,-- that the following Proclamation of the Hon'ble Continental CONGRESS, for a General THANKSGIVING throughout the United States, be printed, and sent to the several religious Societies in this State, to be observed, agreeable to the Directions therein.

M. WEARE, President.

A PROCLAMATION
For a General THANKSGIVING,
Throughout the United-States of AMERICA.

IN CONGRESS, November 1, 1777

FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defense and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgments and Offerings, they may join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favor; and their humble and earnest Supplication that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance; That it may please him graciously to afford his Blessing on the Governments of these States respectively, and prosper the public Council of the whole: To inspire our Commanders, both by Land and Sea, and all under them, with that Wisdom and Fortitude which may render them fit Instruments, under the Providence of Almighty GOD, to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human Blessings, INDEPENDENCE and PEACE: That it may please him, to prosper the Trade and Manufactures of the People, and the Labor of the Husbandman, that our Land may yield its Increase: To take Schools and Seminaries of Education, so necessary for cultivating the Principles of true Liberty, Virtue and Piety, under his nurturing Hand; and to prosper the Means of Religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom, which consisteth "in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost."

And it is further recommended, That servile Labor, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion.

Cha. Thomson, Secretary.

Continental Congress Thanksgiving Proclamation (1782)

STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.
IN COMMITTEE of SAFETY,
EXETER, November 1, 1782.

ORDERED, THAT the following Proclamation for a general THANKSGIVING on the twenty-eighth day of November, received from the honorable Continental Congress, be forthwith printed, and sent to the several worshipping Assemblies in this State, to whom it is recommended religiously to observe said day, and to abstain from all servile labour thereon.

M. WEARE, President.
By the United States in Congress assembled.
PROCLAMATION.

IT being the indispensable duty of all Nations, not only to offer up their supplications to ALMIGHTY GOD, the giver of all good, for his gracious assistance in a time of distress, but also in a solemn and public manner to give him praise for his goodness in general, and especially for great and signal interpositions of his providence in their behalf: Therefore the United States in Congress assembled, taking into their consideration the many instances of divine goodness to these States, in the course of the important conflict in which they have been so long engaged; the present happy and promising state of public affairs; and the events of the war, in the course of the year now drawing to a close; particularly the harmony of the public Councils, which is so necessary to the success of the public cause; the perfect union and good understanding which has hitherto subsisted between them and their Allies, notwithstanding the artful and unwearied attempts of the common enemy to divide them; the success of the arms of the United States, and those of their Allies, and the acknowledgment of their independence by another European power, whose friendship and commerce must be of great and lasting advantage to these States:----- Do hereby recommend to the inhabitants of these States in general, to observe, and request the several States to interpose their authority in appointing and commanding the observation of THURSDAY the twenty-eighth day of NOVEMBER next, as a day of solemn THANKSGIVING to GOD for all his mercies: and they do further recommend to all ranks, to testify to their gratitude to GOD for his goodness, by a cheerful obedience of his laws, and by promoting, each in his station, and by his influence, the practice of true and undefiled religion, which is the great foundation of public prosperity and national happiness.

Done in Congress, at Philadelphia, the eleventh day of October, in the year of our LORD one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and of our Sovereignty and Independence, the seventh.

JOHN HANSON, President.
Charles Thomson, Secretary.

George Washington's Thanksgiving Proclamation (1789)

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enable to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted' for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have show kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the 3rd day of October, A.D. 1789.

G. Washington

Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation (1863)

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe had enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years, with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

By The President: Abraham Lincoln
William H. Seward, Secretary of State

The First Thanksgiving

From Stories of the Pilgrims, by Margaret B. Pumphrey (1912)

The summer days were full for the busy Pilgrims. In the fields there were only twenty men and a few boys to do all the work. There was corn to hoe, and there were gardens to weed and care for. When time could be spared from this work, there were barns to be built, and the fort to finish.

The brave men worked from morning till night preparing for the next long winter. The sun and the rain helped them. The crops grew wonderfully, and soon the hillsides were green with growing corn, and wheat, and vegetables.

When the warm days of early summer came, there were sweet wild strawberries on the sunny hills. A little later, groups of boys and girls filled their baskets with wild raspberries and juicy blackberries from the bushes on the edge of the forest. Sugar was too scarce to be used for jellies and preserves, but trays of the wild fruits were placed in the sun to dry for winter use.

The fresh green of the wheat fields began to turn a golden brown. The harvest was ripening. Before long the air rang with the steady beat of the flail, as the Pilgrims threshed their first crop of golden grain.

Soon the corn was ready to be cut and stacked in shocks. Then came the early frosts, and the Pilgrims hurried to gather the sweet wild grapes from vines which grew over bushes and low trees near the brook. The frost had opened the prickly burs and hard brown coats of the nuts, and every day Squanto went with a merry group of boys to gather chestnuts, hickory nuts, beechnuts, and walnuts.

At last the harvest was all gathered in. The Pilgrims rejoiced as they saw the bountiful supply of food for the winter. Some of the golden ears of corn they hung above the fireplace to dry for seed.

The rest they shelled and buried in the ground, as Squanto showed them how to do.

As the evenings grew longer and cooler, the Pilgrims often went in to spend an hour or two at Elder Brewster's. The men piled great logs upon the fire. Then the girls and boys drew the chairs and benches nearer the huge fireplace, and all would sit in the twilight and talk.

Sometimes they spoke of old times in England or Holland, but usually it was of their work and the life in the new home. On this November evening all talked of the harvest which had just been stored away.

"Friends," said Governor Bradford, "God has blessed our summer's work, and has sent us a bountiful harvest. He brought us safe to this new home and protected us through the terrible winter. It is fit we have a time for giving thanks to God for His mercies to us. What say you? Shall we not have a week of feasting and of thanksgiving?"

"A week of thanksgiving!" said the Pilgrims. "Yes, let us rest from our work and spend the time in gladness and thanksgiving. God has been very good to us."

So it was decided that the next week should be set aside for the harvest feast of thanksgiving, and that their Indian friends should be asked to join them.

Early the next morning Squanto was sent to invite Massasoit with his brother and friends to come the following Thursday.

When he returned, a party of men took their guns and went into the woods for two days of hunting. They would need many deer and wild ducks to feed so large a company.

Far away in the forest they heard the sound of wild turkeys. They hurried on in that direction, but the sound seemed as far away as ever.

Squanto knew how to bring the turkeys nearer. He made a kind of whistle out of a reed. When he blew it, it sounded like the cry of a young turkey.

“Squanto blow. Turkeys come. Then Squanto shoot! Ugh!” said the Indian, as he showed the Pilgrims his whistle.

When the men came back from their hunt they brought a bountiful supply of game, There were deer, rabbits, wild ducks, and four large turkeys.

The next few days were busy ones in Plymouth kitchens. There were the great brick ovens to heat, and bread to bake, and game to dress.

“Priscilla shall be chief cook,” said Mistress Brewster. “No one can make such delicious dishes as she.”

As soon as it was light on Wednesday morning, a roaring fire was built in the huge fireplace in Elder Brewster’s kitchen. A great pile of red-hot coals was placed in the brick oven in the chimney.

Then Mary Chilton and Priscilla tied their aprons around them, tucked up their sleeves, and put white caps over their hair. Their hands fairly flew as they measured and sifted the flour, or rolled and cut cookies and tarts.

Over at another table Remember Allerton and Constance Hopkins washed and chopped dried fruits for pies and puddings. Out on the sunny door stone, Love Brewster and Francis Billington sat cracking nuts and picking out the plump kernels for the cakes Priscilla was making. What a merry place the big kitchen was!

When the oven was hot, the coals were drawn out, and the long baking pans were put in. Soon sweet, spicy odors filled the room, and on the long shelves were rows and rows of pies, tarts, and little nut cakes.

In the afternoon all of the girls and boys took their baskets or pails and went to the beach to dig clams. "Clams will make a delicious broth. We shall need hundreds of them," said Priscilla.



The girls and boys went to the beach to dig clams

While they were gone, some of the men brought boards, hammers, and saws and built two long tables out-of-doors near the common-house. Here the men would eat, and a table would be spread in the elder's house for the women and children.

It was Thursday morning, and the Pilgrims were up early to prepare for the guests they had invited to the feast of thanksgiving. The air was mild and pleasant, and a soft purple haze lay upon field and wood.

"We could not have had a more beautiful day for our feast," thought Miles Standish, as he climbed the hill to fire the sunrise gun.

Just then wild yells and shouts told the astonished Pilgrims that their guests had arrived. Down the hill from the forest came Massasoit, his brother, and nearly a hundred of his friends, dressed in their finest skins, and in holiday paint and feathers.

The captain and a number of other men went out to welcome the Indians, and the women hurried to prepare breakfast for them.



Squanto and John Alden built a big fire near the brook, and soon the clam broth was simmering in the great kettle.

The roll of the drum called all to prayers, for the Pilgrims never began a day without asking God's blessing upon it. "The white men talk to the Great Spirit," Squanto explained to Chief Massasoit. "They thank Him for His good gifts." The Indians seemed to understand, and listened quietly to the prayers.

Then all sat down at the long tables. The women were soon busy passing great bowls of clam broth to each hungry guest. There were piles of brown bread and sweet cakes; there were dishes of turnips and boiled meat, and later, bowls of pudding made from Indian corn.

While they were eating, one of the Indians brought a great basket filled with popped corn and poured it out upon the table before Elder Brewster. The Pilgrims had never seen pop corn before.

They filled a large bowl with this new dainty and sent it in to the children's table.

When breakfast was over, there was another service of thanksgiving, led by Elder Brewster. Then Governor Bradford took his friends to the grassy common where they would have games.

A number of little stakes were driven into the ground, and here several groups of Indians and Pilgrims played quoits, the Indians often throwing the greater number of rings over the stakes.

Then the savages entertained their friends with some wonderful tests in running and jumping. After this Governor Bradford invited the Indians to sit down on the grass and watch the soldiers drill on the common.

The Indians sat down, not knowing what to expect next, for they had never before seen soldiers drill. Suddenly they heard the sound of trumpets, and the roll of drums. Down the hill marched the little army of only nineteen men, the flag of old England waving above their heads.

To right and to left they marched, in single file or by twos and threes, then at a word from the captain, fired their muskets into the air. The Indians were not expecting this, and some sprang to their feet in alarm.

Again came the sharp reports of the muskets. Many of the Indians looked frightened. "Have the white men brought us here to destroy us?" they asked.

"The white men are our friends; they will not harm us," answered Massasoit.

Hardly had he finished speaking when there came a deep roar from the cannon on the fort. The sound rolled from hill to hill. At this the Indians became more and more uneasy. They did not enjoy the way the white men entertained their guests.

Some thought of an excuse to leave the village. "We will go into the forest and hunt," they said. "We will bring deer for the white men's feast."

Captain Standish smiled as he saw the Indians start for the forest. "They do not like the thunder of our cannon," he said.

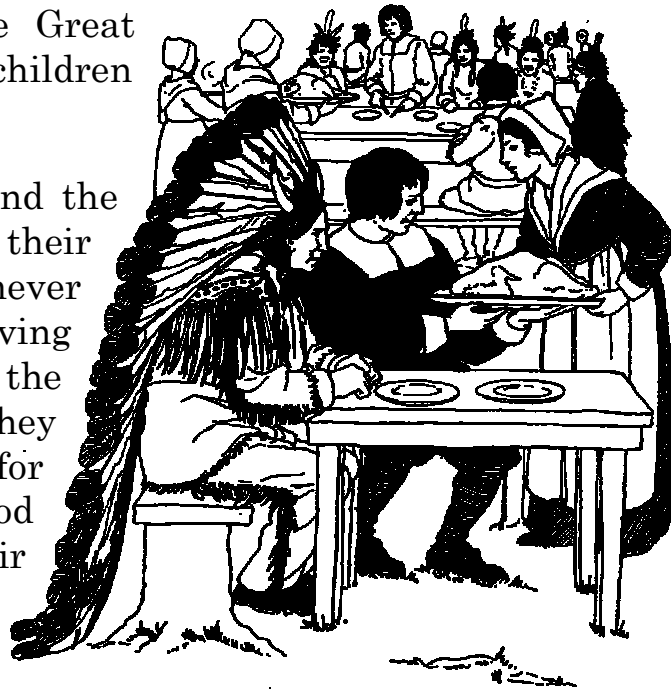
But the next morning the five Indians returned, each bringing a fine deer.

Saturday was the last day of the feast. How busy the women were preparing this greatest dinner! Of course the men and boys helped too. They dressed the game, brought water from the brook, and wood for the fire.

There were turkeys, stuffed with beechnuts, browning before the fire. There were roasts of all kinds, and a wonderful stew made of birds and other game.

And you should have seen the great dishes of purple grapes, the nuts, and the steaming puddings. The table seemed to groan under its load of good things. The Indians had never seen such a feast. "Ugh!" said Massasoit, as he ate the puffy dumplings in Priscilla's stew. "Ugh! The Great Spirit loves his white children best!"

So the happy day ended, and the Indians returned to their wigwams. The Pilgrims never forgot their first Thanksgiving day. Each year when the harvests were gathered, they would set aside a day for thanking God for his good gifts, and for years their Indian friends joined in this feast.



Pilgrim Timeline

Plymouth Colony existed from 1620 until 1691 when it was incorporated into the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Do you know what else was happening during this time?

The Dutch artists Rembrandt and Vermeer were painting masterpieces.



Rembrandt in 1632



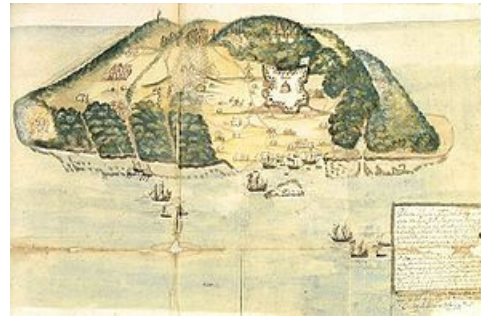
Vermeer, circa 1656

Musketeers were guarding King Louis of France.



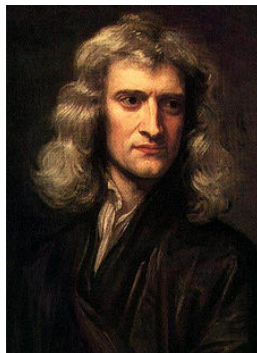
Illustration by Maurice Leloir

Pirates of all nationalities were using Tortuga as their base of operations in the Caribbean.



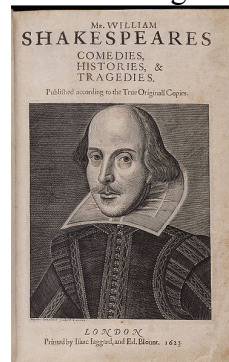
17th century map of Tortuga Island

Isaac Newton was making scientific discoveries.



Isaac Newton in 1689

Shakespeare's *First Folio* edition was published in England (1623).



Shakespeare died in 1616

Pilgrim Trivia

The Pilgrims were known as “Separatists” because they wanted to separate themselves from the Church of England. Persecuted in England, the Pilgrims lived in Holland for a while before coming to America. A pilgrim is one who goes on a long journey of faith.

There are two existing firsthand accounts for the events of Autumn 1621 in Plymouth— *Mourt’s Relation* by Edward Winslow, a Pilgrim leader; and *Of Plymouth Plantation* by William Bradford, Governor of the Plymouth Colony for 33 years.

Four adult Pilgrim women (the only women left after the terrible first winter) were probably in charge of all the cooking at the first harvest feast, serving about 22 Pilgrim men and 90 Indian braves. 13 young children and 14 teenage Pilgrims were also present.

Pilgrims did not use forks; they only used spoons, knives and their fingers. They used napkins to pick up hot pieces of food and to wipe their hands. Pilgrims didn’t wash their wooden bowls – they just wiped them out. They used stale bread as plates – then they could eat the plates! They would pass one or two cups around for everyone to drink from. Children usually stood at the table and shared a dish.

The Pilgrims used the Julian Calendar, also known the Old Style, which at that time was ten days behind the Gregorian Calendar.

The Pilgrims spoke 17th century English, which was different from what we speak today. Spelling rules were not standardized in those days, and everyone wrote words phonetically as they pleased. In early colony documents, Plymouth was spelled several ways including “Plimoth,” “Plimouth,” and “Plymoth.”

The Pilgrims were intelligent and had an unusually high rate of literacy. Even farmers and women could sign their names, and most could read (a rarity back then). Pilgrim parents taught their children how to read and write. Despite a lack of formal schooling, New Englanders led the colonies in literacy rates for many years.

Thanksgiving Links

Pilgrim Hall Museum - www.pilgrimhall.org

The oldest public museum in continuous operation in the United States is the Pilgrim Hall Museum located in historic Plymouth, Massachusetts. Built in 1824, Pilgrim Hall is America's largest and most significant museum of Pilgrim possessions. Some of the historical treasures held at the Pilgrim Hall Museum include: William Bradford's Bible; Myles Standish's sword; the original portrait of Pilgrim Edward Winslow; the cradle of New England's first born, Peregrine White; the great chair of William Brewster; and the earliest sampler made in America. The official website of the Pilgrim Hall Museum contains up to date information on the Pilgrim Story and the First Thanksgiving.

Plimoth Plantation - www.plimoth.org

This 17th-century living history museum in Plymouth, Massachusetts is home to a 1627 Pilgrim village, a Wampanoag homesite, and a full-scale reproduction of the *Mayflower*. Their website includes virtual tours, educational information about the colonists and the Indians, how to talk like a Pilgrim, kids pages, and more. The Online Learning Center has an interactive feature, "You are the Historian: Investigating the First Thanksgiving."

The Mayflower Society - www.themayflowersociety.com

The General Society of Mayflower Descendants operates the Mayflower Society House Museum. Their primary interest is educating people about the role of the Pilgrims in the early history and development of what would become the United States of America.

Mayflower Web Pages - mayflowerhistory.com

Although most of the Mayflower web pages are written for historians and genealogists, you can find a lot of useful information in the History section which is more oriented towards teachers and students. The site contains short biographies on every *Mayflower* passenger. Higher level students should be introduced to the Pilgrims' writings, found under the Full Text Primary Sources link. The all-time classic is Governor William Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation*, his journal of the first days of the Pilgrims in Plymouth Colony which is popular at the high school and college level. Students will also enjoy reading the first-hand explorer-style journal account in *Mourt's Relation*.

Pilgrim Fathers Origins - www.pilgrimfathersorigins.org

A website celebrating the origins of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Annie's Thanksgiving Games & Activities -

<http://www.annieshomepage.com/thanksgivinggames.html>

Make Faith Your Focus This Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving Reading List -

<http://www.homeschoolpatriot.com/books.html>

This reading list includes a section of Pilgrim books.

Thanksgiving Films -

http://www.knowledgehouse.info/films_thanksgiving.html

A list of family-friendly movies with Thanksgiving themes.



Thanksgiving Poems & Prayers

The Pilgrims liked to recite prayers and psalms. Likewise, many poets and hymnists have celebrated the season with memorable verse. Read aloud one or more of the following to your family on Thanksgiving, or try writing your own Thanksgiving poetry.

“Lord of the earth and seas and skies,
Thou Source Supreme of all supplies,
accept our praise for mercies given,
for mercies shewn on Earth from Heaven.”

*~A Thanksgiving Hymn to Almighty God
for His Blessing on the Harvest~*

We Gather Together

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
He chastens and hastens his will to make known;
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing,
Sing praises to his name: He forgets not his own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
Ordaining, maintaining his kingdom devine;
So from the beginning the fight we were winning;
Thou, Lord, wast at our side, All glory be thine!

We all do extol thee, thou leader triumphant,
And pray that thou still our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation escape tribulation;
Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!

*~Adrianus Valerius (c. 1575-1625)
~Translated by Theodore Baker (1851-1934)*

Thanksgiving

“Have you cut the wheat in the blowing fields,
The barley, the oats, and the rye,
The golden corn and the pearly rice?
For the winter days are nigh.”

“We have reaped them all from shore to shore,
And the grain is safe on the threshing floor.”

“Have you gathered the berries from the vine,
And the fruit from the orchard trees?
The dew and the scent from the roses and thyme,
In the hive of the honeybees?”

“The peach and the plum and the apple are ours,
And the honeycomb from the scented flowers.”

“The wealth of the snowy cotton field
And the gift of the sugar cane,
The savory herb and the nourishing root—
There has nothing been given in vain.”

“We have gathered the harvest from shore to shore,
And the measure is full and brimming o'er.”

“Then lift up the head with a song!
And lift up the hand with a gift!
To the ancient Giver of all
The spirit in gratitude lift!
For the joy and the promise of spring,
For the hay and the clover sweet,
The barley, the rye, and the oats,
The rice, and the corn, and the wheat,
The cotton, and sugar, and fruit,
The flowers and the fine honeycomb,
The country so fair and so free,
The blessings and glory of home.”

~Amelia A. Barr

The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers

The breaking waves dash'd high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches toss'd;

And the heavy night hung dark,
The hills and waters o'er,
When a band of exiles moor'd their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,
They, the true-hearted, came;
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear;-
They shook the depths of the desert gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard and the sea:
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free!

The ocean eagle soar'd
From his nest by the white wave's foam
And the rocking pines of the forest roar'd-
This was their welcome home...

What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trode.
They have left unstained, what there they found
Freedom to worship God.

~Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835)

Thanksgiving Day

Over the river and through the wood,
To grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river and through the wood--
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes
And bites the nose,
As over the ground we go.

Over the river and through the wood,
To have first-rate play.
Hear the bells ring,
"Ting-a-ling-ding!"
Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!

Over the river and through the wood,
And straight through the barn-yard gate.
We seem to go
Extremely slow--
It is so hard to wait!

Over the river and through the wood--
Now grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun!
Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!

~Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880)

The Pumpkin (Verses 3-5)

Ah! on Thanksgiving day, when from East and from West,
From North and from South comes the pilgrim and guest;
When the gray-haired New Englander sees round his board
The old broken links of affection restored;
When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,
And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before;
What moistens the lip and what brightens the eye,
What calls back the past, like the rich Pumpkin pie?

Oh, fruit loved of boyhood! the old days recalling,
When wood-grapes were purpling and brown nuts were falling!
When wild, ugly faces we carved in its skin,
Glaring out through the dark with a candle within!
When we laughed round the corn-heap, with hearts all in tune,
Our chair a broad pumpkin,---our lantern the moon,
Telling tales of the fairy who travelled like steam
In a pumpkin-shell coach, with two rats for her team!

Then thanks for thy present! none sweeter or better
E'er smoked from an oven or circled a platter!
Fairer hands never wrought at a pastry more fine,
Brighter eyes never watched o'er its baking than thine!
And the prayer, which my mouth is too full to express,
Swells my heart that thy shadow may never be less,
That the days of thy lot may be lengthened below,
And the fame of thy worth like a pumpkin-vine grow,
And thy life be as sweet, and its last sunset sky
Golden-tinted and fair as thy own Pumpkin pie!

~John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

Come, Ye Thankful People Come

Come ye thankful people come,
Raise the song of harvest home!
All is safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin;
God our Maker, doth provide
For our wants to be supplied:
Come to God's own temple, come,
Raise the song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field
Fruit unto his praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown
Unto joy or sorrow grown;
First the blade, and then the ear,
Then the full corn shall appear;
Lord of the harvest! grant that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come,
And shall take his harvest home;
From his field shall in that day
All offenses purge away,
Give his angels charge at last
In the fire the tares to cast;
But the fruitful ears to store
In his garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come,
Bring thy final harvest home;
Gather thou thy people in,
Free from sorrow, free from sin,
There, forever purified,
in thy presence to abide;
Come, with all thine angels, come,
Raise the glorious harvest home.

~Henry Alford (1810-1871)

When the Frost is on the Punkin

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover over-head!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the celler-floor in red and yeller heaps;
And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With their mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage, too!
I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could be
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on *me*—
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

~James Whitcomb Riley (1849-1916)

Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to God above,
Thanks for expressions of His love,
Seen in the book of nature, grand
Taught by His love on every hand.

Let us be thankful in our hearts,
Thankful for all the truth imparts,
For the religion of our Lord,
All that is taught us in His word.

Let us be thankful for a land,
That will for such religion stand;
One that protects it by the law,
One that before it stands in awe.

Thankful for all things let us be,
Though there be woes and misery;
Lessons they bring us for our good-
Later 'twill all be understood.

Thankful for peace o'er land and sea,
Thankful for signs of liberty,
Thankful for homes, for life and health,
Pleasure and plenty, fame and wealth.

Thankful for friends and loved ones, too,
Thankful for all things, good and true,
Thankful for harvest in the fall,
Thankful to Him who gave it all.

~Lizelia Augusta Jenkins Moorer

The Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving

It may be I am getting old and like too much to dwell
Upon the days of bygone years, the days I loved so well;
But thinking of them now I wish somehow that I could know
A simple old Thanksgiving Day, like those of long ago,
When all the family gathered round a table richly spread,
With little Jamie at the foot and grandpa at the head,
The youngest of us all to greet the oldest with a smile,
With mother running in and out and laughing all the while.

It may be I'm old-fashioned, but it seems to me to-day
We're too much bent on having fun to take the time to pray;
Each little family grows up with fashions of its own;
It lives within a world itself and wants to be alone.
It has its special pleasures, its circle, too, of friends;
There are no get-together days; each one his journey wends,
Pursuing what he likes the best in his particular way,
Letting the others do the same upon Thanksgiving Day.

I like the olden way the best, when relatives were glad
To meet the way they used to do when I was but a lad;
The old home was a rendezvous for all our kith and kin,
And whether living far or near they all came trooping in
With shouts of "Hello, daddy!" as they fairly stormed the place
And made a rush for mother, who would stop to wipe her face
Upon her gingham apron before she kissed them all,
Hugging them proudly to her breast, the grownups and the small.

Then laughter rang throughout the home, and, Oh, the jokes they told;
From Boston, Frank brought new ones, but father sprang the old;
All afternoon we chatted, telling what we hoped to do,
The struggles we were making and the hardships we'd gone through;
We gathered round the fireside. How fast the hours would fly--
It seemed before we'd settled down 'twas time to say good-bye.
Those were the glad Thanksgivings, the old-time families knew
When relatives could still be friends and every heart was true.

~Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)

Now Thank We All our God

Now thank we all our God,
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
Has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us still in grace,
And guide us when perplexed;
And free us from all ills,
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given;
The Son, and him who reigns
With them in highest heaven;
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

~Martin Rinkart (1586-1649)

~Translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

Father We Thank Thee

For flowers that bloom about our feet,
Father, we thank Thee.

For tender grass so fresh, so sweet,
Father, we thank Thee.

For the song of bird and hum of bee,
For all things fair we hear or see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

For blue of stream and blue of sky,
Father, we thank Thee.
For pleasant shade of branches high,
Father, we thank Thee.
For fragrant air and cooling breeze,
For beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

For this new morning with its light,
Father, we thank Thee.
For rest and shelter of the night,
Father, we thank Thee
For health and food, for love and friends,
For everything Thy goodness sends,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

~Attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson

America the Beautiful

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!
O beautiful for pilgrim feet, whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat across the wilderness!
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law!

~Katharine Lee Bates

Giving Thanks

For the hay and the corn and the wheat that is reaped,
For the labor well done, and the barns that are heaped,
For the sun and the dew and the sweet honeycomb,
For the rose and the song and the harvest brought home--
Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving!

For the trade and the skill and the wealth in our land,
For the cunning and strength of the workingman's hand,
For the good that our artists and poets have taught,
For the friendship that hope and affection have brought--
Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving!

For the homes that with purest affection are blest,
For the season of plenty and well-deserved rest,
For our country extending from sea unto sea;
The land that is known as the "Land of the Free"--
Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving!

~Author Unknown

A Traditional Indian Prayer

The friendly, helpful natives played a vital role in the ultimate success of the Pilgrim colony. Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoag tribe, signed a treaty with the Pilgrims that was never broken. As a result, the two groups enjoyed a peaceful coexistence.

Since Indians are so closely associated with Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving, it may be appropriate to offer a traditional Indian message of thanks. The following verse is based on a good morning prayer spoken by the Iroquois Indians of New York State and Canada, which is recited at ceremonial, governmental, and social gatherings. The prayer normally follows a certain order, divided into elements of the earth, elements of the sky, and spiritual elements. Each speaker states the prayer in his or her own words.

Giving Thanks (a poem based on an Iroquois Indian prayer)

We give thanks for all of the blessings we receive in God's glorious creation:
Thank you, earth, for providing all of the resources that we need.
Thank you, clear blue waters, for quenching the thirst of every living thing.
Thank you, green grasses, for the softness that feels so good against our bare feet.
Thank you, grains and beans, for satisfying our hunger and nourishing our bodies.
Thank you, flowers and fruits, for your beautiful colors and delicious sweetness.
Thank you, medicinal herbs, for healing us when we are feeling sick.
Thank you, all creatures great and small, for being part of the web of life.
Thank you, trees, for the shade of your leaves and the warmth of your wood.
Thank you, gentle breeze, for refreshing the air that we breathe.
Thank you, clouds, for bringing rain to help all living things grow.
Thank you, sun, for shining your light and brightening our days.
Thank you, moon, for watching over our sleeping children.
Thank you, stars, for sparkling in the night and guiding us home.
And most of all, thank you God, creator of everything,
For these wonderful gifts, and especially for the gift of life.

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Did You Know...? The term "Native American" may be politically correct; however, most Indians actually prefer the term "American Indian," because anyone born in America is technically a native American. Many Indian organizations (including the American Indian Movement, National Museum of the American Indian, and the National Congress of American Indians) use the term "American Indian."

Thanksgiving Quotations

Here are some quotes about thanksgiving and thankfulness. Quotations can provide inspiration for craft projects and greeting cards; or use as copywork and memory verses.

“I thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes.” ~*e.e. cummings*

“I awoke this morning with devout thanksgiving for my friends, the old and new.”
~*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.” ~*Cicero*

“Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.” ~*Aesop*

“O Lord that lends me life, lend me a heart replete with thankfulness.” ~*Shakespeare*

“Thanksgiving Day comes, by statute, once a year; to the honest man it comes as frequently as the heart of gratitude will allow.” ~*Edward Sandford Martin*

“If I have enjoyed the hospitality of the Host of this universe, Who daily spreads a table in my sight, surely I cannot do less than acknowledge my dependence.” ~*G.A. Johnston Ross*

“For, after all, put it as we may to ourselves, we are all of us from birth to death guests at a table which we did not spread. The sun, the earth, love, friends, our very breath are parts of the banquet.... Shall we think of the day as a chance to come nearer to our Host, and to find out something of Him who has fed us so long?” ~*Rebecca Harding Davis*

“Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving.” ~*W.T. Purkiser*

“If we meet someone who owes us thanks, we right away remember that. But how often do we meet someone to whom we owe thanks without remembering that?” ~*Goethe*

“The unthankful heart... discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings!” ~*Henry Ward Beecher*

“Thanksgiving Day is a jewel, to set in the hearts of honest men; but be careful that you do not take the day, and leave out the gratitude.” ~*E.P. Powell*

“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, ‘thank you,’ that would suffice.”
~*Meister Eckhart*

Thanksgiving Scriptures

You can use these inspirational Bible quotes at home or church, in greeting cards, craft projects, copywork, or for memory verses. The scriptures were taken from the Geneva Bible also known as “the Pilgrim Bible.” The Geneva Bible is one of the most historically significant English translations, preceding the King James version by 51 years as well as being history’s first study bible. William Shakespeare, John Bunyan, and many others used the Geneva Bible. But the official English church disagreed with the Geneva Bible’s commentary and that’s why the King James Bible was published in 1611. Since the Geneva Bible was taken aboard the *Mayflower*, it shaped early American Colonial life and culture more than any other.

1 Chronicles 29:11-13 - “Thine, O Lord, is greatness and power, and glory, and victory and praise: for all that is in heaven and in earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou excellest as head over all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and strength, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18 - “In all things give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you.”

2 Corinthians 9:15 - “Thanks therefore be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

Colossians 3:17 - “And whatsoever ye shall do, in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God even the Father by him.”

Philippians 4:5-7 - “Let your patient mind be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be nothing careful, but in all things let your requests be showed unto God in prayer, and supplication with giving of thanks. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall preserve your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

Psalms 100 - “Sing ye loud unto the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before him with joyfulness. Know ye that even the Lord is God: he hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with praise, and into his courts with rejoicing: praise him and bless his Name. For the Lord is good: his mercy is everlasting, and his truth is from generation to generation.”

Psalms 103:2-5 - “My soul, praise thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits. Which forgiveth all thine iniquity, and healeth all thine infirmities. Which redeemeth thy life from the grave, and crowneth thee with mercy and compassions. Which satisfieth thy mouth with good things: and thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

Psalms 69:30 - “I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving.”

Revelation 7:12 - “Saying, Amen. Praise and glory, and wisdom, and thanks, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forevermore, Amen.”

Thanksgiving Picture Study

Compare and contrast these two paintings. How are they alike and different?



The First Thanksgiving 1621, by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (1863-1930), an American painter known for his idealized portrayals of famous moments from American history.

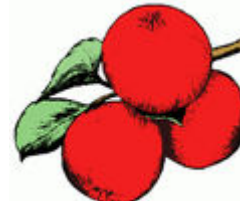
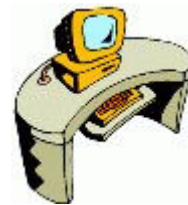


The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth, by Jennie A. Brownscombe (1850-1936), an American painter renowned for her historical scenes of Colonial America.

How does your family's Thanksgiving dinner compare to these classic paintings?

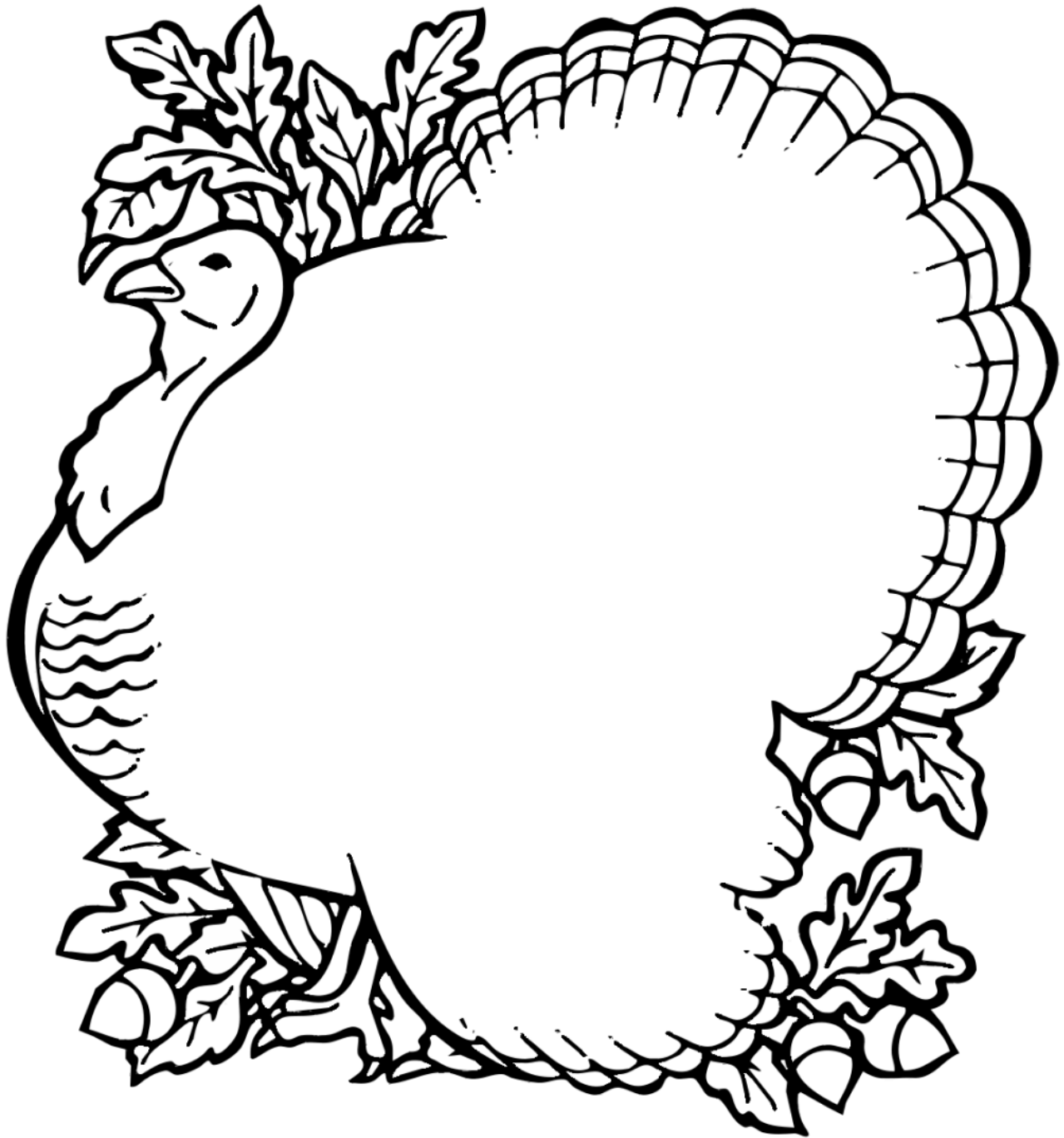
That was Then... This is Now

Put an X over those things we have today that the Pilgrims did not have.



Name _____ Date _____

Color the Turkey



Word Study: Cornucopia

CORNUCOPIA

Pronunciation: corn-uh-COPE-ee-uh
corn-oo-COPE-ee-uh

Plural: cornuacopiae

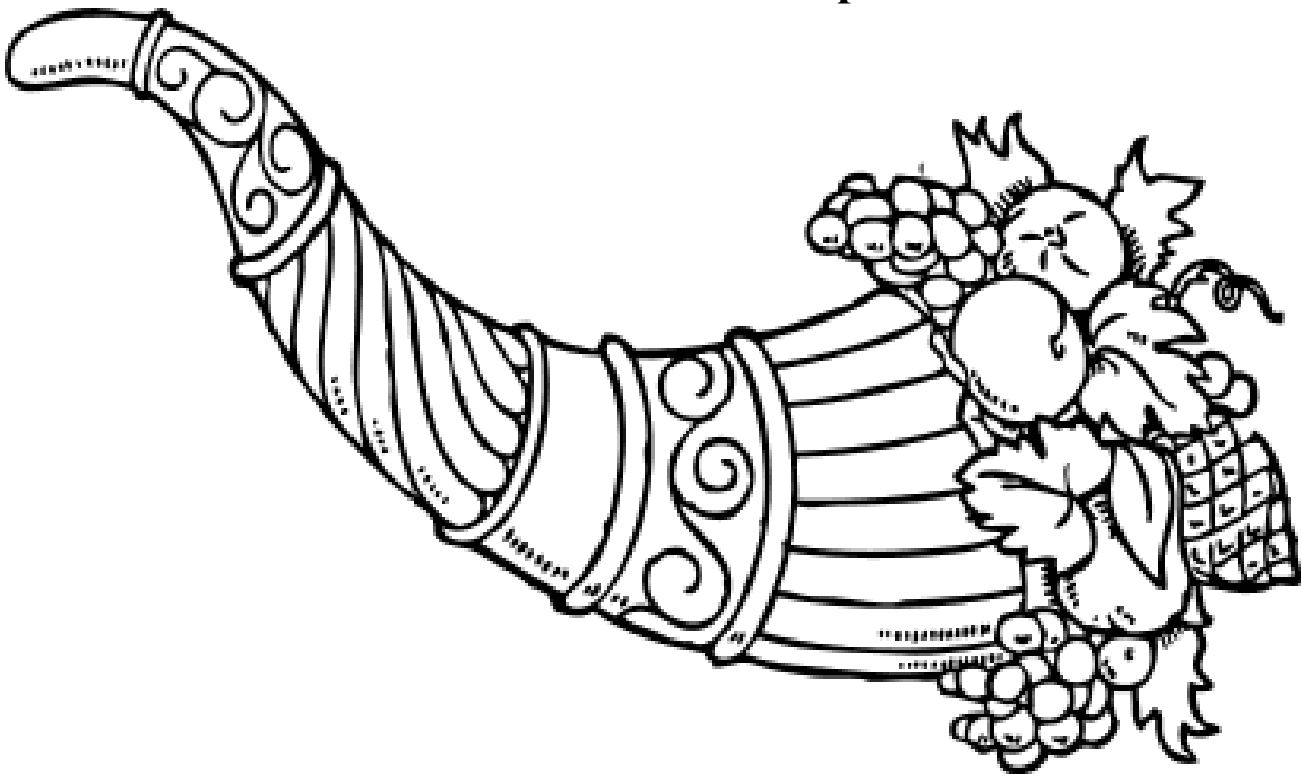
Noun

Latin: *Cornu* (horn) *Copiae* (plenty)



The cornucopia dates back to Greek mythology as a symbol of prosperity. The mythical “horn of plenty” was originally a goat’s horn overflowing with fruits, flowers and grains; or full of whatever its owner wanted. The term gradually came to mean any hollow horn- or cone-shaped object filled with an abundance of edible or useful things. In North America, the cornucopia is often associated with Thanksgiving and the harvest. In modern depictions, the cornucopia is typically a hollow, horn-shaped wicker basket filled with various kinds of festive fruits and vegetables.

Color the Cornucopia



How many words you can make out of the letters in this word?

THANKSGIVING

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 24. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 25. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 26. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 27. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 28. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 29. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 30. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 31. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 32. _____ |
| 13. _____ | 33. _____ |
| 14. _____ | 34. _____ |
| 15. _____ | 35. _____ |
| 16. _____ | 36. _____ |
| 17. _____ | 37. _____ |
| 18. _____ | 38. _____ |
| 19. _____ | 39. _____ |
| 20. _____ | 40. _____ |

Thanksgiving Acrostic

T is for tasting turkey together this Thursday.
H is for home, hearth and hugs, all warm and cozy.
A is for apples and pumpkins in abundance.
N is for nice neighbors we invited to join us.
K is for kitchen kettle corn cooked with kindness.
S is for silverware polished to shininess.
G is for grandma and grandpa that we love so much.
I is for "I obey God who rules from above us."
V is for vision kept clear and held in prayer.
I is for the immortal inheritance we share.
N is for November, the month of Thanksgiving.
G is for God to whom we give thanks for our blessings.
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Write a poem using the following letters as the start of each line, or just think of something you are thankful for that begins with each of these letters:

T
H
A
N
K
S
G
I
V
I
N
G

I Thank God For... (Make Your Own List)

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
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- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



Thanksgiving Activities

Read one of the historic Thanksgiving Proclamations to your family. Memorize and recite a verse or prayer of thanksgiving. Write an essay or poem titled "What I'm Thankful for on Thanksgiving." Make a list of things that you are thankful for. Younger children can create a collage of things they're thankful for by cutting pictures from magazines and mounting them on poster board. Design Thanksgiving placemats using construction paper decorated with pictures and quotes or Bible verses. This fun, creative project may spark an interesting conversation at the dinner table.



The Thanksgiving holiday is a good opportunity to encourage everyone to reflect on what they are grateful for. As your family sits down to a meal together, have each person take a turn mentioning something for which they are thankful. How many times can you go around the table in this way? If anyone has trouble thinking of something, just ask them to imagine things disappearing from the room, one at a time, never to return. Picturing what it would be like to do without certain things may inspire a renewed appreciation for what they have.

Giving Thanks

Being thankful is not just for Thanksgiving – it's always in season. Remembering to say "thank you" is a part of good training. More than just common courtesy, expressing gratitude is a critical part of character development, as you learn to appreciate the world and the people around you.

Throughout history, people have set aside special days for giving thanks. The Greeks, Romans, Hebrews, Chinese, Egyptians, and American Indians all held thanksgiving celebrations following bountiful harvests. Many countries around the world have a Thanksgiving Day. The date and customs vary from place to place, but the desire to reflect on life's blessings remains the same.

Sometimes going "without" can serve as a reminder to give thanks where thanks are due. After an extremely difficult year, the Pilgrims still recognized the providence of God in their lives. This goes to show that gratitude is more than simply enjoying the good things in life. Has your family suffered hardships that have cultivated perseverance and character? Thanksgiving is a great time to remember that there is always something to be thankful for. Start by giving thanks for each member of your family!

Even if there are things that you feel grieved and worried about, there are other things for which you can be thankful. At such times, it's more important than ever to count your blessings and to be grateful for what you have. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds." (Philippians 4:6-7)

Just take a look around. Blessings abound – the playful laughter of children, the beauty of a glorious sunset, the comfort of a warm bed at night. There are many things to be thankful for, from the most significant to the simplest things in life. Small and great, there are plenty of reasons for all of us to look up at Heaven and say to our Creator, "Thank you." This Thanksgiving, I hope you will pause to give thanks for all of these things and more.

Thanksgiving for Life

“Thanksgiving is a time when the world gets to see just how blessed and how workable the Christian system is. The emphasis is not on giving or buying, but on being thankful and expressing that appreciation to God and to one another.” ~John Clayton

The Thanksgiving holiday reminds us to pause and express gratitude. But for Christians, Thanksgiving is more than just a special day – it’s a way of life. The Bible urges us to live a life of thanksgiving every day. Being grateful to God for His blessings is truly a mark of the Christian. After all, God has given us an abundance of gifts. The very breath you are breathing right now is a gift from Him. Every moment of life is something for which we should be thankful. Not that bad things don’t happen, but God uses everything to ultimately work for our good. The most amazing thing God has done for us is sending Jesus, because every good thing we receive from God is a gift paid for on the cross. Do you know what that means? Keep reading to find out!

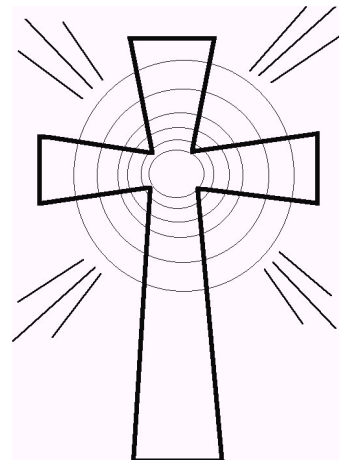
Check yourself – do you think you’re a good person? Are you sure? Let’s see if it’s true! Have you ever told a lie? (The Bible warns that the fate of all liars is “the lake of fire.”) Did you ever take anything that didn’t belong to you regardless of value? (That’s stealing and it makes you a thief.) Do you ever use God’s name as a cuss word or take His name in vain? (Like saying “Oh my G--!”) Have you ever hated someone? (Jesus said that’s the same as murder in your heart.) Do you ever feel jealous or greedy? God tells us NOT to do these things! It’s written in the Ten Commandments – ten rules He gave us to live by – and it’s for our own good. If you break any of His commandments (we’ve only looked at half of them; see Exodus 20), then you are guilty of sinning against a great and mighty God. One day sooner or later God will judge you; your sin cannot be hidden from Him, no matter how long ago it was. The place of punishment is Hell – and it lasts forever.

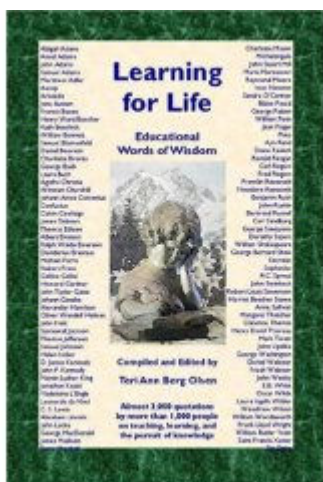
But that’s not God’s will. God created you and He loves you so much that He sent Jesus, His only Son, to die on the cross and take your punishment onto Himself. In other words, you broke God’s Law, and Jesus paid your fine. Then Jesus rose from the dead, defeating death forever. If you turn from your sins in sorrow toward God for what you’ve done, and put your full trust in Jesus to save you, then God will forgive all of your sins and you will have everlasting life with Him in Heaven.

Do you want to be saved? Pray to God right now telling Him you are truly sorry and want to place your faith in Jesus today. Say something like this: “Jesus, I believe that you are the Son of God and that you died on the cross for my sins. I want to know you and to follow you. Please forgive me, come into my heart and make me a new person in you. Thank you! Amen.”

Read the Bible every day starting with the Gospel of John, and obey what you read. When you put God first in your life, you have God’s promise that He will never leave you.

Now THAT’s something to BE THANKFUL FOR!!!





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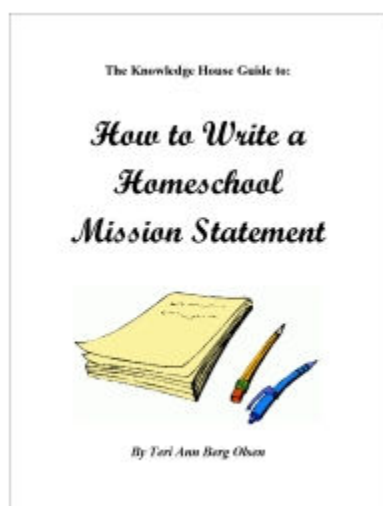
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