

Thanksgiving Family Time

“Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”

Psalm 106:1

Books

Thank You, God by J. Bradley Wigger

Porcupine's Pie by Laura Renauld

Squanto and the Miracle of Thanksgiving by Eric Metaxas

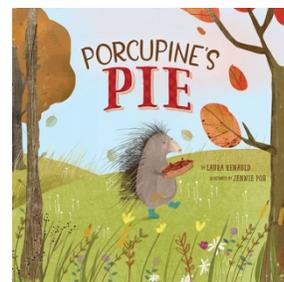
A Very Thankful Prayer by Bonnie Rickner Jensen

A Pumpkin Prayer by Amy Parker

God Gave Us Thankful Hearts by Lisa Tawn Bergen

Thanksgiving in the Woods by Phyllis Alsdurf

Thankful Together by Holly Davis



Activities

Thankful Turkeys

A Venhousen Family Tradition

As we think about thanksgiving, the yummy food and special time with family & friends, may we also prepare our hearts. Let's spend time in the coming weeks giving thanks to God for His many blessings.

In our family, we have made thankful turkeys. We add feathers to our turkeys each day as we reflect on the many things we have to be thankful for! It's a fun way to involve the whole family and thank God for His provisions.



Thanksgiving Trees

A Hackert House Activity

At our house we like to set up a little evergreen tree at the start of November (it is fake so that it can stay up through December). My kids cut out paper leaves, write something they are thankful for on the leaves, and hang them on the tree to remember and reflect. If you do not want to use an evergreen tree you could use a large branch or make a tree out of construction paper to hang on the wall.



Turkey Crafts

You can't go wrong with a handprint turkey!

For more turkey crafts visit:

20 Easy and Fun Turkey Crafts for Kids of All Ages

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/thanksgiving-ideas/g33638067/turkey-crafts/>



Prayer

Below is a poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson called *We Thank Thee*. It is a poem that reads like a prayer. I have a couple of ideas of how you can share this poem with your family. You might come up with more!

-Go on a nature walk and point out or collect the items in the poem. Thank God for His amazing creativity in the world!

-Print out the poem, lay out colored pencils or markers, and have everybody illustrate the words they see in the poem that are important to them (items they are thankful for). Share your artwork with your family members.

-As a family or individually, write your own poem prayer of things you are thankful to God for.

We Thank Thee

By: Ralph Waldo Emerson

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.

Zoom Your Family Prayer

Not gathering with the extended family this year? Start your meal with a Zoom (or Google Meet or FaceTime) prayer time with everyone in their different houses. Ask someone in one house to start. Pause with time to allow everyone to say something that they are thankful for. Have someone in another house close. It is sad to not be all together, but we still have so much to say thank you for. Take time to share that as a group.



We Bow and Pray

Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you now on Thanksgiving Day. It has not been an easy year and we have faced some overwhelming challenges. There has been pain, and struggle, and illness – we cannot ignore that. But we thank you for a time to focus on your goodness. We give you thanks for all you've done, especially for the gift of Jesus, your Son. We thank you for your amazing creation, for family and friends, for your daily provision of mercy, love, and care. We praise and thank you. Please hear our prayers of Thanksgiving now:

Give people around the table and over Zoom to pray (in a circle or "popcorn" style).

This year Lord, our gathering does (may) not look the same. We are not able to get together like we have in the past. We pray for our family near and far. Please bless and keep all of us. Help us to connect in other meaningful ways. Thank you for each special family member that you have given us – help us to be grateful for each other. Thank you for the hands that made this food, for laughter we can share, and for memories that we can make. Thank you for this time and for your provision.

We love you,

Amen

Giving

Thanksgiving Baskets

To help those who are unable to afford a Thanksgiving dinner, as a family put together a Thanksgiving gift basket or box. Local organizations will be collecting baskets to donate to those in need. (If you need ideas of where to donate your basket feel free to email me. A close food pantry is the Elmhurst Yorkfield Food Pantry.) When putting together your basket, consider adding the following items:

- A box of mashed potatoes
- A box of stuffing with gravy packets
- One can of corn, yams, cranberries, and green beans
- A pumpkin or apple pie
- Bags of tea or apple cider packets
- A carton of shelf-stable almond, rice, or soy milk
- Canned soups
- A box of cornbread mix
- A warm fleece blanket
- Mittens, scarves, socks, and hats
- Shampoo, soap, toilet paper, personal care products
- Games such as UNO, Go Fish, and Scrabble



Pop the Trunk Food Drive for Elmhurst Yorkfield Food Pantry

“Pop the Trunk” and unload holiday foods at EYP or under the canopy at church through Nov. 25.

Think holiday foods for families for Christmas - view [suggested food items list](#).

Blessing Bags (for the Homeless)

How many times have your children noticed the people standing on the street asking for money and help? Are you like me and are never prepared with money or food in the car? Let's be ready next time!

As a family, brainstorm items people might need and enjoy – socks, candy, granola bars, a couple of dollars, a new toothbrush, etc. Sometimes the signs they are holding mention children so coloring books, crayons, and other toys or treats might be a fun addition. Last week when we were downtown my kids noticed a homeless man reading and they suggested that next time we add a book or two to our bags. Pack a couple of gallon sized Ziploc bags with these items. Keep the bags within reach in your car and be ready to pass on these blessing bags the next time you are at a stoplight.



Christmas Toy Collection for SHE

We are now collecting **gently used and new** toys for our toy giveaway in December for the Single Moms Ministry. Especially needed are toys/gifts for 7-14 year olds. Toys that you would give your own children as presents, make great donations! (Items not accepted: stuffed animals or happy meal toys.) Drop gently used/new toys off at the West entrance overhang or in the church office by **Tuesday, Dec 1**. Questions? Contact Rachel Klooster in the church office, 630-600-5100.

World Renew Gift Catalog

As our thoughts turn towards Christmas, take a look at the World Renew Gift Catalog to see how your family can share their blessings. Visit: <https://worldrenew.net/gift-catalog>

We will also again be doing the Christmas trees as a church in December – you will be able to give to World Renew, Angola Prison, or local families. More details to come.

**“Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples!”
1 Chronicles 16:8**