

15 Ways to Incorporate Giving into Your ThanksGIVING

- 1.** Sponsor a thanksgiving meal for someone in need.
- 2.** Thank those who serve and help your community. Create cards or bake and deliver cookies to your local fire and police departments.
- 3.** Donate to a food pantry or food bank. If possible, go shopping with your children and bring the items to your local food pantry or food bank.
- 4.** Use your creativity to make items such as art or jewelry with messages of hope and optimism.
- 5.** Create Caring Kits to be distributed to people in need.
- 6.** Clean out your closets and donate items (only those in good condition) to those that can use them.
- 7.** Brainstorm as a family ways you can all actively do good together.
- 8.** Call or video chat with those more vulnerable in need of healing and/or a friendly visit.
- 9.** Donate your time and expertise to a family or agency that can benefit from them.
- 10.** Sign up to volunteer with a local non-profit agency.
- 11.** Participate in a run, walk or other event for charity.
- 12.** When shopping be sure to only frequent companies that share your values.
- 13.** Discuss what giving means to your family and the role it plays.
- 14.** Before posting on social media think first and make sure that what you post is inclusive, uplifting, kind and sensitive.
- 15.** Start a family Giving Circle. Decide as a family on a cause and agency worthy of your support.

15 Thanksgiving Conversation Starters for Teens and Adults

- 1.** What are you grateful for this year?
- 2.** What have you done this year to live your values?
- 3.** If you could change something in the world to make it better, what would it be?
- 4.** What was your most meaningful giving experience this year? Why?
- 5.** Think of a time when you benefitted from someone else's giving. What did it give you? How can you pay this forward?
- 6.** When in your life have you felt like you could never fully repay someone?
- 7.** Think of a time that someone helped you. How can you help more people like that?
- 8.** If you could only help one person, who would your help and why?
- 9.** What is our family's history of giving and helping?
- 10.** What was your proudest moment from the past 12 months?
- 11.** What are you most grateful for, right now, in this moment?
- 12.** What's your personal anthem or theme song?
- 13.** What's the best compliment you've ever received?
- 14.** What are you grateful for that more people had in their lives?
- 15.** Who in your life are you most grateful for?

10 Thanksgiving Conversation Starters for Kids

- 1.** Who is someone you could say “thank you” to today?
And why?
- 2.** What is something you do with your family that makes you happy?
- 3.** If you had to give anyone in the world your piggy bank, who would you give it to and why?
- 4.** What is something you’d like someone to tell YOU “thank you” for?
- 5.** When is a good time to tell someone “thank you”?
- 6.** How can you be thankful even when we’re upset?
- 7.** How does it make you feel when someone does something really nice for you?
- 8.** How does it make you feel when you do something really nice for someone else?
- 9.** What are you MOST thankful for?
- 10.** What is better today than a year ago?

To-Do Things for a Very Special COVID-19 Thanksgiving

- 1.** Discuss with family and friends near and far how you will all actively and collectively impact others.
- 2.** Make several identical decorations and share them with the family and friends you generally celebrate with who aren't able to celebrate with you in person this year.
- 3.** Create picture collages to share with family and friends with whom you generally share Thanksgiving.
- 4.** Place photographs at the table of family and friends who cannot join you in person.
- 5.** Have your family create a poster board, slideshow or video presentation of the things they're thankful for this year and spend some time enjoying them on Thanksgiving.
- 6.** Encourage everyone to share something they are thankful for.
- 7.** Get creative with family traditions: If your family's into board games, look for some online game options. If you are a football family, gather each group around the TV and watch it virtually together.
- 8.** Send flowers or festive napkins, tablecloths and/or centerpieces to surprise family and friends and let them know you are thinking of them
- 9.** Schedule a Zoom skit demonstrating peace and sharing in honor of the native Americans and pilgrims, who traditionally did the same. Discuss hospitality and welcoming the stranger. Share the skit with family who can't be present.

Activities to Practice Gratitude for Thanksgiving

- 1.** Create a paper bag turkey and encourage children to discuss things they are grateful for and draw/write it on every feather.
- 2.** Encourage children in your sphere to write thank you's to acknowledge teachers, the person who cooks their Thanksgiving feast and all those that help them regularly.
- 3.** Host an intergenerational book read. Encourage a child to read to a grandparent. Use Thanksgiving as an opportunity to investigate the journey of the pilgrims and your own personal immigration story.
- 4.** Construct a "Gratitude Paper Chain". Write what you are thankful for on strips of construction paper and then loop the chains together as Thanksgiving decorations. Ask family and friends who cannot celebrate together to share their chains with you to extend your same "Gratitude Paper Chain."
- 5.** Create a "Thankful Turkey" by using a cardboard tube and feathers to cut. Write why you are thankful for on each feather. Attach them to the tube with glue and add googly eyes, creating fun and meaningful table decorations.
- 6.** Encourage everyone to write down or draw a picture of what they are thankful for. After everyone shares their picture, save them in a binder. In future years, add to the binder and reflect on blessings of the past.
- 7.** "Thankful Tree": Encourage family and friends to cut out paper leaves and each night write one thing to be thankful for on a leaf and tape it to the tree.
- 8.** Have each family member skip snacks, dessert or screen time to understand what we too often take for granted. Discuss what this means.
- 9.** Organize a book drive or swap. Leave books in a box on your curb for sharing. Go through your shelves and set aside books you read and don't want anymore.
- 10.** Encourage your family to engage in minutes of prayerful meditation. Even if this is not part of your ordinary practice, include a blessing before eating (or after) with a period of breathing and quiet. Enjoy a nature walk and breathe in a few moments of fresh air.

Family Community Service Opportunities

When you volunteer as a family kids see you helping others and are more likely to continue serving as an adult. Serving in an area that your children are already interested in helps create excitement for the project. If your child loves to play at the park, plant flowers or pick up litter. Set aside time for a service project as a family.

Ideas may include:

- 1.** Delivering library books to homebound readers.
 - 2.** Clean up trash in a local park.
 - 3.** Rake a neighbor's leaves.
 - 4.** Purchase items for a Thanksgiving meal and deliver them to a food bank.
 - 5.** Clean closets and toy boxes and donate gently used toys and clothing to a local charity.
 - 6.** Talk with your kids about how some people may not have coats, hats and gloves to keep warm during the winter months. Collect these items to donate to a homeless shelter.
 - 7.** Buy fleece and cut fringes in them. Have children create no-sew blankets by tying the fringe together to donate.
 - 8.** Give each child a small budget and encourage them to go online, during COVID-19 and buy a gift for another child their age.
- Many agencies and towns have Adopt-a-Family programs.