

15 Ways to Incorporate Giving into your ThanksGIVING & Life

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 of 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. As a family brainstorm 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 genuinely thank the person at the checkout counter.
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.



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 or grandchildren are already interested in helps create excitement for the project. If your child or grandchild 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 purchase a gift for another child their age. Many agencies and towns have Adopt-a-Family programs.



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 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.
4. Use Thanksgiving as an opportunity to investigate the journey of the pilgrims and your own personal immigration story.
5. 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."
6. Create a "Thankful Turkey" by using a cardboard tube and feathers to cut. Write what you are thankful for on each feather. Attach them to the tube with glue and add googly eyes, creating fun and meaningful table decorations.
7. 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.
8. "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.
9. Have each family member skip snacks, dessert or screen time to understand what we too often take for granted. Discuss what this means.
10. 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.
11. 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.



Thanksgiving Conversation Starters

Adapted from The Blue Dove Foundation

1. What have I done to actively help another person, family or community this past year?
2. What is one thing I can do to bring joy to somebody's Thanksgiving holiday this year?
3. What is one thing that happened this week that made me smile?
4. What is right in my life right now?
5. What can I rely on to help me be my best self?
6. What is one thing I have learned about myself this year?
7. What will I do to help another person, family or community this year?
8. What am I hopeful for?



Three Questions to Ask at Your Thanksgiving Table

From Daniel Pink, author of “The Power of Regret”

Here’s a suggestion for better Thanksgiving conversations, especially if your gathering includes people you don’t know extremely well: Replace small talk with “deep talk.” We often opt for discussing shallow subjects with others, because we worry that bringing up loftier, more personal matters will feel awkward. Research shows that other people welcome such deeper conversations and that these feel far less uncomfortable than we predict. So, if you’re looking for a compelling topic to discuss during the upcoming holidays, try regret. In fact, ask someone at your table these 3 questions:

1. What is one big regret in your life?
2. What lesson did you learn from it?
3. How are you going to apply that lesson in the next year?

