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The Fourth Thursday of November – Thanksgiving

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever!” (Psalm 107:1)

Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday in the United States. It is a day set aside to give thanks to God for the many blessings of the year.

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1619 by the Pilgrims who settled near the James River in Virginia. This was a Thanksgiving of prayer and did not include feasting, probably because there was so little to eat.

In 1721 after a successful harvest, Governor William Bradford planned a Thanksgiving celebration. The feasting lasted three days and included wild game, corn and other crops grown by the settlers. About ninety Native Americans also attended the celebration.

President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving Day to be observed on the fourth Thursday of November in 1863. It wasn't until 1941 that congress declared Thanksgiving Day to be a legal federal holiday.

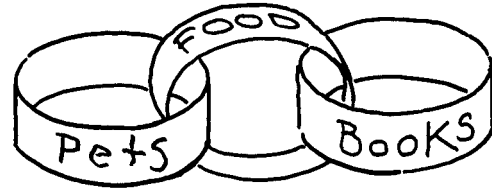
Prayer

On this Thanksgiving Day, we thank God for all of the blessings in our lives. We are thankful for the people who love us and take care us as we learn and grow. We are thankful for friends with whom we share secrets and play and laugh. We are thankful for the food we eat, the warm clothes we wear and the loving home in which we live. Thank you, Lord, for all of these blessings. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Activities

Sharing Traditions

Discuss the Thanksgiving holiday with the children. Have them share a tradition their family has for this holiday. At prayer time invite the children to individually add some specific things they are thankful for.

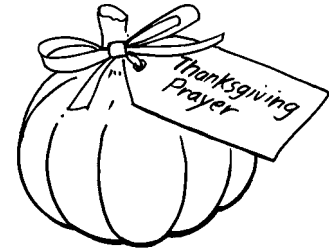


Paper Thanksgiving Chains

Make a list of things with the children that they are thankful for. Write these on strips of orange and yellow paper and link them together to make a paper chain. Hang the chain around the room.

Mini-Pumpkins

Purchase mini pumpkins from the grocery store; they are about fifty cents each. Tie a piece of raffia around the stem of the pumpkin and attach a card with a copy of the Thanksgiving prayer.



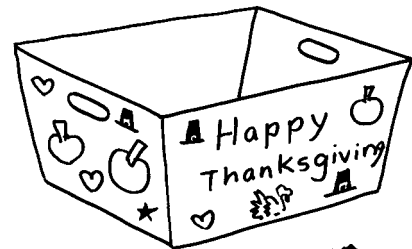
Pumpkin Candleholder

Make a mini pumpkin candleholder. Use a carving knife to cut out a 1" hole in the center of the pumpkin. Place a taper or votive candle in the pumpkin. Use either of these ideas to decorate your classroom or send them home for the kitchen table.



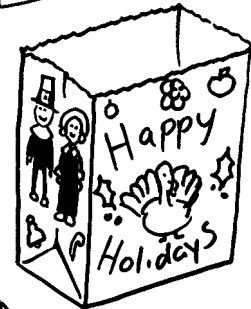
Food for the Poor

Collect food for the local food pantry. To make the collection more interesting, collect only baby food or breakfast food. Assign each family a couple of nonperishable items for a thanksgiving dinner. Suggestions would be canned gravy, vegetables, cranberries, stuffing, pie, cake or bread mixes, juices and relishes.



Decorating Bags and Boxes

Decorate warehouse grocery boxes or other cardboard boxes with thanksgiving greetings or a prayer. Add drawings made by the children to make them look festive. Give these to your local food pantry to use for distributing food. Decorating grocery bags is also fun.



Hoop Art

Have the children look through magazines and cut out pictures of the things they are thankful for. Tape the pictures around a Hula-Hoop and hang it in the room. The hoop could hang on its side like a wall wreath or from the ceiling, parallel to the ground. To hang the hoop from the ceiling, tie three, 4-foot pieces of string onto the hoop, making sure they are equal distance apart. When tying leave one end of the string as long as possible. Gather the long ends of the string together and tie in place. Hang the hoop in your prayer corner just above the eye level of the children.

