

# Thanksgiving

## A Historical Look



A 7-Day Theme Unit from Our Montessori Home

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## A Note to Parents & Educators

I had a lot of fun putting together this theme. History is fascinating, especially when you get into the personal narratives of those that make up history, which is really all of us. There were so many tales and tangents I explored and new things I learned in my research. What is perhaps, most interesting, is the Thanksgiving as we know it has very few similarities in comparison to what history records. The story of the Pilgrims and Indians gathering together to share a harvest meal has become more of folklore than a reflection of actual events.

We imagine a large table set with a wild turkey and men, women, and children of each community gathered in friendship. While relations between the Wampanoag and Pilgrims were friendly in the early years, both were also wary of the others' intentions. If you research further, you'll find familiar faces in the narrative we know, such as Squanto, were not always the heroes we read. Parts of the historical Thanksgiving narrative are paid more attention, while others are barely touched upon and some ignored altogether. My goal in this theme unit is to lay the foundation of the historical narrative--who the Pilgrims were, why they left England, who (the often nameless) Indians were, and how the iconic Thanksgiving feast came about.

There is much history behind why the Pilgrims left their home country. A simple inquiry quickly becomes complicated with economic issues, separation of church and state, as well as tensions between the Pilgrims' Puritan views (heavily influenced by the Reformation) with that of the Church of England and Catholic church. For the purposes of this theme unit and its intended young audience, I've chosen to touch on the most basic aspects of these issues. I'd encourage you to take a deeper look as to what was really the differences between the Puritans and Separatists, as well as the differences in their theology from that of the Church of England, that prompted the Pilgrims (then called Separatists) to move across continents.

In light of the early European settlers (and even early American government's) sometimes harsh treatment of Indians, the Montessori philosophy provides a useful lenses in which to look back on such a hard piece of American history while acknowledging the hardships and wrongs done to Native peoples. The Montessori philosophy encourages us to look inward to our own dealings with people different from ourselves and leads us to treat all people with grace and courtesy, realizing everything we do has an impact on someone else.

As a Native American myself, it's important to me to acknowledge the effects and impact European settlers had Native life. As well as showcase that all Native peoples do not have the same culture. As Europe is not one homogeneous people, neither are the Native peoples of America. I do not wish to villainize either people group--history is complicated. The

Wampanoag and Pilgrims did live at peace with each other for many years, but as the number of settlers grew so did their friction.

But for the purposes of this theme unit and its intended audience, my goal was to give an introduction to who they Pilgrims were, why they left England, what life was like on the *Mayflower*, who the Wampanoag people were and their way of life, as well as the partnership that developed between them. Toward the end of the unit, we'll look at what led to what we call the first Thanksgiving, as well as a lesson on cultivating thankfulness in our own lives.

Each lesson has a suggested activity and recommended book to read as supplements. In the Resources section you'll find a list of helpful books to explore the subject and plenty of links to articles, videos, and crafts/activities to accompany the unit. My favorite is from Plimoth Plantation, a living museum that shows what the original Plymouth colony looked like in the 17th century. It's such a wonderful resource.

I'd encourage you to read through the lessons and decide what fits your students needs and age. Tailor the unit to fit your goals. Use it all or only part. Either way, I'd love to hear what you think about it and how it worked with your students. Let me know at [jessica@ourmontessorihome.com](mailto:jessica@ourmontessorihome.com).

Happy Thanksgiving!

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# Thanksgiving

*A Mini-Theme Unit from Our Montessori Home*

**Objective:** To lay the framework for the historical narrative of Thanksgiving, by giving an introduction to who they Pilgrims were, why they left England, what life was like on the *Mayflower*, who the Wampanoag people were and their way of life, as well as the partnership that developed between them.

## Lessons Overview:

Day	Daily Lesson	Focus
1	Why do we celebrate Thanksgiving?	Culture
2	The Pilgrim's Journey to Religious Freedom	Culture - History - Geography
3	Crossing to the New World: Life on the Mayflower	Geography
4	Life in the New World	Culture - History
5	Life for the Wampanoag People	Culture - History
6	A Partnership	Culture - History - Grace & Courtesy
7	What Does it Mean to Be Grateful?	Grace & Courtesy

## Mini-Theme Unit, Day 1: *Thanksgiving*

**Objective:** To bring awareness to the Thanksgiving holiday and why we observe a season of giving thanks.

### **Lesson 1:** *Why do we celebrate Thanksgiving?*

Thanksgiving is a holiday, celebrated in America, every year on the fourth Thursday of November. It signals the end of the harvest season, when the food that was planted in the spring, grown throughout the summer, and picked in the fall is ready to be eaten or stored for the winter.

It's a time to set aside to look at all we have and give thanks. To be grateful for the many things we have been blessed with--food, a house, clothes, our families, and much more.

*Blessed is another way to say make happy, what are some things in your life that make you happy?*

In America, we model our Thanksgiving celebration after what is considered the First Thanksgiving at Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1621. Pilgrims, a group of settlers who moved from England to be able to practice their religion in peace, struggled to survive their first winter in the new world. Many of them died that first year. It was during the next year a group of neighboring Indians befriended them and began to teach them how to farm the land, grow food, and live in this new land. Both the Pilgrims and Native peoples had traditions of special days they'd offer thanks to the Creator. It wasn't until 1863 that Thanksgiving became a national holiday with a fixed day to celebrate.

There is much about our modern day celebration of Thanksgiving that is different from the one we remember in history, but today Thanksgiving is a time we remember the kindness and cooperation the Indians and Pilgrims showed to each other---as the Pilgrims trusted the Indians in this new land and the Indians were willing to help and teach these new strangers how to survive. Near the end of the fall of their year of working together, the Pilgrims and Indians gathered together for a feast that lasted three days. (We'll learn more about this famous gathering later.)

We celebrate Thanksgiving with our friends and family--the people closest to us--with a big meal and sharing the things we are thankful for from the last year. Many people also choose to give to others less fortunate than themselves by cooking meals, delivering baskets of food to their houses, holding can food drives, or even sharing a Thanksgiving meal at a homeless shelter.

*How does your family celebrate Thanksgiving?*

*What are you thankful for?*

**Activity** – Start an *'I am thankful...'* tree in your classroom or home. You could gather small branches from your yard to place in a vase or cut a tree with branches and hang on the wall. Cut out leaves of different colors and have the children write something they are thankful for. Have them add a leaf each day during the month of November or the week of leading up to Thanksgiving.

**Reading** - *Thanksgiving*, Gail Gibbons

## Mini-Theme Unit, Day 2: *Thanksgiving*

**Objective:** To provide a basis of understanding why the Pilgrims left England and how they got to America.

### **Lesson 2:** *The Pilgrim's Journey to Religious Freedom*

When we talk about Thanksgiving, we always hear about the Pilgrims and the Indians. But did you know the Pilgrims weren't always called Pilgrims? Before their journey to the new world they were called Separatists.

The Separatists were a group of people who lived in England in the 1600's. They were called Separatists because they wanted to separate themselves from the Church of England. Why did they want to separate from the Church of England? To answer this we have to go back 100 years earlier.

Much of Europe was part of the Catholic church based in Rome, Italy, but King Henry VIII of England no longer wanted to be a part of the Catholic church, because he wanted to go his own way. He wanted to divorce his wife, so he could have a new wife. The Catholic church believed that a man should have only one wife for life, so they did not give King Henry permission to divorce his wife. Because he couldn't get permission from the Catholic church, King Henry broke from the Catholic church to start his own church, the Church of England.

Now, what does this have to do with the Separatists (Pilgrims)? Just because people lived in England didn't mean they agreed with what the Church of England believed. Because they didn't agree with the Church they could lose their job, have their home taken away, or even be thrown in jail. They would even be fined (pay money) if they didn't go to the Church of England every Sunday! The Separatists wanted the freedom to practice their religion as they choose, without fear of harm coming to them or their family.

They wanted to move to a new country to be able to practice their faith in peace. A group of Separatists decided to move to Holland, because they'd be free to believe what they did without harm. In 1607, a group of about 40 Separatists and their families moved to Holland. Because they didn't want to be caught by the English, the Separatists moved to Amsterdam, Holland in small groups. In a few years time, over a hundred Separatists moved from England to Leiden, Holland. Many of them very poor for having sold their homes and possessions to pay for the move.

During their time in Holland, many of the Separatists learned new skills as weavers,



merchants, tailors, bakers, and carpenters. Even though they were free to practice their religion the Separatists still weren't happy. A war between Holland and Spain was beginning and if Spain won, the Separatists could lose their religious freedom. So they planned to move again, but this time to the New World.

The Separatists had to ask King James of England if they could settle in the New World. He gave them permission. To pay for the trip, they made a deal with the Merchant Adventurers who would lend them the money for the trip in exchange for the Separatists sending goods from the New World to England.

In July of 1620, a small group of Separatists left Holland on a small ship called the *Speedwell*. This is when they began to call themselves Pilgrims. Pilgrim is a word used to describe someone on a religious journey. They had to stop in England, because part of their deal with the Merchant Adventurers was they would settle with a group of skilled tradesmen. The Separatists called these men Strangers, because they were very different from themselves.

The Separatists were to sail on the *Speedwell* and the Strangers on the *Mayflower*, however the Pilgrims had to move to the *Mayflower* because their ship was leaky and not safe for traveling across the Atlantic Ocean. Altogether there were 102 people plus the crew traveling on the *Mayflower*. On September 6, 1620, the Pilgrims began their way across a vast ocean to a new land looking for freedom and peace.

How would you feel moving to a new country you've never visited or knew anything about?

What do you think living on the *Mayflower* was like? We'll learn more about that tomorrow.

**Activity** – Map the Pilgrims journey from England to Holland, then back again to England and the path to the New World.

**Reading** – *The Pilgrims Before the Mayflower*, Susan Whitehurst

## Mini-Theme Unit, Day 3: *Thanksgiving*

**Objective:** To learn about the hardships the Pilgrims encountered as they sailed to the New World---food, living conditions, and life on the Mayflower.

### **Lesson 3:** *Crossing to the New World: Life on the Mayflower*

Traveling to the New World was a dangerous journey for the Pilgrims. They encountered many storms and lived in a tiny space. Of the 102 passengers aboard the *Mayflower* 35 were Pilgrims, 67 were the Strangers, and then there were also the ship's crew. It was a lot of people for one ship built for carrying cargo.

The Pilgrims were not planning to move back to England. They had to bring everything they needed to survive in the New World with them, but there wasn't much room on the ship. *What would you bring if you were going to a new land?*

The Pilgrims packed clothes, guns for hunting, tools to fish with, dishes for cooking, and blankets. They had to bring enough food for their families for the whole trip (which would take about 2 months) and for the time before they could plant food (about 6 months). *Do you think food normally lasts 8 months?* Not really, because of this many of the Pilgrims got sick from eating rotten food, but it was the only thing for them to eat.

*What was the Mayflower like?* The *Mayflower* was originally a merchant ship, carrying different goods from place to place. It wasn't designed to be a passenger ship. The ship was about 100ft long and 25ft wide, not very big to hold the 102 passengers and 30 crew members.

The *Mayflower* had three decks. The main deck (where you could see the ocean) was mostly for the sailors. The second deck (or gun deck, often called the 'tween deck because it was between) was where the passengers lived. It was only about 5ft tall, so the adults couldn't stand up straight. It was a very small space and children had no place to run and play. There was no bathroom on the second deck, so the people had to use buckets as a toilet and throw the contents overboard. The third deck was the cargo hold where the Pilgrims belongings, supplies for life in the New World, and, perhaps, even animals were kept.

Because they left in the fall, the travelers had a rough and stormy journey on the Mayflower. During one storm, a man even fell overboard! Thankfully, he grabbed a rope from the ship and was able to be pulled back on board. The Pilgrims were often soaked during these storms and, unable to light a fire, simply had to wait for their clothes to slowly dry. Because there were so many people on the ship, it began to smell. The Pilgrims had no place to take a bath,

went to the bathroom in buckets, and often threw up from seasickness. It was a very unpleasant, smelly, cold trip.

It was a hard, scary journey to find the freedom they wanted to practice their religion. Even once they reached the New World their hardships would not be over.

*What about you? How do you think you would've felt if you were on the Mayflower?*

*Scared? Excited? Stinky? Sick?*

**Activity** – Here's a few ideas to explore the *Mayflower*:

Build your own *Mayflower* ship.

Using yarn (or even toilet paper), measure the dimensions of the Mayflower.

Color & label the decks of the *Mayflower*.

**Reading** - *The Mayflower*, Susan Whitehurst

## Mini-Theme Unit, Day 4: *Thanksgiving*

**Objective:** To teach what happened after the Pilgrims landed in the new world and the many challenges they faced during their first year.

### **Lesson 4:** *The Pilgrims Life in the New World*

The Pilgrims had left England bound for Virginia, but because of harsh weather crossing the Atlantic they ended up in the Cape Cod Bay of Massachusetts in November of 1620. How glad they must've been to see land!

But still they were not home yet. Before they left the *Mayflower* the Separatists and Strangers signed an agreement that they wouldn't separate, but would work together to survive in this new land. That agreement is known as the *Mayflower Compact*.

A group of men set out to explore the coast where they landed to find a place to begin their new town. The rest of the men stayed to fix the boat while the women and children cleaned their clothes and enjoyed the fresh air. It took the men a month before they discovered Plymouth Bay. They sailed the *Mayflower* there and the Pilgrims, Strangers, and sailors stayed on the ship as their home for the winter. The men would leave during the day to begin to build their town, but the work was cold and hard because it was winter. Each family got a one-room house and a garden. A common house was built to store food and goods. Because it was winter the Pilgrims couldn't plant crops and had to live off of the food they had brought on the *Mayflower* or found in the wild and occasionally an animal they caught hunting.

It was a hard winter for the Pilgrims with little good food and a harsh climate, many of these new settlers got sick. Some reports tell us as many as 2 to 3 people would die a day. Fewer than half of the people on the *Mayflower* survived the winter--4 of 18 women, 19 single men, 7 girls, and 10 boys lived. Sadly, four entire families and half of the married men died that winter.

Thankfully, Spring came early. Those that survived the winter, continued to build houses and began planting crops. In April 1621, the *Mayflower* sailed back to England and even though the winter and New World was hard for the Pilgrims none decided to return to England.

There was much work for the Pilgrims to do and much to learn, but they were diligent in their quest to live in this New World. Soon they would meet their Native neighbors, the Wampanoag.

**Activity** – Make a diorama of a Plymouth home or draw a map of the Plymouth village.

**Reading** – *Plymouth: Surviving the First Winter*, Susan Whitehurst

## Mini-Theme Unit, Day 5: *Thanksgiving*

**Objective:** To remember the Pilgrims were not the first to live in Plymouth, as well as gain a new understanding and appreciation for native culture, and lay the foundation of a future partnership.

### **Lesson 5:** *Life for the Wampanoag Indians*

The Pilgrims were not the first people to this new land. Indians had lived in what Europeans called the New World for thousands and thousands of years. In Massachusetts, where the Pilgrims settled, the Native peoples of that land were the Wampanoag (wam-puh-NO-og), which means “People of the First Light,” possibly referring to their eastern position in the direction the sun rises.

The Pilgrims were not the first settlers to meet the Wampanoag. Years before they came other European settlers visited the area to explore and trade--some respectful, others not. They brought many diseases that the Native peoples had not encountered and would even capture Indians as slaves to bring back to Europe. The Wampanoag taken as slaves learned the English ways and language. Some of these men were eventually freed and made it back to their homeland. (We'll meet two of these men soon.)

#### ***Plymouth's First Inhabitants***

Plymouth, where the Pilgrims began to build their town, was chosen because it had cleared land which would make it easier to build houses and even areas that were already ready to plant crops. What the Pilgrims didn't know when they arrived was their new home was the Wampanoag village Patuxet. *What happened to Patuxet?* The early settlers brought disease with them, some historians today think it was smallpox, and this disease killed nearly everyone in the Patuxet village. The village was abandoned and the few remaining moved to other Wampanoag villages.

#### ***The Wampanoag Way of Life***

The Wampanoag were a peaceful people. They were lead by a group of men, and sometimes women, called the sachem (SAY-chum). They were highly respected in Wampanoag society and sought to lead and care for their people well. Women were very important in Wampanoag society, because land was passed through the woman instead of the man. Wampanoag homes are called *wetus* (WE-toos) and are made of cedar sticks and grass, which could be easily moved. The Wampanoag moved with the seasons. In the winter, they moved more inland where they could be protected from the harsh weather and be closer to the larger animals they hunted for food. During the planting season, they moved toward the coast to farm the land as well as fish.

The men did most of the fishing and hunting (deer, squirrel, rabbits and birds like duck, geese, or turkey), while the women farmed the land (mostly corn, beans, and squash), gathered nuts and berries, and collected shellfish on the coast. They used what they had and tried to not put things to waste. A deer would bring meat for food and its skin would be used for clothes. They respected the

land caring for it because, in many ways, the land cared for them. They considered it owned by none but used by all.

### ***Famous Wampanoag Men: Samoset , Massasoit, Tisquantum (Squanto), & Hobbamock***

Earlier settlers captured about 29 Wampanoag men, bringing them to England as slaves, showing them off as ‘savage’ people. There are four Wampanoag men that are often referred to in retelling the Thanksgiving story: Massasoit, Tisquantum (Squanto), Samoset, and Hobbamock.

*Samoset* was the first Indian to make contact with the Pilgrims. He was a *sagamore*, similar to a sachem, from the Abenaki tribe and was visiting Massasoit. He spoke a little English, having learned from his interactions with English fishing crews off the coast of Maine.

*Massasoit* was the Wampanoag sachem, which is often called chief, of the tribe. He was the leader of the tribe and helped make agreements with other leaders or tribes, as well as keep the peace within his own tribe. Massasoit helped to keep the peace between the Pilgrims and Indians until his death.

*Tisquantum (Squanto)* was a Wampanoag from the Patuxet village. There he was a *pniese* (pah-NEES), a warrior counselor. Pniese were highly respected in their community. They protected their village as well as gave counsel to the elders. They were also seen as spiritual leaders. Around 1614, Tisquantum was captured by slave traders and brought to Spain. He eventually made his way to England, learned the language, and worked for a ship builder. He returned back to his homeland near 1619 to find his village, Patuxet, empty most of the people having died from European diseases. In March 1621, Squanto was sent by Massasoit to visit the Pilgrims new settlement to trade furs and to see if they would be people of peace or war.

*Hobbamock*, a Wampanoag pniese (warrior counselor), was sent with his family by Massasoit to live near the Pilgrim settlement to keep an eye on them and help them. He served as a guide and interpreter between Massasoit and the settlers. He was highly trusted by both groups.

### ***Natives: A Forgotten People***

We often hear great things about Europeans coming to the New World, but we don’t hear how sometimes the things they did and brought were not good for the Native peoples. American history has not been kind to Native peoples, most often referred to as American Indians or Native Americans today. In early American history, many were killed because Europeans didn’t understand their way of life--their clothes, language, or culture.

Many European settlers wrongly assumed because the Indians did not eat, dress, speak, or live like they did or have the same tools they were savage, uneducated people who were less important and not equal to them. Many saw the Native peoples as something to get rid of rather than someone to live alongside. The Europeans saw the New World as land to be conquered for their home country, rather than land that already belonged to a group of people. As a result, many Native peoples died through disease and war (whole tribes are now extinct), forced off their land, lost much of their traditional language and culture, and were treated poorly because they looked different from the white settlers. This was not right.

There are still many Native peoples in America today. Some live in reservations with their tribe practicing as many of their traditional ways as they can, while others live the standard American life looking no different from others than maybe the shape of their face or the color of their skin. Both are still Native peoples each tribe with its own unique culture, history, and heritage to be remembered.

***What can we learn from this hard part of history?*** To treat people with respect no matter their language, color of their skin, or way of life. We should consider others first, before ourselves, thinking how our actions might affect them. Remember, we can always learn from people different than ourselves. We are not better or more important than anyone else--all people were created equal in the image of their Creator and so should be treated with respect.

**Activity** – Build a Wampanoag wetu, bow and arrow, or an Indian head dress (a beaded headband with 1-2 feathers). The sachem might wear their feathers up, while others would be pointed down.

**Reading** - *Tapenum's Day*, Kate Waters, *The Wampanoag*, Kevin Cunningham

## Mini-Theme Unit, Day 6: *Thanksgiving*

**Objective:** To demonstrate how the Indians cared for the new strangers, partnering with them, and helping the Pilgrims survive in the New World.

### **Lesson 6:** *A Partnership*

The Pilgrims began to work the land to plant crops. It was there they met Samoset. What was different about Samoset from other Indians was he spoke English. He came to see if the Pilgrims would be at peace with the Natives or if they were looking for war. Tisquantum (also called Squanto) came with him. He also spoke English. Tisquantum was one of the Wampanoag who had been captured by earlier settlers and taken to England. Sadly, when he returned to his homeland his village Patuxet was gone, the people having died of a European disease.

Massasoit and John Carver, the Plymouth governor, made an agreement to keep the peace between their people, as well as protect each other from outside attacks. Hobbamock, a Wampanoag pniese (warrior counselor), was sent with his family by Massasoit to live near the Pilgrim settlement to keep an eye on and help the new settlers.

Tisquantum lived among the Pilgrims teaching them how to grow corn and other crops. He taught them that if they planted their corn seed with a fish head, they plant would grow strong and fast. Tisquantum acted as a translator between the Pilgrims and Wampanoag, such he was one of the few to speak both languages.

At the end of their harvest, the Pilgrims decided to have a feast of thanksgiving to thank God for his goodness in providing plenty of good crops. A few men were sent out to hunt for the meal, others stayed behind practicing their military drills (marching and shooting).

The Wampanoag had heard gun shots, more than usual, and Massasoit came to investigate with 90 Wampanoag men. Why so many? Perhaps the Wampanoag thought the settlers were getting ready to attack them. When they arrived at Plymouth they realized the Pilgrims were practicing shooting for fun as part of their military drills and end of harvest celebration. It was then the Indians stayed to enjoy the feast. Massasoit sent a few of his men to bring back five deer for the feast.

The 90 Wampanoag men and Pilgrims spent three days eating and playing games, all in thanks for a good harvest. In each of their cultures, both the Indians and Pilgrims had traditions of feasts to give thanks to their Creator. They were not on the same day every years like our Thanksgiving, but would happen as they were grateful in their season---for a good harvest of corn or cranberries, rain after a drought, or even a victory over their enemies.

How is our modern-day Thanksgiving different from the feast the Pilgrims and Wampanoag shared? How do you give thanks or celebrate the good things in your life?



**Activity** – Plan your own Thanksgiving meal. Try a recipe the Pilgrims or Wampanoag might have made (see the Resources for links to recipes).

**Reading** - *Giving Thanks: The 1621 Harvest Feast*, Kate Waters

## Mini-Theme Unit, Day 7: *Thanksgiving*

**Objective:** To remind ourselves that we have much to be thankful for and, like the Indians, we too can help others in need.

### **Lesson 7:** *What does it mean to be grateful?*

*What does it mean to be grateful?* To be grateful means to show or feel an appreciation for a kindness to us. Appreciation is kind of a big word, it simply means being aware (acknowledging or seeing) some good that has come our way not from our own doing. *What are some ways God or others have been kind to you?*

To be thankful means to be glad that something has or hasn't happened, depending on the circumstances, while recognizing good has come to us. *What are some good things in your life that you didn't do yourself?*

The Pilgrims and the Wampanoag had much to be grateful for. Their survival depended a lot on nature. They could cultivate the land and plant crops, but could not make the rain come or the sun shine. They could do their best work, but they still had to wait and hope for a good season. So, when a harvest was bountiful or rain came after a drought it made sense to give thanks to the Creator who is over all things.

We don't have to plant our own food or rely on animal skins to keep warm in the winter. Our life today is much easier than that of the Pilgrims and early Natives. And, like them, we have much to be thankful for. *What are some things you are thankful for in your life?*

Sometimes it's easy to think of things we are grateful for--a home with a roof over our heads, food on the table, and a family who loves us. Those are usually the things people mention when asked what they're thankful for--and right they should! Those are good and important things.

But how can we be grateful when things are hard? *Can we be grateful when life is hard?*

It's not easy, but even when life is difficult or sad we can be grateful for the many blessings in our life. And, if we look close enough, even the hard things can bring about good.

Being grateful doesn't mean if something sad happens we just call it a blessing and act like we're happy. For example, if a family member dies that is sad and we should grieve over the loss of them not being with us anymore. We need to acknowledge that it hurts our hearts that they are gone. *So how can we be grateful at such a loss?* We can be grateful that we knew them, were able to spend time with, or for things they taught us and in those ways we remember them.

Another hard thing might be if a parent loses their job or perhaps a family doesn't have much money. Those are hard things that often cause grown-ups to worry. We can be grateful in those

situations for the good that might come out of them. Perhaps we might learn to persevere when life is stressful or new ways to be resourceful with what we do have. These hard things may even give us a chance to try something new we wouldn't have considered before or teach us that sometimes it's good to rely on the help of others--that we aren't suppose to live life alone, but in a community.

We can look for the good in each of our circumstances. It helps to tell others what we're thankful for each day or start our own gratitude journal where we write something we're thankful for each day. Sometimes what we're thankful for might be something big like a new dog or a special trip and other times we can be grateful for something small like seeing a beautiful flower or someone helping you when you fall down.

By acknowledging the good things in our life, what we are grateful for, we often can change our outlook on life. When we stop to count our many blessings, it can change our attitude, even our whole day.

The Pilgrims believed in a good God. They traveled across the Atlantic Ocean and endured many hardships just so they could worship God the way they believed he should be worshiped. And even though many of those first settlers died their first winter, they still believed God was good and were grateful for the ways he provided for them.

The Pilgrims centered their life around the Word of God, the Bible. Their Edward Winslow, one of the Pilgrims from the Mayflower, wrote in a letter to England of the 1621 harvest, "And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, *yet by the goodness of God* we are so far from want, that we often wish you partakers of our plenty." Even amidst their losses and hardships, the Pilgrims strong belief in God gave them hope even amidst the hardships of life in a new colony to choose to look to their heavenly Father and give thanks, remembering the Scriptures,

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" Psalm 107:1

**Activity** – Start a Gratitude Journal. It doesn't have to be a big endeavor. Make a little booklet (or even just use a sheet of paper) and for seven days write down one thing you're thankful for. You could even draw a picture of what you're thankful for.

**Reading** - *Thanksgiving for Emily Ann*, Teresa Johnston

# Resources

## Recommended Reading

### Thanksgiving Picture Books:

*Thanksgiving*, Gail Gibbons

*Thanksgiving Day*, Anne Rockwell

*Thanksgiving for Emily Ann*, Teresa Johnston

*Thanksgiving on Plymouth Plantation*, Diane Stanley

*...If You Sailed on the Mayflower in 1620*, Ann McGovern

*If You Were at the First Thanksgiving*, Anne Kamma

### Books from the Perspective of a Pilgrim or Wampanoag:

*Giving Thanks: The 1621 Feast*, Kate Waters

*Pilgrims of Plymouth*, Susan E Goodman

*Samuel Eaton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Boy*, Kate Waters

*Sarah Morton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl*, Kate Waters

*Tapenum's Day: A Wampanoag Indian Boy in Pilgrim Times*, Kate Waters

*The Wampanoags*, Alice K. Flanagan

*The Wampanoag*, Kevin Cunningham and Peter Benoit

*Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving*, Joseph Bruchac

### Books with a Historical Perspective:

*The Pilgrims Before the Mayflower*, Susan Whitehurst

*The Mayflower*, Susan Whitehurst

*Plymouth: Surviving the First Winter*, Susan Whitehurst

*A Plymouth Partnership: Pilgrims and Native Americans*, Susan Whitehurst

*1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving*, Catherine O'Neil Grace and Margaret M. Bruchac

*Mayflower 1620: A New Look at the Pilgrim Voyage*, Plimoth Plantation with Peter Arenstam, John Kemp, Catherine O'Neil Grace, and Sissie Brimberg

*What You Didn't Know About History: The First Thanksgiving*, Kathleen Connors

*What You Didn't Know About History: The Mayflower*, Michael Rajczak

## Informative Websites

*All links were active at the time of publishing.*

**Plimoth Plantation** - <http://www.plimoth.org/>

*Who Were the Pilgrims?* - <http://www.plimoth.org/learn/just-kids/homework-help/who-were-pilgrims>

*Faith of the Pilgrims* - <http://www.plimoth.org/what-see-do/17th-century-english-village/faith-pilgrims>

*Mayflower II (a replica)* - <http://www.plimoth.org/what-see-do/mayflower-ii>

*17th Century English Village* - <http://www.plimoth.org/what-see-do/17th-century-english-village>

*Wampanoag Homesite* - <http://www.plimoth.org/what-see-do/wampanoag-homesite/>

*Thanksgiving History* - <http://www.plimoth.org/learn/MRL/read/thanksgiving-history>

*Virtual Tours* - <http://www.plimoth.org/learn/MRL/watch>

*Daily Life for the Pilgrims & Indians* - [http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic\\_thanksgiving/daily\\_life/](http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic_thanksgiving/daily_life/)

To learn more about the Pilgrim's faith and why they disagreed with the Church of England, visit: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrim\\_Fathers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrim_Fathers)

### ***Mayflower:***

Inside the *Mayflower* - <http://mayflowerhistory.com/cross-section/>

Information and photos from the *Mayflower II* -

<http://www.mybigadventure.com/index.php?action=Stats&stat=Sites&date=20041023.2&page=27>

### **The History Channel:**

The History of Thanksgiving - <http://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving>

Thanksgiving - <http://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving>

The *Mayflower* - <http://www.history.com/topics/mayflower>

## Multimedia Resources:

Plimoth Plantation Virtual Fieldtrips -

[http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic\\_thanksgiving/webcast.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic_thanksgiving/webcast.htm)

*Mayflower*, 20 minutes

*Pilgrim Village*, 18 minutes

Wampanoag Homesite, 17 minutes

Plimoth Plantation: A Thanksgiving Discussion, 30 minutes

Slideshow Tour of Plimoth Plantation

More Thanksgiving Videos, about 1 minute each

Thanksgiving Virtual Field Trip -

<http://www.plimoth.org/learn/just-kids/thanksgiving-virtual-field-trip>

Virtual Tours of a Wampanoag Homesite, Wetus, & a 17th-Century English village -

<http://www.plimoth.org/learn/MRL/watch/virtual-tours>

Journey on the Mayflower -

[http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic\\_thanksgiving/voyage/journey.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic_thanksgiving/voyage/journey.htm)

Thanksgiving Interactive: You are a Historian - An interactive game where the children can be history detectives.

<http://www.plimoth.org/learn/MRL/interact/thanksgiving-interactive-you-are-historian>

Talk Like a Pilgrim -

<http://www.plimoth.org/learn/just-kids/talk-pilgrim>

Deconstructing History: The *Mayflower* & Other Videos - Three minute clips on the *Mayflower* and the Pilgrims experience.

<http://www.history.com/topics/mayflower/videos#deconstructed-mayflower>

Desperate Crossing: The Untold Story of the *Mayflower* - A documentary for adults. Partial clips for children, depending on their age.

<http://www.amazon.com/Desperate-Crossing-Untold-Story-Mayflower/dp/B000JU7IE6>

## Crafts & Activities:

Draw the *Mayflower Step-by-Step* -

<http://artprojectsforkids.org/portfolio/mayflower/>

Build Your Own *Mayflower* -

<http://www.eduplace.com/kids/tnc/gr3/activities/ship.html>

“Sail on the *Mayflower!*” Game -

[http://printables.scholastic.com/printables/detail/?id=37397&esp=PRT/ib/20091013/acq/t\\_giving\\_html////txtl////](http://printables.scholastic.com/printables/detail/?id=37397&esp=PRT/ib/20091013/acq/t_giving_html////txtl////)

Pilgrim & Wampanoag Recipes -

<http://www.plimoth.org/learn/just-kids/recipes>

Wampanoag Food & Recipes -

[http://www.manyhoops.com/wampanoag-food-and-recipes\\_1.html](http://www.manyhoops.com/wampanoag-food-and-recipes_1.html)

How to Make a Wampanoag Headdress -

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_11367542\\_make-wampanoag-hats.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_11367542_make-wampanoag-hats.html)

How to Make a Wigwam (Similar to a Wetu) -

<http://www.nativetech.org/wigwam/construction.html>

<http://sueathome.com/2012/11/29/making-a-wigwam-for-a-school-project/>

Woven Paper Basket -

<http://www.manyhoops.com/woven-paper-basket.html>

A Mini Bow & Arrow -

<http://www.manyhoops.com/bow-and-arrow.html>

Pilgrims History Coloring Pages -

<http://www.raisingourkids.com/coloring-pages/holiday/thanksgiving/pages/pilgrims.html>

Wetus Coloring Page -

<http://www.raisingourkids.com/coloring-pages/holiday/thanksgiving/pages/first/008-indians-first-thanksgiving.html>