

## Thanksgiving Activities for the Family

### Show and Thanks

Goal: Create a more meaningful time of sharing what you are most thankful for.

Ask each member of the family to bring one item that represents what they are grateful for this year. It may be as simple as a good report card or as impactful as a hospital bracelet from a successful surgery or baby's birth.

### Thanksgiving Table

Goal: Create an heirloom of thanks.

Designate a particular tablecloth for your family Thanksgiving celebrations. Provide fabric markers where guests can record their "gratitudes" or special prayers for the year ahead. Ask your guests to sign and date each message, as you'll be using the same tablecloth year after year. For more lasting results, have someone embroider the statements that were written down.

### Thank You Notes

Goal: Giving thanks for others in your life.

Set up an area with paper, pens and markers or crayons for everyone to write thank you notes to someone who has blessed them in some way this year. They can thank family members, friends or teachers. They can also write a thank you note to God. Younger children can draw pictures. Let everyone who wishes read their notes aloud during the meal.

### Thanksgiving ABC's

Goal: Use the alphabet to help you remember God's blessings.

Play a fun game with the ABC's and thanks. Start with saying something that you are thankful for that starts with the letter "A" and go through all the letters of the alphabet. Have members take turns or have each person share a "thanks" for each letter.

### Thanksgiving Blessing Cards

Goal: Blessing family members.

Write each person's name across the top of a card. Set these cards out and have everyone write something about that person for which they are thankful on the back. During dessert, gather the cards and take turns reading and blessing each person at the table.

## Give a Thanksgiving Blessing

**DINE IN:** Consider inviting someone who might be alone or needy to share the bounty at your Thanksgiving celebration. Invite them to join your family for a meal and informal time spent playing games, doing puzzles, telling stories, singing or just hanging out together.

**DELIVERY:** Plan to cook double the amount of food that you need for your family. If you usually have family members make different items to bring to your feast, ask if they will double the recipe and bring in two separate dishes. Choose a family to bless and when you drop the food off, spend time praying with them before you leave.

### Grateful Rolls

As guests arrive, have each person write a few things that they are grateful for on small sheets of paper. Make your own special roll recipe or bake pre-packaged crescent rolls. Place the papers on the dough wedges, roll them up into the crescent shape and follow the baking directions. When the rolls are served, pass them around and enjoy the moment as each guest tears into their hot roll and reads what someone else at the table is grateful for. Have fun guessing who wrote each "thanks."

### Further Resources

*It should be noted that Calvary Chapel Chino Hills does not necessarily endorse any particular resource and the entirety of its content.*

### Intentional Holiday Tools

There are more great ideas for Thanksgiving available on the @Home website, [athomecalvary.org](http://athomecalvary.org). Check out the CCCH e-bulletin, website ([calvarycch.org](http://calvarycch.org)) or Facebook for the many ways that you can serve during this season. We offer Feeding the Needs to feed the homeless near us and D3 (Ding Dong Ditch) where the youth get together to bless CCCH families in need.

### Recommended Websites:

**Fjm.org:** Fred Jordan Missions has been ministering to the homeless since 1944. They are on the streets of Los Angeles and throughout the world to help share God's love by providing nourishing food, warm clothing, blankets and other vital services.

**Calvarycch.org:** Visit the website or call the church office to find out ways to help CCCH reach those in need during this Thanksgiving season.

A Ministry of Calvary Chapel Chino Hills • [calvarycch.org](http://calvarycch.org)  
Go to [www.athomecalvary.org](http://www.athomecalvary.org) for more information and resources.  
Like us at: [Facebook.com/athomecalvary](https://www.facebook.com/athomecalvary)

## A Family Guide to Gratitude

# Thanksgiving @Home

Make your holiday more meaningful  
than just turkey and football!



Choose one or more of these ideas to help your family create and enjoy fun Thanksgiving family times together.

### • Hungry, Hungry Thank You's •

Help younger children anticipate giving thanks with this simple, fun game.

1. Purchase a Hungry, Hungry Hippos game at a local retailer for about \$20. Gather the children or entire family together at some point during the day to enjoy a game designed to emphasize why we give thanks.

2. As the children anticipate starting the game, pause and invite the oldest child to read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, *"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."* (NLT)

3. Afterwards ask the following questions:

Q: What is God's will for us?

A: To give thanks.

Q: Why do we give thanks?

A: To experience joy.

4. Tell the children that one of the most important ways we understand what joy really means is to give thanks for the many blessings God has given to us.

5. Now play several rounds of "Hungry, Hungry Hippos" where the children try to gobble as many marbles as they can. The winner is the person who has the most marbles at the end of the round.

6. Now, turn each child into a real "winner" by inviting them to share one thing for which they are thankful for with each marble they retrieved. Emphasize that the more thanks we give, the more our "joy tanks" fill up! Play as many rounds as you can until the meal is served.

### • Tree of Thankfulness •

Use this Thanksgiving tradition as a reminder of the many blessings the Lord gives us.

1. Place a small plant or arrangement as a centerpiece for your table.

2. Cut leaf shapes out of construction paper or trace/cut everyone's hand to make a special leaf.

3. Punch a hole in the paper and tie a loop of ribbon through it. Place the papers in a basket with pencils/crayons.

4. As each family member arrives for your Thanksgiving meal time together, ask them to write out what they are thankful for. Younger children can draw a picture or cut/paste something out of a magazine.

5. Before you begin eating, hang each of the leaves on the centerpiece "tree."

6. During the Thanksgiving meal, take turns allowing everyone at the table to share what they wrote on their leaf.

7. Read 1 Chronicles 29:13 together, *"O our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name!"* (NLT)

8. End your time together by asking the oldest person to thank God for all He has given to your family.

#### Added Options and Ideas to Start a Tradition:

- When the meal is over, take the thankful leaves and record the items of thanks that were written down in a Thankful Journal and update it each Thanksgiving and review the prior years' blessings together. Take a picture of your entire family and add it in with your notes of thankfulness and gratitude for God's many blessings. Someday, you will have a journal chockfull of blessings!
- Have the children draw on a poster board a tree trunk, grass, flowers, etc. Take the leaves and attach them. Hang the poster during the next couple of weeks to remind you of the things you are thankful for. Also remember that to give thanks is not a once a year event but one that should be celebrated everyday!
- Start your Thanksgiving Tree at the beginning of the month or beginning of the week before Thanksgiving. At the end of each day, have each member of the family write one thing or one person that they are thankful for.
- Have everyone trace their hands to create your Thanksgiving leaves. After everyone has written down items to be thankful for, create a Thankful Wreath to put up in your house. It will be a great reminder of all God's blessings as it hangs for all to see.



### • Thanksgiving Communion •

The Lord's Supper is a celebration of God's greatest gift, our salvation. Eucharist, the word early Christians used to describe Holy Communion, literally means "thanksgiving." Plan a time to gather and observe the Lord's Supper and express gratitude for His sacrifice.

The Lord's Supper is to be taken by those who have made a decision to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. Children will naturally want to have some, but this is a great opportunity to teach that the Lord's Supper is for those who fully understand and have made this decision.

1. Purchase matzo flat bread and grape juice. (Any kind of bread may be used but the flat bread is more demonstrative of "His body broken for us.")

2. Read the passage from Matthew 26:26-28, *"As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, 'Take this and eat it, for this is My body.' And He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, 'Each of you drink from it, for this is My blood, which confirms the covenant between God and His people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many.'"* (NLT)

3. Talk about what a symbol is (i.e. wedding ring symbolizes the fact that one is married, a flag symbolizes our country, a picture of a cow is not a cow, but it reminds us of what a cow looks like).

4. Talk about the symbols of the bread and the juice, His body and His blood.

5. Remind everyone that the bread and juice can't save us, but they "symbolize" what happened when Jesus Christ died to pay for our sins.

6. Say a prayer of thanksgiving for what Christ did for us.

7. Eat the bread and drink the juice before repeating what each represents.