



## Navigators Discipleship Tool



# 12 Thanksgiving Activities for Families

This season of gratitude provides an ideal opportunity for Christ-centered Thanksgiving activities for families. When children (adults, too!) understand what it means to be grateful, they begin to develop an awareness of all that God has given them, as well as a sense of contentment.

The Bible tells us to “give thanks to the Lord, for he is good” and to “enter his gates with thanksgiving” (Psalm 107:1, Psalm 100:4). Yet that attitude is often lost in our “I want more” culture. Cultivating a grateful posture in our lives is no small task.

**Here are Thanksgiving activities for families that can help cultivate an attitude of gratitude.**



### 1. Tell a story.

Children of all ages love stories. Use Scripture stories to reinforce the importance of gratitude. You could start with the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 from Matthew 14:13-21.



### 2. Act it out.

Read the story of the 10 lepers (Luke 17:11-19). Highlight that Jesus was pleased with the one man who returned to give thanks for being healed. Provide rags for bandages, and let your children play the roles of the lepers and Jesus. Let them dramatize the healing, with all of them rushing off while only one returns.



### 3. Share a song.

Look up the story of the Israelites' celebration after Jerusalem's walls were rebuilt (Nehemiah 12:27-47). Talk about the instruments they used and the two great choirs that marched atop the walls to the temple. Then put together a homegrown band using real or improvised instruments. For younger kids: Practice joyful praise songs, and march around the “walls” of your home or yard. For older children: What are your favorite sounds of praise and thanksgiving today? They may have a favorite worship song they'd like to share with the family.



### 4. Gain perspective.

Ask your church for the name of a missionary family they support and find out about their life overseas. Discover where there are similarities and differences. As a family, brainstorm ways you could bless this family. There could be a special need they have that you could together save for and provide. Or you could write them letters of gratitude for their sacrifice and ministry so those around them hear the gospel. Make sure it is safe for those missionary families you would like to encourage to receive email, mail, or packages containing Scriptures and the mention of God.



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### 5. Create a goodness chain.

Help your children make a goodness chain. Gather scissors, stickers, pencils, crayons, glue, and construction paper. Cut the paper in strips, and ask your kids to think about the many ways they notice God's goodness in and around their lives. Have them write or draw these attributes on the strips. Connect the strips to form a chain, and hang the chain in a place where it will remind your family of God's goodness.



### 6. Make an everyday blessing basket.

Place a basket containing a pencil and pad of paper in an easy-to-reach location. Encourage family members to jot down ways they notice the everyday blessings from God. Younger children can draw or cut out pictures from magazines. These could be a beautiful sunset, a special moment with someone they love, or even enjoying a yummy dessert. Set aside some time to share what's in the blessing basket on Thanksgiving Day.



### 7. Share a favorite family memory.

During this season, ask your family to share a memory that is meaningful to them. Explore these favorite memories as an opportunity to discover more ways of creating memories in the future.



### 8. Find your seat.

Help your children make a place card for each person joining you for Thanksgiving. On one side, write names of guests and family; on the other, write a Scripture around the themes of thankfulness and God's goodness. Have each person read the verse on their place card before the prayer.



### 9. Read a thanksgiving psalm.

Read Psalm 100 together as a family. Try reading this Scripture passage in a few different Bible versions to explore the different ways praise and thanksgiving to God is offered in this psalm.



### 10. Say the blessing for a meal.

Start a conversation around the meaning behind giving thanks to God before a meal. During this season, give each family member an opportunity to say the blessing in their own way.



### 11. Set the mood.

Give an unlit votive candle to each person. Light your own candle, and thank God for specific blessings. Then continue the process around the table until all the candles are lit.



### 12. Share your gratitude with others.

As a family, decide on who you would like to encourage and thank this season. This could include teachers, coaches, pastors, neighbors, teammates, friends, or even extended family. Write each name on an envelope and put all the envelopes in a container. Pull out the number of envelopes your family could send out that week. Have each family member write one or two sentences and younger kids draw thank-you pictures in each corresponding thank-you card. Then see what happens next as you thank God for those in your life and encourage their hearts in the process.

These are a few Thanksgiving activities for your family that could be started this season and even continued beyond. Don't stop here, but use these as a way to create more Christ-centered Thanksgiving activities that guide your family toward a posture of gratitude.