

Thanksgiving Gratitude Games and Activities for Kids

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More than any other holiday, Thanksgiving is a day dedicated to reflecting and gratitude for everything we have in life. During the first unofficial Thanksgiving in the New World in 1621, Native Americans and the pilgrims came together to host a feast to celebrate the first fall harvest after a particularly rough year. These individuals put aside their conflicts share in their gratitude, just as many families tend to do at the Thanksgiving dinner table today.



Before diving straight into the Christmas holiday season, which can sometimes materialize the giving spirit, it's important to take the time to show children how to reflect upon what they're thankful for, and to create ways to express their gratitude.

Before the big day, try some of the following Thanksgiving activities for kids that promote thankfulness and gratitude to teach your child or your students the true meaning behind this important holiday. Then, keep reading to find active games that are great for any classroom party, or even just to keep the them busy while you're cooking!

Thanksgiving Gratitude Games and Activities

Children learn lessons and values best when they are presented in a positive and fun manner. Whether you're a teacher or a parent, the following activity ideas can be used at home or in the classroom to inspire your child throughout the season.

Gratitude Scavenger Hunt: Thanksgiving Edition

Kids love scavenger hunts, so why not make one that is geared towards helping little learners reflect upon what they are thankful for the most? This activity will require some forethought and preparation but is well worth the effort!

Items needed:

- Scavenger hunt cards with instructions and a checklist
- Access to digital cameras. Phones or tablets work well!
- A way to print, share, or view photos

What to do:

To get started, prepare scavenger hunt cards ahead of time. These cards should include directions, what to look for in the hunt, and a checklist. For this activity, kids will be taking pictures of things they are thankful for. Ideas for what to look for to picture on the hunt include things like, "something in nature", or "someone older than me", or "something that has words on it". Depending on if you are a parent or teacher, you may want to set rules/boundaries ahead of time, and it's up to you if you want this activity to span several days at home, or to be something that is only done at one time.

When it's time to begin, kids can be grouped in small groups or with siblings, or they may complete the activity individually. Children will work through the list, finding items they are thankful for and snapping a picture. After the photo is taken, simply have them check the item as completed on the list.

When the activity is over, share the photos and explain! If at home and as a parent, this might include projecting the images on a computer or TV screen to discuss. In a school setting, have students submit pictures to a gallery file on your school's learning management system, or devise a way for the pictures to be printed and compiled in class.



Watch on [YouTube](#)

[Need more ideas to keep the kids actively engaged before and during Thanksgiving break? Find holiday-themed worksheets, games, and more on the Talented and Gifted app. Act fast and subscribe now to our Talented and Gifted app with 60% Cyber Week discount!](#)

Make a Thankful Jar

In the days or weeks leading up to the big day, make this Thankful Jar to prepare for Thanksgiving!

Items Needed:

- A large mason jar
- Colorful strips of paper
- Markers or pens
- Any decorations for the jar as you see fit!

What to do:

Before getting started, help kids decorate the Thankful Jar in any way that they would like. Make it look like a turkey face or paint it to be colorful! When ready to get started, make the colorful strips available to children by placing them in a familiar spot. Each day, or every time they feel reflective of something they are thankful for, they will write down what that what it is and place it into the jar.

On or before Thanksgiving, make it a point to remove all the strips of paper from the jar. Take turns reading the strips and allowing kids to explain if they would like! This would be a great activity to do during Thanksgiving dinner, or at a classroom party before the break from school. Be sure to allow students enough days to fill the jar to get the most out of this exercise!

M&M's Gratitude Game

If your family has left room for some dessert, this M&M's gratitude game will come in handy for after-dinner conversation! All you need are some pre-made gratitude cards, and "Fun Sized" M&M's! To prepare, make cards that list prompts like, "name a person you are grateful for and why", or "name a memory of something you are grateful for and explain". Make a list six prompts, and place (or draw!) a colorful dot next to each. Be sure to use the colors of M&M's: red, yellow, orange, green, blue, and brown.

When ready to play, distribute a pack of "Fun Sized" M&M's to each player. Each participant will open their packet and spill out the M&M's on the table, just in front of them. Taking turns, everyone will choose a color and answer the prompt aloud, covering the dot with the M&M. When everyone is finished, the candy can be eaten! Discuss further about what each player is grateful for, why!

Turkey Talk Month-Long Conversation Starters

Rather than waiting, why not talk about thankfulness for the entire month. If you don't have that much time, try this activity each day until Thanksgiving to get kids and adults in the right mindset for reflection and gratitude.

This activity is perfect for dinner conversations, or warm-ups at the beginning of class, make a series of cards that ask questions like, "what has happened in the last month that you are the most thankful for and why?". Try to keep prompts focused on anything that has happen recently and encourage them to share "the little things", too! At home, set out the cards on the dining table before dinner for every night of the month or week. Before the mealtime prayers or eating, encourage all family members to answer the prompt. Go around the table, sharing!

Adapt this idea for the classroom by using it as a warm-up as children enter the room in the morning. Place a card on each student's desk so that it is front and center each day. Start the first lesson off positively by sharing around the room, each school day before the break!

Thanksgiving-Themed Games for Classroom or Family Parties

Sometimes parents are looking active games to play just to keep kids busy while cooking, or during a family gathering! Teachers may need ideas to keep rambunctious little ones busy before school lets out for an extended weekend. Find the fun-filled activities below that can be used during a Thanksgiving party!



Stuff the Turkey Learning Game for Kids

This active game keeps children and adults busy having fun, and can also be adapted as a gratitude game, as well!

Items needed:

- 1 large brown paper grocery bag
- 2 small paper lunch bags
- Scrap pieces of paper
- White tissue paper
- Stapler, glue, or tape
- Colored construction paper

What to do:

Before playing, the turkey will need to be constructed! To make it, take the large grocery bag and turn it into a turkey by turning it inside out, obscuring the advertisements on the outside. On what will become the front of the turkey, fold down the top about 4 inches. Take the front edges and fold them in, as if you are wrapping a present before taping or stapling to secure the flaps. Stuff the two smaller paper bags with scrap pieces of paper and use these to create the turkey legs. Top them with the white tissue paper to make them look like a cooked turkey leg with the exposed bone. Glue or staple the legs onto the side of the turkey, and it's ready to play!

To get started with the game, wad the construction paper pieces into balls. To adapt this as a gratitude game, have the players write down what it is they're thankful for, before crumpling the paper into balls. Set the turkey on the ground outside, or on a table if it's too cold to play outdoors! Participants take turns throwing their paper balls into the turkey to stuff it! After finishing, have all players choose any paper ball, open it and share what's written inside!

Turkey Butternut Bowling

There is quite possibly no cuter way to use butternut squash! At the store, buy at least 10 of the gourds to use for this adorable game. All you need will be the 10 squash, and a ball to use as a bowling ball. Feel free to decorate the squash, giving them turkey faces. Print a template online, or create your own faces using construction paper and a hot glue gun.

To play, line up the squash like bowling pins and allow for enough space for kids to bowl. Before each turn, encourage players to name something they are thankful for before taking their first shot. Keep score like any other bowling game, naming what each participant is grateful for with each new turn. The player who knocks down the most squash wins!

DIY Thanksgiving Pictionary

Pictionary is a perennial classic when it comes to kid-friendly party and holiday games! All you'll need is poster paper, or a large dry erase board, and something to draw with. To tweak this game for Thanksgiving, instruct players to think of what they're thankful for and watch as each participant draws it out! Guess the picture that your child, student, or family members are drawing, and answer correctly to win the round!

In the classroom, this exciting game can also be adapted to instruct players to draw out historical facts that they know about the first Thanksgiving. See what your students know about American history and watch as their knowledge comes to life!

As we approach the holiday season, it's important not to forget about the one holiday that keeps us humble. Celebrate it with your children this fall by choosing one of the Thanksgiving games for kids above. This season show them how to reflect upon their gratitude and share it with those they love!

