

## Day 1: The First Thanksgiving

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

In the fall of 1620, a merchant ship called the *Mayflower* set sail from Plymouth, England with 102 passengers on board. These men, women, and children sought religious freedom or a better life in a New World they knew little about. Sixty-six days later they landed in present-day Massachusetts, far north of their intended destination of Virginia. Winter was setting in and the settlers were ill prepared for the harsh months ahead. That first winter, they suffered illness and food scarcity and many died.

Meanwhile, a group of indigenous people called the Wampanoag watched the pilgrims from a distance. They had seen many ships come in before, but never with women and children. They must have felt very unsure about these new neighbors.

In the spring, the pilgrims who survived met Squanto, a Native American who spoke English and offered to help them. Because of his extensive knowledge in how to grow and hunt food, the pilgrims reaped a bountiful harvest that autumn. In celebration, they gathered together with their Wampanoag neighbors and celebrated with a feast, the first Thanksgiving.

As the pilgrims looked back and remembered their hardship, then looked ahead and saw God's abundant provision, they had reason to rejoice. Pain and loss give us a new perspective and help us to not take things for granted. Have you ever been ill and unable to taste your food for a few days? How did you feel when your taste returned and you took a bite of something delicious? Your appreciation for that food and its taste grew, didn't it? Suddenly, you savored every morsel. In a similar way, when the pilgrims reaped a plentiful harvest, they felt profound joy because of the lack they had experienced the past year. And so they rejoiced and gave thanks to God.

When God allows us to walk through challenging seasons of life, we have a choice. We can allow these difficulties to make us bitter, or we can remember that it is through suffering that God often chooses to mature us, humble us, and transform us into joy-filled, grateful people.

Picture book *This Is the Fear* by Diane Z. Shore

Activity Watercolor leaves + Gratitude tree

Hymn Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Recipe Pumpkin pie smoothie

Preschool Thanksgiving story bracelet

## Activity: Watercolor Leaves & Pumpkins



Copy the shapes above onto watercolor paper using a light pencil. Use watercolor paint to fill in the shapes with the suggested colors. Keep the colors light by diluting your paint with plenty of water. Let dry completely.

## Activity: Gratitude Tree

What you need:

Dry, leafless branches

A large glass vase

Leaf printables (see pages 33-34 of this guide)

Pen or Sharpie

Mini clothespins

Optional: Pebbles or sand to fill the vase and keep the branches in place

Paint watercolor leaves on watercolor paper using instructions above - or use the painted leaves on pages 33-34 of this guide. Use a pen or Sharpie to write something on each leaf that you're grateful for. Cut out the leaves and clip to the branches for a beautiful centerpiece that reflects God's faithfulness.





## Picture Study: *The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth*



*The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth* by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe (1914)

This beautiful oil-on-canvas painting features an interpretation of what the first Thanksgiving might have looked like. Though the artist conducted extensive research using portraits and historical documents, there are a few details that aren't quite accurate.

Spot and circle the differences:

1. Men and women of the Wampanoag tribe commonly wore a single feather in their hair.
2. The pilgrims would have lived in homes with thatched roofs and no front porch.
3. It is most likely that participants sat on the ground and ate their food with their hands.

Test your knowledge by marking T for true or F for false:

- \_\_\_\_\_ There was no pumpkin pie, cranberry sauce, or sweet potatoes at the first Thanksgiving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The first Thanksgiving was celebrated in late November.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is believed that the first Thanksgiving meal included fish, shellfish, and even eel.

Answer key: 1. True 2. False - it was celebrated in late September or early October, surrounding the recently gathered harvest. 3. True

## Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Though we don't know which hymns might have been sung on the first Thanksgiving, we do know that a song called "All People That on Earth Do Dwell" was sung by the pilgrims around this time. It has different lyrics but a similar melody to "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."

Let's sing this song together!

1. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise

3. Him, all creatures here be-low; Praise Him a-bove, ye

6. heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost. A - men.

Baptist Hymnal 1991 253  
WORDS: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711  
MUSIC (OLD 100TH (altered) 8.8.8.8 (L.M.)): Genevan Psalter, 1551 Edition; attr. Louis Bourgeois, 1510-1561





## PSALM 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!  
Serve the Lord with gladness!  
Come into his presence with singing!

Know that the Lord, he is God!  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise!  
Give thanks to him; bless his name!

For the Lord is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.