



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

# THANKSGIVING FAITH FORMATION

## Activities for Families

**NATURE WALK:** It's a beautiful time of year to be outdoors. Go for a walk as a family—invite your neighbours too! As you walk, discuss what you are most thankful for in God's natural creation. Bring souvenirs back from the walk (leaves, sticks, acorns, stones) and put them in a special place in your home. Each time you pass by, remind those in your family to give thanks to God for the natural world.

**A COUNT-YOUR-BLESSINGS COLLAGE:** Find a blank wall in your home to attach a poster board. Place a small table of art supplies underneath it. In the days leading up to Thanksgiving, invite all members of your family and guests who visit the house to write, draw, or glue a magazine picture of what they are thankful for to the poster board. Use the collage at Thanksgiving dinner to give thanks to God for all you have.

**THANK YOU BANK:** Look through the Presbyterian Church in Canada Gifts of Change catalogue ([presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange](http://presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange)). Choose a "gift" related to something you are thankful for (clean water, food, education, security). Make "piggy banks" out of cans, jars or boxes by decorating them with images related to the gift you've chosen. Deposit coins in the bank every day for the whole month of October and then submit your donation.

**CANDLE LIGHTING:** Fall is a time when the weather is cooling down and the days are getting shorter. Make it a ritual to light a candle in the evening. Remind your children that Jesus is a light for us in the darkness, and he promises to provide for our every need. Teach them to say a short prayer based on Ephesians 1:18 as you light the candle: "Give light to our hearts, Jesus, so we will experience the hope you bring."

**COUNTDOWN TO THANKSGIVING BIBLE VERSES:** Write or print off Bible verses about giving thanks. Put them in a jar. Have each child take a Bible verse from the jar and read it. Find a way of integrating the verse into a family routine you are already doing, such as driving or walking to school, eating breakfast, or reading before bed. Here are printable Bible verses with questions you can use to start these discussions: [faithgateway.com/thanksgiving-bible-verses-free-printable](http://faithgateway.com/thanksgiving-bible-verses-free-printable)



**PRAISE PUMPKINS:** Start a family tradition of using pumpkins as reminders to praise God. Go to the pumpkin patch and have each member of the family choose their own unique pumpkin. Talk to kids about the qualities of pumpkins and draw links to what it means to be a Christian ([happyhomefairy.com/being-a-christian-is-like-being-a-pumpkin-free-printable](http://happyhomefairy.com/being-a-christian-is-like-being-a-pumpkin-free-printable)). When you get home, paint the pumpkins white and then, after they are dry, write praises to God on them.

**MAKE A THANKSGIVING TREE:** Gather or buy long sticks and put them in a large vase. Make paper cutouts of leaves in the fall colours of orange, red, yellow and brown. Invite family members and guests to write something on the leaves that they are thankful for. Attach the leaves to the branches using twine or colourful pipe cleaner. [hgtv.com/design/make-and-celebrate/handmade/new-thanksgiving-tradition-create-a-thankful-tree](http://hgtv.com/design/make-and-celebrate/handmade/new-thanksgiving-tradition-create-a-thankful-tree)

**PRAYERS OF THANKS:** Thanksgiving is the perfect time of year to teach children how to pray. Children are good at identifying things that they enjoy and appreciate about their lives. Ask them about those things and write them down or, better yet, have the child draw them. Using the list or drawing as a prayer prompt; start the praying simply with “God, we thank you for...” As you or your child names each thing, have your child draw circles using colourful markers around each of the prayer requests. At the end, you will have a colourful list of thankfulness that you can put on the fridge or in the child’s room.

**PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT:** Make a list of all the things that you are grateful for in your neighbourhood (favourite hangouts, gardens, parks, neighbours, restaurants, trees, etc.). Divide into two groups, ensuring that each group has a device they can use to take pictures. Send both groups out to collect pictures of as many things on the list as they can in a certain amount of time (your time limit will depend on the length of your list!). The group with photos of the most items wins. If both teams have pictures of all the items, then determine the winner by the quality of the photos. If you want to take this game one step further, have the photos developed and make a collage in your home of all the things you are grateful for in your neighbourhood.

**SHARE THANKSGIVING BLESSINGS:** As a family, choose a couple of people you’d like to bless this Thanksgiving. Perhaps there is an older person in your congregation, without family in the area, who could use a visit. Or maybe one of your neighbours is struggling with an illness so you could pick some flowers to bring them. Thanksgiving offers excellent opportunities to teach your kids how to put Jesus’ command to “love your neighbours” into action.

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow.***



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