
Holy Hacks: November 15, 2019

By the Rev. Julia Mitchener

“If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.”—Meister Eckhart

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays. I love its focus on community and gratitude—two things we can never have too much of in our world. While thankfulness knows no season, the month of November is a wonderful time for children to practice being grateful. Here are some ideas to help your family get a jump start on the holiday:

1. Put a gratitude box (or bowl) in a central location in your home. Place index cards or slips of paper nearby and encourage family members to write or draw one thing for which they are grateful each day, then drop their paper in the box. Read the contents on Thanksgiving.
2. Read a few books that encourage thinking and talking about gratitude. Some good options include: *The Secret of Saying Thanks* by Douglas Wood; *Gratitude Soup* by Olivia Rosewood; *Bear Says Thanks* by Karma Wilson; *All the World* by Liz Garton Scanlon; *The Thank You Book* by Mo Willems; and *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Pena.
3. Create a gratitude mural on a big sheet of butcher paper. Have children draw pictures of people and things for which they are thankful. Hang the mural somewhere in your home or even use it as the tablecloth at the children’s table during the big feast.
4. Take a gratitude walk, maybe right after Thanksgiving dinner. Get outside and challenge each family member to name at least three things they see in nature that they appreciate.
5. Make a family gratitude book. Buy a small photo album and invite your children to fill it with pictures or drawings of people and things for which they are grateful. Save the book and pull it out again next year.
6. Film a Thanksgiving themed “Year in Review.” Recruit a child to make a video of family members describing events that brought them joy in 2019

A Prayer of Thanks to God (sung to the tune of “Twinkle, twinkle, little star”)

Thank you for the earth and sky,
Thank you for the birds that fly.
Thank you for the food we grow,
Thank you for the streams that flow.
Thank you, thank you, this we say
Thanks for all we have today! Amen.