This year, consider using one or more of the following suggestions when you observe Thanksgiving in your home or with others.

* Many countries have a day of thanksgiving to celebrate the harvest of crops and the food provided by the land that sustains us. Create a list of the foods you enjoy. Give thanks for the earth and the blessings of the world that God has created.
* Create a place tag for every person who will partake of the Thanksgiving meal in your home. On one side of the tag, write the name of the person. On the other side, place a word or phrase from a verse of Scripture. Ask each person to line up according to the verse of Scripture. This determines who sits by whom during the meal. Say the Scriptures together after everyone has been seated.
* Identify family members and close friends of your family who will not be able to be with you at Thanksgiving. Create or purchase cards for each of these people. On Thanksgiving Day, invite all who are gathered in your home to sign and/or write a note on the cards to those who are missing. Don’t forget to mail the cards on the Friday following Thanksgiving!
* Make a blessing box. Ask different family members to write on slips of paper things for which they are thankful and to place the slips of paper in the blessing box. Use the box as a centerpiece on Thanksgiving Day. Pass around the box, pull out the slips of paper, and read the blessings.
* Reflect on the past year. Ask each person gathered at your Thanksgiving celebration to share one thing that happened to him or her during the past year for which he or she is thankful.
* Take a photograph of all who are gathered with you to celebrate Thanksgiving.  Label it “Thanksgiving 2018” and list on the back the names of all who are there and one thing each person is thankful for this year.
* Pray for those who have lost family members during the last year.  Light a candle of remembrance and call out the names of those in the family who are no longer physically present.
* Use the following as a litany of thanks prior to your Thanksgiving Meal:

**Reader**:  Today is Thanksgiving Day.  We are grateful to be together at this time of the year.

**Reader:**  Hear these words from the Bible:
“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.”  (Psalm 24:1-2, NIV)

**Reader**:  As we light the candles on this table, let them be a reminder to us of God’s presence with us.

**Reader**:  Let us pray, “O God for all the blessings we enjoy, we give you thanks.  Help us look at the world around us in such a way that we see your hand in creation and in those we meet.  Help us be a blessing today to those gathered around this table and in all our days to those we meet at home, at school, in church, and in our community.  AMEN.

https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/thanksgiving-celebrations-for-the-home

**1. Act it Out**Read the story of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). Remind your children 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.

**2. Make Some Noise**Look up the story of the Israelites’ celebration after the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt (Nehemiah 12:27-46). Talk about the instruments they used and the two great choirs that marched atop the walls to the temple; a joyous, active "thanksgiving" that could be heard "far away" (Nehemiah 12:43). Put together a home grown band using real or handmade instruments. Practice joyful praise songs and march around the "walls".

**3. Read a Book**Share a book that expresses gratitude and thankfulness. For example, consider Corrie ten Boom’s book [*The Hiding Place*](http://www.randomhouse.com/book/16030/the-hiding-place-by-corrie-ten-boom-and-john-scherrill)teaches a great lesson in thankfulness. Share Corrie’s story, pointing out her struggle to be "thankful in all things." She even thanked God for fleas in her barracks. She later learned that the fleas kept the guards away and allowed Corrie and others to study the Bible undisturbed.

**4. Create a Chain Reaction**Make a "God is Good" 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 God is good. Have them write or draw these attributes on the strips, then connect them to form a chain and hang it in a place where it will remind your family of God’s goodness.

**5. Make a Blessing Basket**Place a pretty fall basket containing a pencil and pad of paper in an easy-to-reach location. Throughout the month, encourage family members to jot down ways God has blessed them. Younger children can draw or cut out pictures from magazines. Read these together and give God thanks each day or set aside some time on Thanksgiving Day.

**6. Trim a Tree of Thanks**Draw and cut out a large paper tree with lots of loose leaves in autumn colors. Mount the tree in a prominent place and put the leaves nearby in a box with glue and markers. Ask your family to write things they are thankful for on the leaves, filling the tree by the end of the month. Consider the following question: "If I could keep only the gifts I’ve thanked God for today, what would I have?" Ask younger children: "What do you want to thank God for today?" Encourage your family to add to the tree daily.

**7. Create Scripture-themed Place Cards**Have the children make a place card for each place setting on the Thanksgiving table. On one side, write names of guests and family; on the other, type a Scripture verse about being thankful. Let each person read a verse before the blessing.

**8. Encourage Sharing**Place a paper leaf at each place with an "assignment" written on it. Each person adds to the festivities by completing their assignment. Assignments might include:

* Read Psalm 100
* Share a Thanksgiving memory (use this on several paper leaves)
* Sing a Thanksgiving song (good for preschoolers)
* Lead the group in a praise chorus (have copies of the lyrics available)
* Say the blessing for our meal

**9. Let your Lights Shine**Give an unlit votive candle to each person. Begin by lighting your own candle and thanking God for specific blessings. Then, continue the process around the table until all the candles are lit, making sure to keep the flames away from small children. Lead your family in a candlelight service of thanksgiving.

https://www.buildfaith.org/thanksgiving-activities-for-church-and-families/#gref

<https://www.sadlier.com/religion/blog/free-thanksgiving-prayers-reflections-for-catholic-families>

<https://childrensministry.com/thanksgiving-gratitude-bingo/>

<http://akidsheart.com/bible/PsalmsofThanksp.htm>

<https://www.christianitycove.com/thanksgiving-game-thankful-toss/7857/>

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/thanksgiving-family-kids-parenting-thanks-filled-activities>

<https://www.sharefaith.com/blog/2014/10/10-ways-celebrate-thanksgiving-biblical-perspective/>