

## Thanksgiving Traditions: Nine Ideas for Families

Celebrate families and togetherness this Thanksgiving Day with some time honored traditions, which give us a sense of family identity and meaningfulness that can last for generations. Here are nine ideas for starting new family traditions, and for revering the old ones:

1. Sit down with your family and reminisce about your childhood celebrations. What do you remember most about Thanksgiving and the days that follow? Thanksgiving traditions can be much more than just food and recipes. In what ways did your childhood traditions symbolize particular values, such as abundance, generosity, the importance of family? What would you like to do that is the same? What would you do like to do differently?
2. Make a small booklet or a mini scrapbook album (which you can either make or purchase.) Write "Five Things I Love About My Family and Friends" and keep it out on the table during your Thanksgiving celebration. Each guest can come and record thoughts and insights. Other themes to try: "Five Things I am Thankful For" or "Five Wishes for my Family and Friends." An even simpler approach would be to put one sheet of cardstock out for each year, and combine them together over the years in a Thanksgiving Gratitude Scrapbook.
3. Keep a Family Gratitude Journal throughout the year. Each night, a family member can share something that they are grateful for. Share the highlights of this family tradition at the dinner table on Thanksgiving Day.
4. Make a Gratitude Circle. Before the Thanksgiving meal, everyone stands and holds hands in a circle. Guests each take a turn sharing what they are grateful for. Or, if your guests are on the shy side, ask everyone to write down their blessings on a piece of paper, which you can read before or after dinner.
5. Designate a particular tablecloth for your family Thanksgiving celebrations. Provide fabric markers where guests can record their "gratitudes" or special prayers for the year ahead. Ask your guests to sign and date each message, as you will be using the same tablecloth year after year.
6. Involve the entire family in Thanksgiving decorations. Family Fun magazine posts lots of creative ideas for the entire family at [familyfun.go.com](http://familyfun.go.com)
7. Make a hostess gift for the person who is cooking this year. Purchase an apron or a T shirt or a gift album with sentiments of thanks from each guest. Present the gift after dinner.
8. Show your gratitude to an unsung hero. Get together with your family and decide on a person or a group in your community who could use an extra pat on the back, ie. firefighters, soldiers, police officers, volunteers. Put together a special plate of goodies and deliver it (or pack it up for shipping) as a family.
9. Preserve your traditions. After the meal, record the favorite activities of each family member. Appoint one person to be the scribe, or ask everyone to jot down a few thoughts. Remember to take lots of photos. It is fun to place disposable cameras throughout the house so everyone can capture bits of the action.

## About the Author

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