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Thanksgiving Traditions of Gratitude

By Teresa Hansen

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Several years ago, I was on a talk show, sharing some of these ideas to show our thankfulness.

During the break, one of the hosts shared with me their family Thanksgiving tradition.

With tears in her eyes she said, "My mother taught us that many of the early settlers of our country starved to death because there was not enough food. Sometimes all they got to eat each day was five kernels of corn. When we start our Thanksgiving dinner, each person is served five kernels of corn on their plate. Then we each share five blessings we are grateful for as we move those five kernels of corn across our plate."

This story touched me. It is such an effective and dramatic way to actually visualize how much we have as we first witness the scarceness of food so many people have to endure before we eat our feast and enjoy our bounty.

Ways to Count Your Blessings & Show Your Gratitude

- After prayer on the food, hold hands and take turns telling what you're thankful for.
- Make a Thanksgiving Box--Have your family write notes about what they are thankful for and stick them in a box beginning a week before Thanksgiving. At Thanksgiving dinner open the box and read the notes.
- On small cards or paper, write down the following categories on each paper:
person, day, place, experience, food, item
Go around the table and have each person draw out a card. Then that person tells of something they are grateful for from that category and why they are grateful for it.
- On Thanksgiving Day hang a piece of posterboard where it will be accessible to everyone. Have everyone in your family write things on it that they are thankful for. See how many you can come up with by the end of the day. (Or write these on a roll of cash register receipt paper and tape it up around

the room.)

- Have thank-you notes and stationary readily available to everyone in your home on Thanksgiving day. Encourage your family to write a letter or thank-you note to someone they are thankful for: a teacher, a grandparent, a friend.
- Invite a new family in your neighborhood or a lonely person to dinner
- Go to a homeless shelter to help cook and serve Thanksgiving dinner
- Gather food to take to a local food bank

About the Author Teresa Hansen is the creator of www.momsmakingit.com sharing creative ideas to save time, save money, and enrich your life! Visit <http://savemoney.momsmakingit.com> for your free e-guide "Moms Making It! 111 Great Money Saving Ideas!" She is a wife and mother of five children.

Thanksgiving Traditions that Make Memories

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Thanksgiving is a time of family, food and fun. Here are some ideas of traditions you can start that will give you those "warm fuzzy feelings" for years to come!

- Watch the parade on TV or make an effort to attend the parade. Don't forget a thermos of hot chocolate
- Family Portrait Time--use this picture for Christmas cards
- Decorate with: gourds, indian corn, corn stalks, pine cones, fall leaves, cornucopia, a large pine cone turkey with feathers
- As family gathers, this is an excellent time for making a personal history video helping to connect the generations. Ask questions such as:
 - What was life like when you were our age?
 - What were your parents like?
 - What were your brothers, and sisters like?
 - What was your happiest memory as a child? your saddest?
 - How did you and your spouse meet?

Ask the interviewee to bring along momentos or pictures for your children to look at.

Here is a great webpage full of other interesting questions to ask.

http://articles.scrapbooking.com/family_history.htm

- Break out the Christmas music
- Watch a favorite holiday movie each Thanksgiving to bring on the Christmas season such as: It's a Wonderful Life, Miracle on 34th Street, The Santa Clause, Little Drummer Boy.

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