

The Thanksgiving Family Activity Planner

A printable companion to Thanksgiving Activities for Families

Print this planner and keep it with the recipe you reach for every November. It gives you all twelve activities at a glance, the supplies to gather, a four-week countdown so nothing lands on the morning itself, a gratitude journal page, place-card templates and a reset list for after the plates are cleared.

The Twelve Activities at a Glance

#	Activity	Ages	Time	Done
1	The gratitude tablecloth	4 and up	20 min	
2	The family interview	7 and up	30 min	
3	The gratitude jar	3 and up	10 min	
4	The goodness chain	4 and up	25 min	
5	The thankful tree	3 and up	20 min	
6	The photo story of the year	6 and up	40 min	
7	The place-card workshop	5 and up	30 min	
8	The kitchen crew	6 and up	1 hour	
9	The leaf-and-candle centrepiece	5 and up	25 min	
10	The thank-you assembly line	5 and up	30 min	
11	The neighbourhood delivery	6 and up	45 min	
12	The game hour	5 and up	45 min	

Pick three, not twelve. A day that holds three done properly beats a day that half-starts all of them.

Supplies to Gather

Almost everything here lives in a normal kitchen cupboard. Check the list a week early so nothing turns into a shop run on the day.

- A plain cream or white cotton tablecloth (or a length of unbleached cotton) and fabric pens
- A jar with a wide mouth, plus a stack of small slips of paper and a pencil pot
- Construction paper in rust, gold and deep green, cut or ready to cut into strips
- A glue stick and a roll of low-tack tape
- A spool of natural twine or thin kitchen string

- Blank card stock or folded card blanks, about 20
- Envelopes and a roll of stamps
- Coloured pencils and one or two washable paint pots (rust, ochre, deep green)
- A branch with a stable base, or a small pot filled with sand or gravel
- Twelve or so blank gift tags
- A handful of clean dry leaves, pressed flat for a day or two
- Two or three tealights or short pillar candles in glass holders
- A cake stand or shallow dish for a centrepiece
- One index card and a pencil per person at the table

Four-Week Countdown

When	What to do
Four weeks out	Choose your three activities and write them on the family calendar. Ask one relative for a fifteen-minute interview slot on the day.
Three weeks out	Order or gather the supplies above. Check the tablecloth and the fabric pens are actually where you think they are.
Two weeks out	Cut the paper strips for the goodness chain and the tags for the thankful tree. Bag them with the twine so there is no hunting later.
One week out	Print this planner. Blank the place cards. Press the leaves under a heavy book.
The night before	Set the jar, the index cards and the pencils on the table. Charge the phone you will use to record the interview.
Thanksgiving morning	Do the one activity that needs calm at nine, before the kitchen takes over. Everything else is flexible.
After the meal	Read the jar aloud. Then work the reset list below before anyone leaves the table.

Gratitude Journal Page

Keep this page in the November section of a binder and add to it each year. Four lines a year becomes something worth reading in a decade.

November _____ · Something small I was thankful for

November _____ · Someone who helped me this week

November _____ · Something hard that turned out fine

November _____ · What I want to remember about today

Place-Card Templates

Cut along the lines. Let each person write their own name on the front and one sentence of thanks on the back, then read it aloud before the meal. Younger children draw instead.

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Thanksgiving Morning Checklist

- The three chosen activities are written down where an adult can see them, not just remembered.
- The one calm activity is done before the kitchen gets busy.
- Every child has a job that is genuinely theirs, not a pretend one.

- One adult is free of kitchen duty for the first hour.
- The screens have a stated home and a stated time to come back.
- Someone has checked that the interview is actually being recorded.
- A backup quiet activity is ready for whoever melts down first.
- Nobody has promised a perfectly decorated table.

After the Meal: Reset and Record

- Read the gratitude jar aloud while everyone is still seated.
- Add this year's names and date to the tablecloth in fabric pen.
- Write the date on the back of any new place card before it goes in the box.
- Photograph the chain, the tree and the table before anything comes down.
- Fold and store the tablecloth flat, not bundled in a drawer.
- Put the thank-you cards in the post the next morning, not next week.
- Move anything unfinished to Sunday and say so out loud.
- Write one line on the journal page above.

Next Year's List

Three things worth trying in twelve months. Writing them now is the whole reason this page exists.

One activity to bring back

One activity to retire

One person to invite earlier in the day

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