

Theme: THANKSGIVING

Gross Motor (Indoor & Outdoor):

Gobble-Gobble-Turkey! (aka Duck-Duck-Goose)
Make a "fort" with sheets and chairs for the Pilgrims to live in – or a teepee for the Indians – so children can pretend to visit each other and invite each other to Thanksgiving dinner.
Set up an obstacle course to represent the fact that the pilgrims coming to the new world had to go through the wilderness to find a place to settle and build their own homes. Children can sit on pillows and pretend to be pulling oars through the water in their imaginary "boats" coming ashore.

Math Activities:

Memory Game: Make some cards with Thanksgiving pictures on them—two of each—for children to play a game of "concentration."
Count the sails on the Mayflower, count the turkeys, etc., using the flannel board.
Make cards to match up with turkeys on one and numbers on the other—count the number of feathers on the turkey.
Thanksgiving Bingo (print out bingo game at <http://www.mes-english.com/flashcards/thanksgiving.php>)
Help Mr. Squirrel count his acorns. (Gather real acorns and let the children count them. SUPERVISE small children!) Could also use felt acorns and squirrels.

Science Activities:

The 5 Senses of Thanksgiving: Have children identify what that can taste, see, smell, touch, taste.
Talk about why leaves change color and display the children's leaf book (see circle time activities) along with several magnifying glasses.
Let children dye water with fall colors of food coloring and keep the jars sitting near a window so the children can see the pretty colors.
Children can mix colors to make orange and brown.

Small Motor/Manipulatives:

Play dough – make homemade play dough in fall colors. For fun, add cinnamon to make it smell good!
Squish bags – put goop (you can buy clear hair gel inexpensively at the dollar store) and Thanksgiving sequins into a zip-close bag.
Double bag and tape the edges with clear packing tape. Children can squish the goop around and see the pretty sequins.
Fill a large pan with dried corn and put small containers and trucks in there for children to play with.

Snacks:

- Serve a traditional Thanksgiving dinner of turkey, dressing, potatoes, beans, rolls and pumpkin pie.
- Pumpkin pudding (mix 2 t. pumpkin pie mix per 1 c. vanilla pudding)
- Cut yellow, red and green apple slices and let children dip them in caramel dip.
- Make some Wassail punch for children to drink—it makes the room smell good, too! (This is a mixture of orange juice, apple cider, cinnamon sticks, cloves, orange slices, etc.)

Special Visual Aids/Room Set-Up/Field Trips:

Decorate a tree with fall cookie cutter cutouts and a paper chain made of fall-colored construction paper. Put children's names on different cutouts. If you can do it, sit pots of beautiful fall mums around the bottom of the tree to add a splash of gorgeous color to the room. Children will have fun checking to see if the plants need to be watered.
Make a large fall wreath to hang on your front door. Cut a wreath out of a sheet of cardboard and glue onto it items the children find outdoors, like leaves, acorns, pinecones, pine straw, etc.

Songs & Fingerplays: <http://www.preschooleducation.com/sthanksgiving.shtml>

Books:

Thanksgiving by Miriam Nerlove
'Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving by Dav Pilkey
Thanksgiving Is... by Gail Gibbons
The Night Before Thanksgiving by Natasha Wing
A Turkey for Thanksgiving by Eve Bunting
Thanksgiving is for Giving Thanks by Margaret Sutherland
Thanks for Thanksgiving by Julie Markes
The Story of Thanksgiving by Nancy J. Skarneas
Squanto's Journey: The Story of Thanksgiving by Joseph Bruchac
Corduroy's Thanksgiving by Don Freeman
Dora's Thanksgiving by Sarah Willson
Author's Thanksgiving by Marc Brown
Happy Thanksgiving, Biscuit! by Alyssa Satin Capucilli

Blue's Thanksgiving Feast by Jessica Lissy
Thank You, Thanksgiving by David Milgrim
Spot's Thanksgiving by Eric Hill
Thank You, Sarah: The Woman Who Saved Thanksgiving by Laurie H. Anderson
Franklin's Thanksgiving by Paulette Bourgeois
It's Thanksgiving by Jack Prelutsky
What is Thanksgiving? by Harriet Ziefert
Gracias the Thanksgiving Turkey by Joy Cowley
Silly Tilly's Thanksgiving Dinner by Lillian Hoban
Clifford's Thanksgiving Visit by Norman Bridwell
P is for Pilgrim by Carol Crane

Dramatic Play:

Supply children with pilgrim hats for dress-up.
Put Indian and Pilgrim figures in the block play area.
Pull out a few kitchen utensils and let children pretend to be cooking Thanksgiving dinner. This would be a good time to pull out the Thanksgiving tablecloth—you can make a cute one out of fabric with a Thanksgiving print.
Thanksgiving paper plates, napkins and cups would be a great addition to the dramatic play area! Children can make and serve their own snacks!

Art:

- Cut large leaves out of construction paper in fall colors. Use eye droppers to drop fall colored paint onto the leaves. Fold in half to get gorgeous bursts of fall color! Display leaves around the room.
- Dip lengths of yarn into fall colors of paint and let children pull them through folded paper to do string painting.
- Spatter paint with fall paint colors onto Thanksgiving cutouts laid on black paper. Lift the cutout to see your surprise!
- Paint pumpkins
- Cut out Thanksgiving figures and let children glue dried pumpkin seeds onto them.
- Paint on white construction paper with feathers dipped in fall colored paints.
- Make hand- and foot-print turkeys! Paint the child's foot, press onto lower center of paper. Paint the child's hands and press onto paper for the "feathers" of the "turkey" (foot). Add eyes and legs and you have an adorable turkey!

Circle Time Activities:

Thanksgiving Flash Cards: "Things We Do at Thanksgiving" – these can be printed free from <http://www.mes-english.com/flashcards/thanksgiving.php>, things you might see at Thanksgiving, etc.

Use a turkey puppet to tell the story of the First Thanksgiving or to read one of the many books available about Thanksgiving.

Make a book of fall leaves; go on a nature walk and let children gather the leaves. Wipe them off and glue or tape them into a spiral notebook that children can be proud to show their parents! The book can be placed on the science table for children to examine the leaves with magnifying glasses.

Use some Pellon (sew-in interfacing) to make flannel board figures for your favorite Thanksgiving story. Children love to take turns coming up to add the flannel piece to the board as you reach that part in the story.

Do a cut-and-tell version of another Thanksgiving story; cut out a string of turkeys or pumpkins or pilgrim hats!

Make a "feely box" with items such as leaves, acorns, pinecones, nuts, apples, etc., for children to identify. Ask the child to identify what he/she is feeling, then try to guess what it is. Making a feely box is easy with a medium-size box covered in gift wrap; leave a hole big enough for the child's hand to reach comfortably inside (and for you to put items into the box!).

Let children talk about their family Thanksgiving celebrations.