

November 2015 Book of the Month

Thanksgiving Is...

By: Gail Gibbons

Thanksgiving is turkey, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie. It is a holiday for remembering the Pilgrims and the Indians. Most of all, it is a time to share with family and friends, and a time to give thanks for many blessings. The author, Gail Gibbons offers the book *Thanksgiving Is...*, to young readers as a good balance of information surrounding this fall holiday without overwhelming their understanding. Take a look inside at the beautiful images and you'll be convinced to cook a pumpkin pie.



Thanksgiving Fun Facts:

- Thanksgiving Day is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November in the United States. By the fall of 1621 only half of the pilgrims, who had sailed on the Mayflower, survived. The survivors, thankful to be alive, decided to prepare a Thanksgiving feast. The Plymouth Pilgrims were the first to celebrate the Thanksgiving Day.
- The Pilgrim leader, Governor William Bradford, had organized the first Thanksgiving feast in the fall of 1621 and invited the neighboring Wampanoag Indians to the feast in thanking God for the bountiful harvest.
- The first Thanksgiving feast was held in the presence of around ninety Wampanoag Indians and it lasted for three days.
- President George Washington issued the first national Thanksgiving Day Proclamation in the year 1789 and again in 1795.
- Abraham Lincoln issued a "Thanksgiving Proclamation" on October 3, 1863 and officially set aside the last Thursday of November as the national day for Thanksgiving. Before President Lincoln made this happen, each president used to make an annual proclamation to specify the day when Thanksgiving was to be held.
- Traditional foods like turkey, stuffing and pumpkin pie are served by many on Thanksgiving Day.

Activities

Thanksgiving Comparison: Then and Now

Show the class pictures of the first Thanksgiving feast and Thanksgiving dinner gatherings of today. Discuss the differences. Among the things to be compared are how the food is prepared, type of clothing people wear, kinds of food is being served, and individuals invited to dinner. Make a class comparison chart and keep it displayed in the room.

Corn Kernel Counting

Incorporate corn into this math estimation lesson. Fill a glass or clear plastic jar with corn kernels (it's more fun if you can find Indian corn kernels.) Ask the children to estimate how many corn kernels are in the jar. Write down their estimations. Divide the class into groups of three. Distribute small sorting cups to each group, along with a scoop of kernels. Each group should count ten kernels into each cup and then "count by ten" to determine the number of kernels they were given. Come back together as a whole group and calculate the total number of kernels to see who came closest to the original number of kernels in the jar.

Sweet Potato Heads

Have students grow their own sprouts from sweet potatoes. you need organically grown sweet potato tubers – either from a store or a previous harvest. Sweet potatoes can be whole or cut in half. Place each tuber in a jar or glass and use pins or toothpicks to keep tubers suspended above the bottom. Fill with water, making sure that at least half of the tuber is out of the water.

Now comes the important bit: add faces. Forget this step and you will only grow shoots and roots – not character. Place your tubers somewhere warm. The windowsill is ideal. Within a few days, you will see roots start to bud. Then after a week or two, shoots and leaves emerge. These are your sprouts.

GOBBLE, GOBBLE! Turkey Call From a Cup

Have students replicate the sound a turkey makes when it gobbles. **Instructions:** Poke a small hole in the bottom of a plastic cup. Pull a piece of string, about 18 inches long, through the hole a bit so that the long end runs through the inside of the cup and the short end (maybe a half inch) pokes through the bottom. Secure that short end to the bottom of

the cup by tying it to a paperclip so it can't come through the cup. The string has to be attached firmly to the cup because you'll be tugging on it. Tie a small piece of sponge to the end of the string's long end. Decorate the cup with googly eyes, feathers and a beak. Once the turkey is decorated, dampen the sponge slightly (don't soak it). To make the turkey gobble, run the sponge over the string, squeezing it not too firmly but not too gently.

“Thanksgiving is” story read aloud:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iz7HUxi22xs>

National Geographic Kids: More Thanksgiving facts for kids:

http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/content/kids/en_US/explore/history/first-thanksgiving/

Sources:

http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/content/kids/en_US/explore/history/first-thanksgiving/

http://www.gailgibbons.com/pdf/teachers_guide_interior.pdf

<http://www.littleecofootprints.com/2014/10/how-to-grow-sweet-potato-slips.html>