

A Thanksgiving Day Story Children's Story

Good morning and welcome and Happy Thanksgiving. Our story today is about the history of how Thanksgiving Day came to be. Let's listen now.

How Thanksgiving Came to Be

The family had just finished their big turkey dinner. Young Nathaniel, swallowing his last bite of pumpkin pie, ran to Grandpapa's lap and jumped up on it. "Grandpapa, do you like pumpkin pie?"

With a chuckle, he replied, "Why, it's my favorite. Thanksgiving wouldn't be the same without it."

"Grandpapa, why do we celebrate Thanksgiving? It's not like Christmas where we celebrate Jesus and give presents. We don't have Easter egg hunts or shoot fireworks. We just go to church and have a big dinner."

"Nathaniel, that's a very good question. Would you like to hear the story of how we came to celebrate Thanksgiving?"

He loved Grandpapa's stories. "Yes," he said.

"Let's start from the beginning. More than four hundred years ago, many people in England were very unhappy because their king said they must use the same prayers that he did, even if they had different ones.

"Can a king do that?" asked Nathaniel.

"Back then he could. He threatened to put them in jail or take away their homes if they didn't.

“Some of the Englishmen said to each other, ‘Let us go away from this country.’ It was hard for them to leave their homeland but they knew in their hearts that it was important to have freedom of religion. So, they went to the country called Holland.

“Here, they were happy for a while, but they were very poor. Their children started speaking Dutch and it seemed the families were losing their English traditions.

“‘This will never do,’ said the parents. After much discussion they decided to come here to America, and this is why people call them ‘Pilgrims.’”

Nathaniel asked, “What does pilgrim mean?”

“It refers to people who journey to a sacred place for religious reasons,” Grandpapa said.

“After overcoming many challenges, they traveled on the ship the Mayflower. The ship was small, and there were one hundred people on board, including mothers, fathers, and children. The weather was cold and the sea was rough, pitching the Mayflower back and forth so much that it was difficult for them to sleep.”

“How long were they on the ship?” asked Nathaniel.

“More than two months. And, they had been living on the ship for nearly a month and a half before it sailed.

“The conditions were challenging, but one great thing happened on board. In the middle of being in the ocean a baby was born. He was named ‘Oceanus,’ after his place of birth. When the children had nothing to do, they would play with Oceanus, which always brought smiles back to their faces.

“Finally, on November 9, 1620, they sighted land.”

“Yay,” shouted young Nathaniel. “Now the children could play and go to school.”

“Not right away,” replied grandpapa. It was cold and there were no houses. Before they left the ship, the leaders created a written form of government called the Mayflower Compact. When they finally walked off the Mayflower, what do you think they did first?”

“They stretched,” answered Nathaniel innocently.

Grandpapa chuckled, “Yes, they might have done that but then they prayed. All the people knelt and thanked God for protecting them on their journey.

“During that first year, the Pilgrims worked through very challenging conditions of illness and extremely cold weather to build homes and find food. Some friendly Indians, including Squanto who spoke English, taught them how to hunt and plant.

“Twelve months later, when it was autumn, the fathers gathered the barley, wheat and corn that they had planted. It had grown so well that they would have quite enough for the next long winter.

“‘Let us thank God for his abundance,’ they said. So the families and leaders thanked God in their homes and in their little church.

“Then, the mothers said, ‘Let us have a great Thanksgiving feast, and invite the friendly Indians, and all rejoice together.’

“So they had the first Thanksgiving party in the autumn of 1621. And a grand one it was! They all thanked God for his goodness.”

“So, that is why we celebrate Thanksgiving?” asked Nathaniel.

“That’s only one reason.”

“There’s more?” asked an astonished Nathaniel.

Grandpapa answered, “A little, but just as important. People honored that first Thanksgiving but it wasn’t a real holiday. More than a hundred years later the country had grown, fought a war for its freedom and elected George Washington as their first president.

“In 1789, some members of government wanted President Washington to declare a day of giving public thanksgiving to Almighty God for all their blessings. But some people thought that if the government was involved in their worship, it would take away their religious freedoms.”

Nathaniel interrupted, “That’s why the Pilgrims left England, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, and their children’s children had heard those stories and didn’t want that to happen to them. Washington understood the importance of religious freedom, but also recognized the importance of giving gratitude to God. So, when he gave his proclamation, he made it known that states and people could honor it in a way that was agreeable to them.”

“That was a smart thing to do,” said Nathaniel. “What did his procla---

“Proclamation,” helped Grandpapa.

“Yes, what did this proclamation say?”

“Washington proclaimed to all American people to acknowledge the protective care of Almighty God and to obey his will and to be grateful for all his benefits. He proclaimed this day to be one of giving thanks for a peaceful country and the Constitution that they created as

the law of the land and that guaranteed their religious freedom.”

Nathaniel said, “So, that’s why we celebrate Thanksgiving?”

“Yes, it was the second reason, but it still wasn’t an official holiday. In 1863, the United States was in a terrible war. Many people wanted the nation to be at peace and have an official day of Thanksgiving. On October 3, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation setting aside the last Thursday in November as a national day of thanks. And, that’s why we celebrate Thanksgiving today as a National holiday.”

Nathaniel said, “I am grateful to those brave Pilgrims and to George Washington for his procla—ma—tion and for President Lincoln making it a holiday. I’m glad we gave our prayers today.” Nathaniel paused.

“And, I’m really thankful that pumpkin pie is a part of Thanksgiving. I’ll go get us a piece now. That story made me hungry.” Nathaniel jumped off his Grandpapa’s lap and started to race to the kitchen. Suddenly he stopped and turned back around. “Thanks, Grandpapa, for telling me about the true meaning of Thanksgiving. I’m grateful for you.”

Then he ran off as Grandpapa smiled and wiped a tear from his cheek and whispered, “And, I’m grateful to God for you, too.”

CONCLUSION:

Our beloved Saint Germain told us that the first Thanksgiving Day was a direct result of the eternal and infinite gratitude into the human heart by the Holy Spirit. It was called forth by the love of freedom. It was an overflowing of the inner cup of gratitude and joy in the devout hearts of those early and hardy Pilgrim fathers (Beloved Saint Germain, *Pearls*

of Wisdom®, Vol. 2 No. 46, November 20, 1959).

Before we leave today, let's go within our hearts and quietly express gratitude to God for our freedom and all the gifts from God.

(Pause for about 10 – 15 seconds.)

Let's end by standing and saying, "Hear, O Universe I AM Grateful."

(Recite 3x.)





The Pilgrims Leave England

- In 1607, a group of English Separatists, known as **Pilgrims**, moved to Holland to escape persecution from the Church of England

- **Separatists**- wanted to SEPARATE Church of England

- After a while, they became unhappy in Holland as well and asked the Virginia Company for a **charter** to America.





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