Meal Blessing

A plate of bread should be set before the one pronouncing the blessing. The bread lifted may be a single piece or the plate of bread itself.

Lord of the Meal, we come to this prayer called grace asking that You help us eat this food gracefully and with gratitude; that we, with grace and care, share our lives by word and laughter.

May Your grace, Your life, touch us and our food.

Lift up bread

We lift up this bread, symbol of life and of Your Son; may it and He nourish us this day.

Amen †

Lord, You who gave bread to Moses and his people while they traveled in the desert, come now, and bless these gifts of food which You have given to us.

As this food gives up its life for us, may we follow that pattern of self-surrender for each other.

May we be life to one another.

Lift up bread

With grateful and prayerful hearts, we lift up this bread to You. May Your glory surround it and all at this meal. Amen †

Prayers for the Domestic Church/A Handbook for Worship in the Home by Edward Hays

What traditions does your family have for Thanksgiving? Maybe it’s watching the parade or football game on TV. Maybe it’s playing football or games in the backyard. That special dish you serve every year can be a great tradition as well. Each family member sharing what they’re thankful for as you gather around the dinner table can be a very meaningful tradition. Your tradition might even include inviting a family that’s less fortunate. So think about what tradition makes your holiday meaningful and memorable. If you don’t have any traditions, or if those you have seem a little outdated, start one this Thanksgiving that offers a special significance.

Provided by The Marriage and Family Life Office, Diocese of Columbus
Also available online at www.FamilyLife.colsdioc.org
Happiness Is Not Found in Things

One gorgeous autumn day some years ago, my daughter Allison and I were enjoying a visit to a small town filled with shops and antiques stores. After an hour of perusing the stores, I began to grow impatient. She was inspecting every little teacup and heirloom hankie. When I tried to hurry her along she became indignant and responded, “Mother, you have your stuff. I am just beginning to get mine.”

On the way home she explained her philosophy: We spend the first part of life gathering our possessions, the second part enjoying them, and the third part giving them away. In other words, life is all about your stuff.

This story reminds me yet again how we pass on our values to our children. When we put emphasis on a particular way of living, we can expect our children to do the same. It is subtle and enduring. Children are sorting out what they see and hear, and deciding how they want to live. It is our role as parents to offer formation that is grounded in values that are consistent with our faith. Coveting things, whether they belong to us or our neighbor or simply entice us from a shop window, leads us right into the hands of our consumer society. Our society preaches that things will make us happy. Our faith teaches us quite the opposite—that happiness is not found in things but in knowing Jesus Christ.

We encourage our children to live without accumulating more and more things by choosing not to live that way ourselves. Family life should be more focused on people and times shared than on getting the next addition to our pile of stuff. My daughter taught me a valuable lesson that day. Over the years I had inadvertently preached the wrong message as she watched me collect my stuff.

For a family response: As a family, give, recycle, or throw away three things every day for a month. Watch your house come to order and your spirits release that tight grip on material possessions.

Jeanne Hunt in “Every Day Catholic,” October 2007

God of Many Gifts

Generous Giver,
We thank you for all the things that fill our lives.
Teach us to share what we have, and to remember that you are the source of our bounty. Amen.

“Every Day Catholic,” October 2007

For many Americans, the Thanksgiving holiday is about gorging on a sumptuous meal, spending time with family and gearing up for the busiest shopping day of the year. Of course, it’s also supposed to be about expressing gratitude for all that we have in our lives, but that simple lesson often gets lost amid all these other activities. Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk who has written several books about the importance of gratitude, including Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer and A Listening Heart, says remembering what we are thankful for is an essential part of daily living, one that’s too important to overlook. Without gratitude, he says, we become slaves to unquenchable desires. Yet by remaining conscious of all that we’ve been given, we are more able to weather life’s difficult storms.

David Ian Miller

When all the relatives come together for a family gathering like Thanksgiving, it can be a significant event of Biblical proportions! Here is an activity to jumpstart family interactions. Make a copy for each person. Everyone should circulate among the guests and gather names. Have fun checking people’s answers!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who called at least 2 absent relatives?</th>
<th>Who likes white meat?</th>
<th>Who’s already begun Christmas shopping?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who couldn’t be here today?</td>
<td>Who set the table?</td>
<td>Who traveled the furthest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose birthday is closest to Thanksgiving?</td>
<td>Who brought along a cell phone?</td>
<td>Who was the first to arrive today?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has celebrated Thanksgiving in more than 5 states?</td>
<td>Who has a special family recipe?</td>
<td>Whose favorite holiday movie is the same as yours?</td>
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