

Freedom's Feast **THANKSGIVING**

resources to get the most out of your **THANKSGIVING** celebration.

★ **CREATE A GRATITUDE PLATE KEEPSAKE** ★

Adapted from the [Raising Citizens](#) partnership project with the Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)

Introduction

Create a plate to show what you are thankful for this Thanksgiving. Use the plate for your family's Thanksgiving celebration. Display it on the mantel, as a table centerpiece, or even use to pass hors d'oeuvres or serve dessert. At some point during your Thanksgiving meal, be sure to talk about the plate with your guests, and share what it means to you. Creating a set of plates together before Thanksgiving is a great way for families to prepare for the holiday and think about what makes us grateful.

Why Do This?

- 1 It's Thanksgiving and the purpose of Thanksgiving is to give thanks! Think about the meaning and history of Thanksgiving and what about being an American makes you thankful. *(See Resources below for holiday background and samples of Gratitude Plates by others.)*
- 2 Thanksgiving is a harvest festival that celebrates our gratitude for having successfully come through another year, and expresses our hope that we have enough of what we need to survive the year ahead.

Questions to Help You Create

- 1 What special accomplishments or blessings are you and your family celebrating since last Thanksgiving?
- 2 Are your answers related in some way to being American?
- 3 Is there a special part of your family's American story that makes you grateful?
- 4 What do you have enough of that makes you grateful?
- 5 When you close your eyes, what do you "see" that makes you thankful?
- 6 When you open your eyes and look around, what do you think of?
- 7 Consider your family, work, community, country, and events that have affected you, your family members, and/or others, during the past year.
- 8 Consider these themes:
 - New family members, jobs or challenges
 - Recovery from illness or other setbacks
 - Discovering strengths, talents or qualities in yourself or others
 - Relationships or ideas that are important in new ways
 - What America means to you (and your family)
- 9 What colors or patterns come to mind?
- 10 What words or phrases can you use?
- 11 What pictures illustrate your ideas?



"I'm grateful for my family in America."



"I'm grateful for my food choices."



CREATING YOUR GRATITUDE PLATE

Option #1: Plastic Plate Kit

Ingredients

- 1 **Color-Me Plate Group Pack** (12 to a Pack, ±\$33 per pack)
- 2 Pre-cut colored construction circles to illustrate and insert in plastic plates

What You Do

- 1 Choose the color construction paper circle you want as your background.
- 2 Draw on the background.
- 3 When you are finished your drawing, insert the construction paper circle into the plastic plates.
- 4 Decorate the plate (see *Option #2*) or leave plain to use again.

Caution: These plates are not machine-washable. They must be hand-wiped. Plates can be reused with redrawn inserts for other occasions or changing themes.

Option #2: Plate Kit Alternatives

Ingredients

- 1 Plain white melamine plates from Wal-Mart, Target or Michael's **or**
- 2 Heavy-duty paper plates
- 3 Glue gun or multipurpose craft glue to apply materials to melamine or paper plates
- 4 Feathers, beads, sparkle, pipe cleaners and other interesting objects (maybe even seasonal leaves and nuts)
- 5 Assorted markers (use permanent markers for melamine plates)

What You Do

Melamine Plates

If you are using melamine plates, you will need permanent markers. (You may want to sketch your plan on paper before drawing with pens.) You should hand wash your finished plates. You can also apply other materials to your plate with a glue gun, but it may no longer be washable. (See *additional suggestions for the paper plate*).

Heavy Duty Paper Plates

If you are using heavy-duty paper plates, you can use additional materials to decorate. Be creative! You can use feathers, beads, sparkle, pipe cleaners, and other interesting objects (maybe even seasonal leaves and nuts) for your design. You can layer your objects. Have fun with them!

Some families may choose to do this exercise at a local glazing studio, where you can paint and glaze your own plate before Thanksgiving. We know of several families who have created Thanksgiving plate collections over the years this way.

TaDAH! You're done! Don't forget to take a picture of yourself with your creation.

Maybe you can even write a little description about your Gratitude plate...



Resources for Inspiration

To learn more about the history of Thanksgiving consider the following resources:

- 1 Scholastic.com, **The Native American Perspective**
- 2 **A Simple Thanksgiving History**
- 3 Thanksgiving Booklist
Giving Thanks—The 1621 Harvest Feast by Kate Waters, 2001
1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving by Catherine O'Neill Grace, 2004
Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message, by Jake Swamp, 2003

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Take a look at the gratitude plates designed by a group of children's book illustrators and other artists who focused on the themes of America, freedom and gratitude. **The Freedom's Feast Dinner Plate Collection** was developed for **Raising Citizens**, a partnership between **Freedom's Feast** and the **Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)**, and is on display at the museum. Perhaps some of their ideas will inspire you and your family!



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