



THANKSGIVUKKAH

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

(and really close in 2021!)

Leader As we gather this Thanksgiving and think about Hanukkah beginning in a few days, there are many wonderful connections to consider. At Hanukkah, we celebrate the miracle of oil lasting eight nights—of survival with a sparse resource, and the virtues of risk-taking against all odds. At Thanksgiving, we focus on abundance and the joy of sharing the blessings of life together. Yet there are dark themes to each holiday. We remember the hardships our ancestors endured, driven by their faiths and values so that we might live on and remember the lessons they taught us. Each night that we light the Hanukkah candles rekindles our hope for a world in which all people share an equal portion of our blessings.

Reader At Hanukkah, we remember scores of Maccabees and Greeks who lost their lives to the battles of the second century.

ALL We are grateful that we live on, to remember.

Reader At Thanksgiving, we remember the dozens of Pilgrims who did not survive their first winter ashore in America.

ALL We are grateful that we live on, to remember.

Reader At Hanukkah, we remember the courage of Judah Maccabee and [Judith](#).

ALL We are grateful that we live on, to remember.

Reader At Thanksgiving, we remember the Native Americans who made their home here long before our ancestors' arrival. We are grateful that we live on, to remember their stories in solidarity, and to pursue a world of justice where all people share equally in the blessings we share on this night.

Reader We remember the Pilgrims in our own families, who scraped together their resources for the challenging journey, or who came here under duress. As we ourselves journey through times of scarcity and times of abundance, we know that others grew stronger in the journey and hope that we may, too.

Leader Let's pause for a moment before continuing with our reading. Please turn to your neighbor. What is one story of dedication or endurance that you think of when you think of your parents and grandparents? (After a minute, switch who is sharing if partners have not yet done so.)

Leader The stories we share around this table are uniquely ours, and also echo themes of the American story. They are grounded in our American values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Reader In 1790, George Washington wrote a [letter to the Hebrew Congregation](#) of Newport, Rhode Island.

What is Thanksgivukkah?

When Thanksgiving and Hanukkah coincide, **2013** was the first time the two overlapped since Thanksgiving became a federal holiday. Check out [this link](#) to see if it will happen again.



"The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth"

by Jennie A. Brownscombe

Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts. ZACHARIAH 4:6

Tell General Howard I know his heart.... I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed; Looking-Glass is dead. Ta-Hool-Hool-Shute is dead. The old men are all dead.... He who led the young men on is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food... Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.

**NEZ PERCE CHIEF JOSEPH, 1877
SURRENDER TO THE U.S. ARMY**

Dedicate some time during Hanukkah to your family's American Jewish experience. Tell a different story each night as the candles burn down. Record the stories for generations to come.

Coming to America has always been hard... It is foolish to forget where you come from, and that in the case of the United States, is almost always somewhere. The true authentic American is a pilgrim with a small "p," armed with little more than the phrase "I wish...." ANNA QUINDLEN

Reader “Happily, the Government of the United States...gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support....May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid.”

Reader The second Continental Congress passed 10 amendments to the Constitution on December 15, 1791, called The Bill of Rights. The best-known amendment may well be the first:

ALL “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

Leader On this day of Thanksgiving, we anticipate Hanukkah. Both holidays remind us to be grateful to all who came before us. Their aspirations, and the hardships they endured in pursuit of a better world, come to us as a blessing.

Ask those gathered to share a blessing that has come to them from their ancestors' lives. (For instance: perseverance, courage, love of family).

Either before the meal begins or after dessert, ask children to place the first two candles in the menorah(s) you will light on Hanukkah.

1. Recite Ha-motzi before you begin your meal.
2. You may also wish to say the Sheh-hecheyanu prayer.
 1. Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam ha-motzi lechem min ha'aretz.
 2. Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam sheh-hecheyanu, v'ki-y'manu v'hi-giyanu lazman hazeh.
 1. Praised are You, Adonai our God, Creator of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.
 2. Praised are You, Adonai our God, Creator of the universe, for granting us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this day.

Leader As we share our holiday meal, I hope we'll continue to share stories of our families, our traditions and our country. Let's eat!

Original 2013 service written by David Fisher, intern at JewishBoston.com, in collaboration with Lee M. Hendler, Freedom's Feast project director. 2021 Revisions by Lee M. Hendler.

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What is a miracle? When have you or your loved ones experienced a miracle? Did the Pilgrims experience a miracle? What is the opposite of a miracle?



A great miracle happened there.
NES GADOL HAYAH SHAM

Which of the First Amendment rights makes you most grateful?

The turkey is in comparison [to the Bald Eagle] a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America... He is besides, though a little vain and silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, ON THE NATIONAL BIRD, IN A LETTER TO HIS DAUGHTER, 1784

MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE

My country 'Tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside
Let freedom ring!

Please visit Freedom's Feast for more holiday celebrations!



MLK DAY



PRESIDENTS' DAY



MEMORIAL DAY



INDEPENDENCE DAY



LABOR DAY



THANKSGIVING