

1. Make giving thanks fun: As guests arrive, ask them to write on cards what they are most thankful for in the past year. Collect the cards and read from them at several points during the meal. (For zoom, send chat messages to host. Guess who wrote each one.)

2. Tell YOUR American story: Tell stories about the founding of America, and then share the story of how and why your own family came to be in this country.

3. Start a new tradition: Have everyone sign a Thanksgiving book that will stay in your family. Take a picture of the whole gathering and put it in the book (or in an online journal) to share and revisit over the years.

4. Showcase family strengths: Ask a lawyer to discuss her favorite amendment to the Bill of Rights, a psychologist to talk about constitutional rights, a businesswoman to share how recent laws have impacted her business, a third-grader to teach what he learned about the pilgrims and Native Americans, the oldest member of the family to discuss his first voting experience.

5. Donate to charity: Collect a small donation from every guest and let the oldest children or a special guest decide where the funds will go. You can also use the opportunity to discuss the symbols on the dollar bill. *(See p. 28 of the Full Ceremony.)*

6. Sing! Everyone loves the great Thanksgiving songs of gratitude and gathering. Encourage your guests to join in an old-fashioned sing-along. Pass on American songs you love to your kids and grandkids.

7. Remember the earth: Take the opportunity of celebrating the harvest to discuss ways that Americans can better help to take care of the earth and all of its natural resources.

8. Involve everyone: We all enjoy what we help to create. Invite others to help convene virtually or cook, shop, decorate and clean up. Put out crayons and drawing paper to keep young children entertained during zoom or dinner. Or bring out the kid in everyone. Use parcel paper for your tablecloth and put out crayons for all your guests. Recycle and reuse as much as possible.

9. Consider the global world we live in: Hang maps of the U.S. and the world. Have guests mark all the places they've visited in years past. Talk about what people learned from their travels. Or mark all the places people have lived. Talk about the differences and similarities between states or countries.

10. Reflect on America's freedoms: As America's most universally celebrated holiday, Thanksgiving is an opportunity to reflect on what makes our nation special and to give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy. Go around the table and ask guests to complete the phrase, "I am thankful for America's Freedoms because..."

For more Thanksgiving celebration ideas, please visit www.freedomsfeast.us/thanksgiving