

Four quick and crafty ways to celebrate Thanksgiving with Catholic kids

This is a delightful time of year to encourage thankfulness. It is the season between the feasts of All Saints' Day and Souls' Day and Advent, and for those of us in the Midwest, a time for wrapping up fall gardening projects and hunkering down in the rain and/or snow. What better time to get out the crayons, markers, and glitter glue and go to town on giving thanks through art?

Thanksgiving is one of the five forms of prayer for your family's healthy prayer diet. It is acknowledgement, recognition, acceptance and gratitude that everything is a gift from God. While enjoying these projects with your children, talk about how creating art together as a family is in itself a gift.

Easy art to celebrate Thanksgiving

The Turkey Hand

- Trace your child's hand on a piece of light-colored construction paper.
- Cut out feathers for each finger and the thumb out of red, yellow, orange, or brown paper.
- Glue one feather over each finger.
- With marker, add an eye, beak, and legs to your turkey. The thumb is the head of the turkey.
- Make a red wattle and glue it under the beak.
- Write the child's name on the hand, and if they are old enough, let them write five things they are thankful for, one on each finger.
- You could also write down five virtues like love,

generosity, patience, kindness, and purity.

Thanksgiving Box

- Grab a shoe box, Amazon box or even a tissue box.
- Have your children decorate the box with festive fall colors, leaves, feathers, magazine clippings, pictures of your family, whatever inspires them.
- Leave a slit open at the top of the box.
- Have your children welcome guests, family and friends with a pencil and a slip of paper that can easily slip into the box. Ask each person to write on the paper something they are thankful for this year.
- Around the Thanksgiving table, have your children take turns reading the slips of paper and add them to your Thanksgiving prayers. Kids love taking the lead on family prayer time, and this is a great way to share memories of gratitude.
- Bonus: Ask your kids to challenge guests to write a way in which they might express gratitude to God through service in the weeks ahead.

You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God ... thanks be to God for his indescribable gift" ([2 Cor 9:11-15](#)).

The Cornucopia

- Purchase a medium papier-mache cone from Joann Fabrics for \$2.49.
- Paint it dark brown, either solid color or in a basket pattern.
- Make cherries out of modeling clay, Play-Doh or whatever

you have around the house.

- Make stems out of green pipe cleaners, and thread the clay balls onto them. Or use construction-paper leaves to add greenery inside the cornucopia.
- If you want to get fancy, use faux flowers or small fruit pieces to insert into your project.
- This is a good time to let your creativity shine! There are many ways to decorate here.
- If you are super-crafty, make the papier-mache yourself so you can shape your own horn. Or try soaking the cone first to gently soften and bend the tail of it upwards, and let it dry before decorating.
- While creating this craft, encourage your children to author their own simple prayer of gratitude. Write the prayer on a piece of construction paper and cut the paper into a squash, fruit or something else to be the centerpiece of the cornucopia.

Lord, we thank you for our work and our rest, for one another, and for our homes. We thank you, Lord: accept our thanksgiving on this day. We pray and give thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. – from the [Thanksgiving Day Prayer](#)

Sing a Song

Thanksgiving this year falls on the feast of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. What better a way to give thanks to God than singing a song of praise and gratitude together. It's never too soon to carol, right? Here are some suggestions to get you started. Not particularly a musical family? YouTube will help you out.

- [“Now Thank We All Our God”](#)
- [“Let All Things Now Living”](#)
- [“In the Lord I'll be Ever Thankful”](#)

Bonus for parents: Give yourself the gift of time and organization

Call me crazy, but it's a good time to get a head start on preparing for Advent and cleaning for Christmas without so much rushing. If you are like me, you have something that really needs doing. Here's my list of potential projects for which I am thankful I am making a little extra time for now.

- Fixing Christmas ornaments: Broken bulbs? Trash them. Something mendable? Get out the Krazy Glue.
- Advent calendar repair: Let's be real, after two or 10 kids, things get broken. Last year I had to hot-glue the felt on my mother's ancient, handmade calendar numbers. And boy, did they make felt thicker back then! This calendar is 40 years old and still beautiful.
- Sort your wrapping area: Make sure you have enough ribbons, labels, markers, or whatever you enjoy using as wrapping material.
- Find the gifts from last year that you hid away and forgot about. We all do this.
- Get an early start on making gifts, if you are so inclined. Our family makes rock candy the weekend after Thanksgiving, and it takes some pre-planning.
- Make a grocery list for that something special to bake during Advent.

Kids can help with any of these things, and it doesn't hurt to get them started on the preparation. Learning to do things with a thankful heart, and making it fun will give them lasting memories that they will treasure.