



# Creative Ways to Express GRATITUDE on Thanksgiving

By Erin Vander Weele

As families and friends gather to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal, it's a common tradition to ask those sitting at the table to share a few words of gratitude. Give some of these creative ideas a try for a new way to involve everyone in giving thanks this holiday.

## Make a Gratitude Tree

Everyone can take part in helping create a meaningful and beautiful centerpiece for the table on Thanksgiving. To start your tree, all you need is a vase (add a heavy filler such as stones on the bottom) and a few branches from the craft store or from your yard. Arrange the branches how you prefer and cut out colorful paper leaves in advance. It's best to use a thick paper such as cardstock or construction paper. Be sure to hole punch the end of the leaves and add twine for tying the leaves onto the branches. Invite guests to write anything big or small they are grateful for on a few of the leaves and hang on the tree as ornaments.

## Create Place Cards

When setting the table, add cards for guests to write down their words of gratitude. You could design and decorate your own place cards, or simply find a card template to print. You could write prompts such as, "I am thankful for..." or "I am thankful I get to..." or "I am thankful I can..." on each card as a guide.

## Share Photographs

Photos are a great way to take time to appreciate experiences and special moments we've shared in our lives with loved ones. Before Thanksgiving, ask everyone to print and bring a photo of a memory

to share with everyone at the table. It's a great way to start a conversation, tell stories and look back on some amazing times.

## Do a Craft Together

Before or after dinner, do a craft together that is centered on practicing gratitude. This can be fun for kids and adults alike. As one suggestion, guests could make their own cards of appreciation to send out to family, friends or co-workers.

Taking time to reflect and practice gratitude can inspire us to give back, which is most important on Thanksgiving and throughout the year. These creative ideas can also serve as visual reminders to be thankful, spread kindness, share our appreciation for those around us and touch the hearts of others.

