

PARENTS PAGE: Thanksgiving Family Prayer Service

More families come together at Thanksgiving than at any other time of the year. It is a time when families put aside everything else to celebrate their common thankfulness. This prayer service is intended to launch the Thanksgiving meal and may be adapted as desired. Have copies for everyone at the table and assign parts.

The family and guests sit around the table upon which there is an unlighted candle. A glass of wine or soft drink is at everyone's place. After a few moments of silence:



Mother (or designated reader): We are gathered here to share in the feast of Thanksgiving with joy and gratitude. The good food and drink and the fellowship we share today remind us of the many things for which we are grateful.

Father (or designated reader): The Lord is our light and our salvation. May this light burn brightly in our hearts and around this table, today and at all our family meals.

(Grandmother, grandfather or oldest child present lights candle.)

Reader: We give thanks today for all the many gifts we have received.

(Each person is asked to state one thing that he/she is thankful for this Thanksgiving.)

"I am thankful for _____."

Reader: Let us also remember all those today who are without food or shelter. *(Brief silent reflection.)*

Reader: And let us also remember those loved ones who are not present.

(Either a silent pause or the names of individuals may be said aloud.)

"We remember _____."

Blessing

(Each paragraph of the blessing may be read by a different child or family member.)

Lord of all blessings, from you has come a full harvest of gifts to us. With uplifted hearts, we come today around this table to give thanks to you.

We are grateful not only for the gifts of our

very lives but for all the gifts of friendship, love, devotion and forgiveness that we have shared.

On this day of giving thanks, we thank you for showing us how to return our gratitude by lives of service, by actions of hospitality, by kindnesses to others, and by concern for each other.

(If there are guests present) We thank you for the presence of our guest(s) today. We thank you for (name guests), who, by (their) joining us today, (have) has added to this feast of joy and celebration.

Thank you, Lord, for being visible to us in one another, both in our families and our friends, in countless daily gifts, and in the marvels of creation itself.

Father (or designated reader): *(While all raise their glasses):* Lord, bless our table and all the food of this feast. Let us thank the Lord today and all days.

All toast: HAPPY THANKSGIVING! *Shunorhavor Kohapanootyan Or!*
(Conclude with all drinking from their glasses. Begin the meal.)

Table discussion: Questions/ideas

1. What have been the major events of the past year for our family and friends?
2. What are some fond memories of past Thanksgiving celebrations?
3. Call or write to those members who cannot be present and ask them to write a letter to the family to be read during the time between the main course and the dessert.
4. Plan to share photos of special family events.