GET YOURSELF ORGANIZED for THANKSGIVING

By Kathi Lipp
with Paula Tobey
A 7 Day Simple Plan for a Stress Free Holiday

Fall is certainly in the air where I am! The trees are rustling the leaves with every gust of wind, the car windshields are foggy and cold in the mornings and you can smell the crisp, clean air. When I go outside and enjoy these surroundings it hits me, fall really is here!

As much as I love fall, that also means the busiest time of the year is upon us and my mind starts racing with all of the upcoming activities! I start to go into this panic of “How am I going to get it all done”? “How will I pull this off? My plate is already so full!”

Have you ever had one of those years during the holidays that you wish you could have a Do-Over? You know, the year when you forgot Thanksgiving fell on a Thursday and the usual grocery store trip on Tuesday evening after work was not the best time to be buying a frozen Turkey?!

The following tips and tricks are sure to keep you from having that feeling of- “oh no, it’s that time of year again. What the heck am I going to do”? But don’t panic too much yet, you do have time... just use these tips to start your thinking process. Then after you’ve made a few notes, take action!

Before the Seven Days: Where to Start?

- Take a few minutes one day while you are stuck waiting (for your child at the soccer field or in a doctor’s office) and create a list of the holiday happenings. Write down the different Categories for Recipes, Decorations, Guest List of people attending, a Help List- of how people can help , (before and the day of the event.) Prayers or Quotes to be shared etc. Think about where and when they will happen and, if time allows, jot them down on the calendar.
- Start making a shopping list and a budget. You can also get ideas for decorations or place cards on Pinterest.
- Fine tune your menu a few days later, including what foods will be served and their ingredients if they are not things you usually have in your pantry or are perishable.
- Begin working on your Help List so when someone asks how they can help you can assign a job.
- Finalize your list of family or friends attending and create an Evite to invite them. (This may be one of those delegated items too).
- Plan a day to do some of the prep shopping. If you need to make things ahead of time to
save money or time, think of things that freeze well like gravy or pies and get those ingredients.

- Plan a day on the calendar to begin the decorating or table setting preparations. Begin the food shopping by starting with things that keep, such as: canned or frozen items. Add to the list as the menu develops or your budget allows.
- Plan your next shopping trip where you buy most of the items. If there are items to bake or prepare ahead, this is a good time to do them.
- Take another look at the calendar and modify any details or re-plan what needs to happen when. Finish up the lists by purchasing the last items.
- Let the cooking and craziness begin! Plan out what order to prepare items so you don’t have cold turkey but hot cranberry sauce. Elicit the help of others in the kitchen, or delegate out some of the work by having others bring the sides or desserts. By now, you know what is left to do and you will be able to think clearly to give direction.
- Enjoy this time and be thankful for all that you have and all that has been provided for, after all, that is what Thanksgiving is all about!

Every year at Thanksgiving I am reminded how truly blessed I am. I have a wonderful family and friends, I am free to practice my faith and make that a daily priority, and I have a fantastic life with my husband and children.

What are you thankful for?
Have you taken the time to tell those that you love how you feel?
Day 1 Get Your Guest List Together

Who’s Coming
If you are hosting Thanksgiving this year, you have to figure out who’s coming before you can plan the rest of the day. Making a meal for 10 is considerably different than planning for 25 hungry, anticipatory bellies.

Because many families are split by time, marriage and distance, getting invitations early is essential. If spending time with family is the most important consideration, it’s possible you won’t be having the big feast on Thanksgiving Day. We always choose the date based around the schedules of the must-have’s in our lives. Once we have chosen the date and time we send out the invite to all the people we would love to spend the day with making sure to keep expectations low on who will be able to make it.

For your own sanity, make sure you give your guests some time to get back to you and at the same time ensure you have enough time after your RSVP date to get everything together without stressing yourself out.

Evite Invitations
Did you know that Evite is one of the easiest ways to host a get together? After you come up with your guest list, the work is done for you! You choose a theme, who to invite and whether or not you provide the food if it’s a potluck style, or you assign members something. It takes the pressure off of you because it handles reminders, directions, and even gives guests an idea of the theme or look you are going for! And it’s way less expensive, (FREE in most cases) than printed invites and quicker than hand written invites.
Day 2 Get Your Meal Plan

Menu Planner Ideas for the Non-planners
Calendar planning is one of those activities that makes me happy. I feel more organized and calm when I can see what happens when. I love starting and ending my day with my calendar, it truly brings me peace! Calendar planning may not bring you peace at all and might make you feel overwhelmed. But take heart my friend, it is an action that will bring you more organization and structure and allow you to get way more accomplished than you ever thought possible when you use one correctly.

I also use my calendar to plan my menu for meals each week but when we have company for the holidays, I rev-it-up and plan all three meals plus snacks! Why? Because otherwise I am a mess. I get cranky, distant and freaked out. I have learned how nice it is to know ‘what’s for dinner’ rather than the- “oh no’ it’s that time again” feeling!

What are some resources you could use to help you be a better menu planner? Could you look up an app that helps create an entire meal? Could you have everyone help you by doing it potluck style? What about creating an Evite invitation that can be emailed to everyone attending and they can write in what they will bring?

How would using a meal planner system make you feel?
Could it take some of the pressure off?
Could you feel more prepared and not so panicky? It just might, if you give it a try!

Recipes
These recipes are not your mama’s run of the mill recipes; these are fresh, fun and fabulous while being healthy at the same time! Here is a whole menu you could create that is quick, easy, healthy and different! Enjoy!

Appetizers-

Goat Cheese Bruchetta

Ingredients
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs, such as dill, parsley, or basil
• Toasted baguette
• Goat cheese
Prep 10-12 minutes  Ready in 10-12 mins.
Add the balsamic vinegar and herbs together. Drizzle over slices of toasted baguette or other bread and spread with goat cheese. Finish with another drizzle of vinaigrette. Garnish with thyme.

**Caprese Appetizer Sticks**

Ingredients:
• 20 grape tomatoes
• 10 ounces mozzarella cheese, cubed
• 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
• 2 tablespoons fresh basil leaves, chopped
• 1 pinch salt
• 1 pinch ground black pepper
• 20 toothpicks

Toss the tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, olive oil, basil, salt, and pepper all together in a bowl until well coated. Skewer one tomato and one piece of mozzarella cheese on each toothpick, with a piece of basil.

**Butternut Squash Soup**

Ingredients:
• 2 tablespoons butter
• 1 small onion, chopped
• 1 stalk celery, chopped
• medium carrot, chopped
• 2 medium peeled potatoes, cubed
• 1 medium butternut squash - peeled, seeded, and cubed
• 1 (32 fluid ounce) container vegetable stock
• salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Prep 25 mins. Cook 45 mins. (makes a great do-ahead recipe)

1. Melt the butter in a large stock pot, and cook the onion, celery, carrot, potatoes, and squash for 5 minutes, or until lightly browned. Pour in enough of the vegetable stock to cover vegetables. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cover. Simmer for 40 minutes, or until all the vegetables are tender.

2. Transfer the soup to a blender and blend until smooth. Return to the pot, and mix in any remaining vegetable stock to the desired consistency. Season with salt and pepper.

Main Course-

Perfect Roast Turkey

Ingredients:
- 1 (18 pound) whole turkey, neck and giblets removed
- 2 cups kosher salt (or brine mix)
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 2 large onions, peeled and chopped
- 4 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup white wine or white rice vinegar

Prep 30 min. Cook 4 hr. Ready 17 hr.

1. Rub the turkey inside and out with the kosher salt. Place the bird in a large stock pot, and cover with cold water. Place in the refrigerator, and allow the turkey to soak in the salt and water mixture (brine) 12 hours, or overnight.

2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Thoroughly rinse the turkey, and discard the brine mixture.

3. Brush the turkey with 1/2 the melted butter. Place breast side down on a roasting rack in a shallow roasting pan. Stuff the turkey insides with 1 onion, 1/2 the carrots, 1/2 the celery, 1 sprig of thyme, and the bay leaf. Scatter the remaining vegetables and thyme around the bottom of the roasting pan, and cover with the white wine/white vinegar.
4. Roast the turkey uncovered 3 1/2 to 4 hours in the preheated oven, until the internal temperature of the thigh reaches 180 degrees F (85 degrees C). Carefully turn the turkey breast side up about 2/3 through the roasting time, and brush turkey with the remaining butter. Allow it to rest for about 30 minutes before carving.

**Side Dishes**

**Garlic Mashed Cauliflower**

Ingredients:
- 1 head cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, mashed (minced)
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Place a steamer insert into a saucepan and fill with water to just below the bottom of the steamer. Bring water to a boil. Add cauliflower, cover, and steam until tender, about 10 minutes. (Or microwave in a microwave vegetable steamer)

2. Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat; cook and stir the garlic until softened, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

3. Transfer half the cauliflower to a food processor; cover and blend on high. Add remaining cauliflower florets, one at a time, until vegetables are creamy. Blend in garlic, Parmesan cheese, cream cheese, salt, and black pepper.

**Easy Garlic Green Beans**

Ingredients:
- 1 pound fresh green beans, ends trimmed
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 pinch salt
• 1 pinch ground black pepper
• 3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese


1. Set a steamer basket insert into a large saucepan and fill with water to a level just below the steamer. Bring to a boil. Add green beans, and steam to your desired degree of tenderness, or about 5 minutes. (Or heat in microwave vegetable steamer)

2. Once the beans have cooked, transfer them to a serving bowl. Toss with olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper, and Parmesan cheese. Let stand for 10 minutes. (Remove the garlic slices before serving).

**Honey Glazed Carrots**

Ingredients:
• 2 pounds organic carrots, (baby carrots already cut are easiest to buy)
• 1/4 cup butter
• 1/4 cup honey
• 2 tablespoons brown sugar
• salt and pepper to taste

Prep 10 mins. Cook 15 Total 25 mins.

1. Place carrots into a large saucepan, pour in an inch worth of water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cover. Simmer carrots until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain the water and transfer to a bowl.

2. Melt the butter in the same saucepan; stir in the brown sugar, salt, and white pepper into butter until brown sugar and salt have dissolved. Transfer the carrots into brown sugar sauce; cook and stir until carrots are glazed with sauce, about 3-5 minutes until they’re soft.
Honey Pear Cranberry Sauce

Ingredients:
• 1/2 cup water
• 1/2 cup white sugar
• 2 pears - peeled, cored and diced
• 1 (12 ounce) package fresh or frozen cranberries
• 1 cup honey
• 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
• 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest

Prep 15 mins. Cook 15 mins. Total 25 mins. (makes a great do- ahead recipe)

1. In a medium saucepan, stir together the water and sugar over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil. Stir in the pears, and reduce heat to medium. Cook, stirring frequently for 3 minutes, then pour in cranberries and honey. Continue to cook until cranberries pop and the mixture thickens slightly, about 5 minutes.

2. Remove from heat and stir in the lemon juice and lemon zest. Cool to room temperature, then store covered in the refrigerator for up to one week.
Dessert-

Cranberry Apple Crisp

Ingredients:
- 4 Granny Smith apples - peeled, cored and sliced
- 1 1/2 cups whole berry cranberry sauce
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup rolled oats (or quinoa flakes)
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 2/3 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup butter, melted

Prep 15 mins. Cook 45 mins. Total 1 hr.
1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

2. Place apple slices in an 8 or 9 inch square baking dish. Spread the cranberry sauce over the apples. In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, oats (or quinoa flakes), brown sugar, cinnamon, and butter until it’s crumbly. Sprinkle over the apples and cranberry sauce, covering completely.

3. Bake for 45 minutes in the preheated oven, or until apples can be easily pierced with a knife and topping is browned

Roger’s Pumpkin No-Bake Cheesecake

Ingredients:
- 2 sticks of cream cheese (softened)
- 1 Cup of sugar
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- ¼ Cup Pumpkin pie filling
- Pre-made graham cracker crust

Prep 10 minutes Make 5 mins. Total 15 mins. (can be made ahead a day or two before)
1. Blend ingredients in a medium bowl until creamy and fluffy then Pour into graham cracker crust
2. Garnish with cinnamon sugar and shaved white chocolate. Refrigerate to set.
Who’s Bringing What??

Have you been a little overwhelmed with all that is going on? Shopping, planning, cooking and cleaning. Do you feel like there is no way to get it all done? Well, we have the best advice when it comes to preparing for Thanksgiving. Quite simply, KISS It! Keep It Simple Silly!

Request that your family and friends help- they can bring a certain dish, you can provide them with a recipe, or just ask them to help prepare it. There are numerous ways you could go about it, but here are a few good ones.

1. In our family, whoever is hosting provides the meats then creates a menu that lists everything including paper goods, utensils, drinks, desserts, breads, activities- you name it (if it's happening that day, it's on the menu). The host then emails it as a Google doc so each family member can fill in what they are bringing/doing. This way the host isn't crazy and everyone contributes- even those who can't/don't cook.

2. Whether at Friendsgiving or at family Thanksgiving, it's usually a potluck of sorts, with the host family doing the turkey and maybe a dessert. Everyone else brings other sides, etc. Low key keeps everything simple.

3. Have people bring a dish to share- assign one person to bring potatoes, another person to bring the side vegetables, another person to make the stuffing, another person to bring the pies, and the host would cook the turkey.

4. Plan ahead! Don’t try to do it all- ask for help. Let everyone bring a side dish or dessert. Remember that the most important thing is being together with family and friends. Don't over-eat! I could go on and on!

5. Create your list in E-vite and in there lay out the ‘ground rules’ of what you are preparing, what you are in need of, and what can be done ahead of time. When people reply, ask them to list what they are bringing.

As you can see, it is most important to come together as a group and celebrate. Some of the fun traditions that people incorporate into the holiday also make it extra special. Here are a few ideas you could try.
1. Hand everyone a cut out of a leaf and pen. Each person writes what they are thankful for that year and turns in the leaf before they can have dessert. My family decided we shouldn't put our names on the leaves so we could guess who wrote what when we read the leaves aloud during dessert. My brother-in-law takes a picture of the whole family around the table, and I put the leaves and the picture in my Thanksgiving photo album. The TV is on the whole time with the parade and football games. That's it! No big expectations. Same thing every year so no stress to try to outdo past years.

2. One of my all-time favorite Thanksgiving’s we went to a cousin’s house. They did the turkey, others helped with sides and desserts. The table was gorgeous... crystal, china, the works, and we all wore the tacky matching Christmas pajamas that night. It was such a hoot!!
Day 3 Prep Your Home

One of the best things you can do to keep your stress levels low around the holidays is to work at keeping your home clutter free. That may sound obvious from someone who wrote a book with the title “Clutter Free”, but I really believe this to be one of the best things you can do.

Here are a few steps for decluttering before the holidays hit you – and your house.

- Start to take care of the surface clutter: mail, random items left out by your kids, magazines, etc. Recycle anything you don’t need and put the rest away.

- Start to undecorate your home. When I start decorating, I pull out my “FALL” box. But before one horn-a-plenty gets put on a table, I figure out what I’m going to store away for the season: My everyday dishes that are displayed in our hutch, some pottery that is out ten months of the year, etc. I don’t want to put holiday décor on top of everyday stuff. It makes much more sense for me to strip my house down and have a blank-ish canvas to work on.

- Put extra appliances away. Maybe you don’t need that sorbet maker or juicer on your counter as you prepare for the holidays. Your most important real estate, especially at the holiday season, is counter space. Strip it down to just what you’ll need for the season.

- Clean out your hall closet. Do you still have your beach towels and flip flops stuffed in your hall closet? Give it a seasonal makeover and make room for guests’ coats.

- Don’t forget the bathroom. What bathroom will guests be using? No, it is not required that you have Bath and Body Pumpkin Spiced pump soap for the holiday, but clean hand towels are a must.
Day 4 Place Cards and Decorations

If you’re family is low key, then place cards may not be your thing, but there are a million cute and simple ideas out there. The hardest thing is deciding what to make! Place cards add to the table decor and can even be used as a little favor for the guests to bring home. But, if you are like many people and don’t have a creative bone in your body, or simply don’t enjoy doing crafty things, here are some ways you can still get the job done with no fuss.

1. Go to Pinterest. There are a million ideas, from simple to over the top. You can see for yourself how you will want the table to look. I think you might be surprised at how easy some of the ideas really are!

2. Have a craft day with the kids. Ask them to make the decorations and place cards. Lay out the supplies with the general idea in mind, and let them at it. They will be excited to help make them and proud to show off and give away their ‘favors’ afterward!

3. Go to your local craft store and buy die cut leaves. Decorate with them, have the guests write their names and what they are thankful for on them. Make a “Tree of Thanks” by getting a large branch and inserting it into a bucket with rocks and sand in the bottom. Hole punch the leaves, tie string around them and hang them from the branch signifying all the things you are thankful for!

4. Send the kids and grandparents on a walk the day before Thanksgiving. Ask them to bring back pinecones, colorful leaves, pretty rocks or other natural elements that can be easily incorporated into the table decorations.

5. If this is still too much, but you want something, job it out! Assign this job to someone who is crafty and is waiting to jump in and help! Maybe they’d rather be in charge of the decor than the mashed potatoes. There is NO shame in gifting someone else the opportunity to work in their strength! It will bless you and them at the same time.

Maybe to you family decorations are not at all important. Maybe it is spending time together that matters the most. Maybe it is volunteering your time at a soup kitchen, or serving hot cocoa at the local Thanksgiving day football game. Whatever is most important to you and your family is where the focus should be. Don’t let other people’s expectations rid you of your holiday happiness. Decide what is most important to you and your family and come up with a plan.
Day 5 - The Help List
Help Me Please!

Are you the kind of person who knows exactly what to say at the exact second you need to say it and the words just fly off of your tongue? Or do you happen to be one of those people who, after the fact, thinks of what to say? I happen to be of the latter group. My go-to response under pressure is not really fight or flight, it is freeze! My husband jokes with me and refers to me as the character in the kids movie Rango. The lizard lady named Beans. That face she makes... yeah, that’s me.

When I freeze, it is usually because I don’t have the words at that moment, or I am overwhelmed to the point of shutting down. It’s taken me a while to even know when I get to this place. And one of the things that helped get me there was at my daughter’s fourth birthday party. This was me, when I found out the person I had hired to come ‘put on’ the party, was not showing, and people were asking me the dreaded words... “How can I help?” Oh geesh! I lost it. Beans took over.

I have learned over the years that asking for help is one of the easiest things we can do to avoid getting overwhelmed. (And planning well in advance). But for me, at least, asking is hard to do. I was raised to be a “doer” however there are just times when you cannot do it all- no matter how much you plan. So, this is where I have decided that if I literally plan from the beginning that people are going to want to help, then I can think ahead of what jobs to assign!

Your Help List can literally save you even if you know how to assign jobs. It will keep accountability straight too!

“Who has seen the gravy and stuffing? Where is it?? Who moved the stuffing??” Enter The Help List! Who brought it? Who has great eyes and can spot anything?

This list will function as your assistant. Write down the times things need to go in the oven and how the family members asking can help etc. Can they help set the table? Bring their famous deviled eggs? Be on cleanup duty? Entertain the kids? All of these questions can be on your Help List and you can put some time into planning before your house is a zoo, what would be of most help to you- so you avoid the ‘Attack of the Beans’!
Hey There! You, the one with the eight-mile to do list, STOP. Hold on. When was the last time you slowed down to breathe? Really, when did you last take deep slow breaths?

If you are not sure when, it has been too long, so your next step is to *slow down and breathe deeply.*

Did you know that you think much more clearly when you get a good amount of oxygen to your brain? Did you know that by filling your brain with more oxygen you are opening receptors to help you react faster, think more clearly, and get more done? This is scientific fact, so if you are feeling busy or stressed, it’s time for a nice walk- like 20 minutes at a good pace- so you can think again.

Now, after you have taken a few minutes of deep breathing and oxygenated your brain well, it’s time to work on those shopping lists.

When you go and write things down you are more prepared, right? Well, when your brain is working at its optimal efficiency, you are also way less likely to forget things!

When was the last time you were preparing a big meal and you forgot like 3 main ingredients on the list only to have to run back out to the store? Well this time, we are going to tackle it differently. Rather than rush to get your list done and forget things, we are going to take a better approach. Here’s what we are going to do:

1. Make sure you are ready and have taken that walk and breathed. Next, begin to look at your recipes. Look for all common ingredients. Write them down on an inventory list.

2. Write down the items that you do not normally have on hand, such as fresh cranberries.

3. Write down all of the rest of the items that you will need. Some of these will now be repeated but make a quick pantry check to see if you have enough of them and if not, add it to the shopping list.

4. Plan your store trip on the main grocery list. I do this in sections of the store. This helps you waste less time. I do produce, then staples for the pantry, then dairy, meats, miscellaneous and lastly frozen. This also happens to be the way my store is laid out. Then I am not circling around
the store like a single college guy looking for croutons!

These tips are sure to save you time, energy and stress because you are WELL planned rather than just planned by happenstance. Make the best of your precious time and do it right the first time!

Happy list making!
Day 7 Making it Special
Quotes, Prayers and Grace Gems

How do your loved ones gather around the table? Do you begin with a prayer or a toast? Do you recite quotes or scripture? Do you go around the table and state what you are thankful for?

Whatever your tradition, it’s good to be reminded of why and how you are thankful. Appendix A is a great printable full of quotes and prayer will get your mind focused and your thoughts on the ‘reason behind the season’.

Grace Gems

One of my (Paula) absolute favorite Thanksgivings was when we had my In-Laws and some older cousins visiting from out of town. My girls were preschoolers, and I was trying to teach them about why we celebrate Thanksgiving, how we honor each other, and why we share what we are thankful for.

After we said grace, I suggested we go around the table and share what we were thankful for, just as my husband’s grandmother had always done in the past. I knew what I wanted to say. Each person went around the table and said what they were thankful for. Most of the answers were common responses that were well stated and meaningful. My little girls shared their answers of being thankful for their family coming into town, thankful for the sunshine, that kind of thing.

When it got back around to me, I took the opportunity to share something that meant a lot to me that I had never stated out loud before. This was kind of a bold step because it was heartfelt and it got me emotional. The other people were not sharing like that but I really wanted to, so I shared how much it meant to me that about ten years prior, my father-in-law had taken the time to make a phone call. Not just one phone call, probably closer to 50 calls.

You see, my father-in-law started calling me when my husband, his son, was deployed to Bosnia for a year serving as an officer in the Army. He called me every Saturday. He called to check in on me, to shoot the breeze, to tell me all the gossip from home, you name it. We would chat for hours sometimes. There was not one other person that did that for me while my husband was on the other side of the world, but he did! He took the time to call me, and I had to tell him how much it meant to me!
Needless to say, everyone got teary-eyed and laughed because I “trumped” the Thanksgiving game. But I have to say, it was a wonderful opportunity to tell my father-in-law how much I appreciated him, and I am sure I never would have gone back (after 10 years had passed) to thank him for those calls otherwise. I will never forget seeing his face with both tears and laughter, for I had ‘gotten him’!

What are some of your ‘thankful for’ gems? Do you have any memories that were shared or traditions that mean a lot to your family? Any cute kid quotes, special prayers or memorable comments?

Below are some great comments our Facebook fans shared to inspire you:

● Year before last when we went around to say what we were thankful for, our nephew said he was thankful for the new baby in his mommy's tummy. :)

● One year, instead of saying what we were thankful for, we shared something we were thankful for about someone else in the family. My sister-in-law made a comment about how I give people thoughtful gifts and how much she appreciated it. That meant a lot to me and I've never forgotten it. I think we'll do it that way again this year.

● I have a momento box that is a catch all of our memories ... Movie stubs, concerts, putt putt receipts, pictures, bracelets etc. We go through them and remember our year together. Then we share about specific things we are thankful for!

● We have a goofy tradition of sorts...after dinner has settled and it's time for dessert, we watch Elf to usher in the Christmas season. ;) 

● Our family has a fun tradition of playing Christmas Bingo on Thanksgiving afternoon. We each bring a few prizes and my mom buys a bunch and we play Christmas Bingo for an hour or so. We have a lot of fun memories around the table. We pray, eat, and play as a family.
Thanksgiving Quotes

Let us remember that, as much has been given us, much will be expected from us, and that true homage comes from the heart as well as from the lips, and shows itself in deeds.

— Theodore Roosevelt

Perhaps it takes a pure faith to praise God for unrealized blessings than for those we once enjoyed or those we enjoy now.

— A.W. Tozer

Thanksgiving is a jewel, to set in the hearts of honest men; but be careful that you do not take the day, and leave out the gratitude.

— John Clayton

Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received.

— Henry Van Dyke

Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling.

Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse.

— Henry Van Dyke

Praise the Lord. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart. In the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who have pleasure in them. Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and merciful.

For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

— Psalm 100

Psalm 111

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For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

— Psalm 111

Thanksgiving is a time when the world gets to see just how blessed and how workable the Christian system is.

The emphasis is not on giving or buying, but on being thankful and expressing that appreciation to God and to one another.

— E.P. Powell

We Give Thanks

Our Father in Heaven,

We give thanks for the pleasure

Of gathering together for this occasion.

We give thanks for this food

Prepared by loving hands.

We give thanks for life,

The freedom to enjoy it all

And all other blessings.

As we partake of this food,

We pray for health and strength

To carry on and try to live as You would have us.

This we ask in the name of Christ,

Our Heavenly Father.

— E.P. Powell