

5-Day Lesson Plan: A Thanksgiving Adventure

Overall Learning Objectives

By the end of this 5-day unit, the learner will be able to:

- Identify a turkey and make its sound.
- Understand the simple concept of sharing with friends and family.
- Name at least two common Thanksgiving foods (e.g., pumpkin, corn).
- Express one thing they are thankful for.
- Create several Thanksgiving-themed art projects.

Materials Needed

- **General Supplies:** Child-safe scissors, glue stick, washable paint (brown, red, orange, yellow, green), paintbrushes, crayons or markers, construction paper (assorted fall colors), paper plates, playdough.
- **Day 1:** Googly eyes, feathers (optional).
- **Day 2:** Large wooden beads or dry pasta (like penne or rigatoni), pipe cleaners or thick yarn. Storybook about friendship or the first Thanksgiving (e.g., "The First Thanksgiving" by Linda Hayward, or a simple friendship story).
- **Day 3:** An ear of corn (for painting), a shallow tray for paint, a large bin for sensory play, corn kernels (or oats/rice), small shovels/scoops, mini pumpkins or gourds.
- **Day 4:** Orange construction paper cut into a large pumpkin shape, a brown paper bag or branch from outside.
- **Day 5:** Large sheet of paper for a placemat, stickers, stamps, or other decorating materials. Ingredients for a simple, special snack (e.g., fruit salad, crackers and cheese).

Day 1: The Goofy Gobbling Turkey

Theme: Learning about Turkeys

Part 1: Circle Time / Introduction (15 mins)

- **Hook:** Start by making a funny gobbling sound. "What animal makes that sound? Gobble, gobble, gobble!" Wiggle your fingers under your chin like a turkey's wattle.
- **Objective:** "Today, we are going to learn all about turkeys! We will learn what they look like, what sound they make, and make our very own turkey art."
- **Discussion:**
 - "A turkey is a big bird. Can you stretch your arms out wide like big turkey wings?"
 - "Turkeys have lots of colorful feathers. What colors do you see on a turkey? Red, orange, yellow, brown!"
 - Sing a simple song like "Turkey in the Straw" or make one up: (to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle")
*Gobble, gobble, turkey bird,
You're a funny, feathered word.
With a wattle red and bright,
You're a silly, happy sight.*

*Gobble, gobble, turkey bird,
Best sound I have ever heard!*

Part 2: Group Activity / Body (20 mins)

Activity: Turkey Feather Color Sort

- **I Do (Model):** Show pieces of colored construction paper. "This is red. This is yellow." Pick up a red feather (or a red piece of paper/pom-pom). "I'm putting the red feather on the red paper. Watch."
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** "Let's do one together. Here is an orange feather. Which paper should it go on? Yes, the orange one! Let's put it there together."
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** Spread out a small pile of colorful feathers or pom-poms. "Now it's your turn! Can you put all the feathers on the right color paper?" Cheer on their efforts. This works on color recognition and fine motor skills.

Part 3: Art Project / Practice (20 mins)

Project: Handprint Turkey

- **Instructions:** "We are going to make a turkey using your hand! Your thumb will be the turkey's head, and your fingers will be the big, colorful feathers."
- **Steps:**
 1. Paint the child's palm brown and each finger a different fall color (red, orange, yellow, green).
 2. Carefully press their hand down onto a piece of paper.
 3. Once dry, use a marker to draw a little eye and feet. You can glue on a googly eye for extra fun!
- **Success Criteria:** The child has a clear handprint on the paper that resembles a turkey. They can point to the "feathers" (fingers).

Part 4: Conclusion / Wrap-up (5 mins)

- **Recap:** "Look at the amazing turkey you made! What sound does a turkey make?" (Encourage a "gobble, gobble").
- **Show and Tell:** Let the child hold up their artwork and tell you about it. "Wow, you used red and yellow for the feathers! Great job today!"

Day 2: Friends Together

Theme: Sharing and Friendship

Part 1: Circle Time / Introduction (15 mins)

- **Hook:** "Do you have friends you like to play with? What do you like to do with them? Sharing toys and snacks with friends is so nice!"
- **Objective:** "Today, we are going to talk about being good friends and sharing. We'll read a story and make a friendship bracelet!"
- **Discussion:** Read a simple picture book about the first Thanksgiving, focusing on the part where the Pilgrims and Native Americans shared food.

- Use simple terms: "A long, long time ago, some people came on a big boat. They were new here. Some new friends who already lived here helped them."
- "The new friends all shared a big, happy meal together. They were kind to each other. It's important to be kind and share with our friends."

Part 2: Group Activity / Body (20 mins)

Activity: Sharing a Pretend Meal

- **I Do (Model):** Set up a few plates and some play food. "I am going to have a snack. I have one cookie for me... and one for you! Sharing makes our friends happy."
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** "Let's pretend to have a meal together. Can you please pass me the apple? Thank you! What would you like?" Practice saying "please" and "thank you."
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** "Now you can be the host! Can you set up a meal for your stuffed animals? Make sure everyone gets some food to eat." Observe as they share the play food among their toys.

Part 3: Art Project / Practice (20 mins)

Project: Friendship Bracelets

- **Instructions:** "Friends sometimes give each other gifts. We are going to make a special friendship bracelet to remember to be kind."
- **Steps:**
 1. Provide a pipe cleaner or a piece of yarn with one end taped to the table (to make it easier to thread).
 2. Show the child how to thread large beads or pieces of dry pasta onto the pipe cleaner/yarn.
 3. Once it's full enough, tie the ends together to make a bracelet.
- **Success Criteria:** The child has successfully threaded several beads/pasta onto their string and has a finished bracelet.

Part 4: Conclusion / Wrap-up (5 mins)

- **Recap:** "What did we learn about today? That's right, being good friends and sharing! Your bracelet is a beautiful reminder of that."
- **Show and Tell:** Admire their new bracelet. "Who could you share something with today?"

Day 3: The Harvest Basket

Theme: Thanksgiving Foods

Part 1: Circle Time / Introduction (15 mins)

- **Hook:** Hold up a mini pumpkin or a picture of corn. "What is this? Have you ever eaten it? These are special foods we eat in the fall and at Thanksgiving!"
- **Objective:** "Today, we're going to learn about yummy foods that grow on farms, called a harvest. We will play with corn and make a corn painting!"
- **Discussion:**
 - "Harvest is when farmers pick all the food they grew in their gardens and fields."
 - "What foods do we eat at Thanksgiving? Pumpkin pie, corn on the cob, mashed potatoes,

apples!"

- Sing a song: (to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell")

The farmer plants the seeds,

The farmer plants the seeds,

Hi-ho, the derry-o,

The farmer plants the seeds.

(Continue with "The sun comes out," "The rain comes down," "The plants grow tall," "We pick the corn.")

Part 2: Group Activity / Body (20 mins)

Activity: Fall Harvest Sensory Bin

- **I Do (Model):** "Look at this bin! It's full of corn. I can use this scoop to pour the corn. It makes a cool sound! I can hide this little pumpkin under the corn."
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** "Let's scoop together. Can we fill up this little cup? Good job! Now let's pour it out."
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** Let the child have free play time with the bin. They can scoop, pour, bury, and find items. This is great for sensory exploration and fine motor skills. Ask questions like, "How does the corn feel?"

Part 3: Art Project / Practice (20 mins)

Project: Corn Cob Painting

- **Instructions:** "We are going to use a real piece of corn as our paintbrush! It will make a bumpy, cool pattern."
- **Steps:**
 1. Pour blobs of red, yellow, and orange paint into a shallow tray.
 2. Show the child how to roll an ear of corn in the paint so the kernels are covered.
 3. Help them roll the painted corn across a piece of paper to create a print.
- **Success Criteria:** The child's paper has a colorful, bumpy texture created by the corn. They explored a new way to paint.

Part 4: Conclusion / Wrap-up (5 mins)

- **Recap:** "Wow, what did we use to paint today? Corn! We learned all about harvest foods."
- **Show and Tell:** "Tell me about your painting. What does the corn pattern look like?"

Day 4: I Am Thankful

Theme: Gratitude and Family

Part 1: Circle Time / Introduction (15 mins)

- **Hook:** Give the child a big hug. "I am so happy I have you! You make me so happy. Being thankful is about thinking of all the things that make us feel happy and loved."
- **Objective:** "Today we will talk about everything we are thankful for. We are going to make leaves for a Thankful Tree!"
- **Discussion:**

- "Being thankful means saying 'thank you' for all the good things in our life."
- "What makes you happy? Your family? Your toys? Your warm, cozy bed?"
- "I am thankful for our home. I am thankful for yummy food. I am thankful for you!"
- Model it simply: "I am thankful for my dog because he is soft and gives me kisses."

Part 2: Group Activity / Body (20 mins)

Activity: Building a Thankful Tree

- **I Do (Model):** "I have a big tree branch here (or a tree trunk drawn on paper). I am going to write 'sunny days' on this paper leaf because sunny days make me happy. I am putting it on our tree."
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** "Let's think of something we are thankful for together. How about our family? Let's make a leaf for our family and put it on the tree."
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** "Now it's your turn. Tell me something that makes you happy." As the child names things (e.g., "my truck," "Grandma," "juice"), write them on paper leaves. Let the child glue or tape the leaves onto the branch or paper tree.

Part 3: Art Project / Practice (20 mins)

Project: My Thankful Pumpkin

- **Instructions:** "We're going to make a special pumpkin and fill it with drawings of things we love."
- **Steps:**
 1. Give the child a large pumpkin shape cut from orange paper.
 2. Ask them, "What are you thankful for?"
 3. Encourage them to draw pictures of those things on the pumpkin (e.g., a stick figure for family, a scribble for their pet, a circle for a ball). You can help label their drawings.
- **Success Criteria:** The pumpkin has several drawings on it representing things the child is thankful for. They can point to a drawing and name it.

Part 4: Conclusion / Wrap-up (5 mins)

- **Recap:** "Look at all the wonderful things you are thankful for! It feels good to think about happy things."
- **Show and Tell:** Point to the Thankful Tree and their pumpkin. "You are thankful for so much! That is wonderful."

Day 5: Thanksgiving Celebration

Theme: Review and Celebrate

Part 1: Circle Time / Introduction (15 mins)

- **Hook:** "Guess what? We have learned so much this week! We learned about turkeys, friends, food, and being thankful. Today is a celebration day!"
- **Objective:** "Today we will remember everything we learned about Thanksgiving, make a special placemat, and have a yummy snack!"
- **Discussion (Review):**
 - "What sound does a turkey make?" (Gobble!)
 - "What is a nice thing to do for our friends?" (Share!)

- "What is a yummy Thanksgiving food we talked about?" (Corn, pumpkin!)
- "Look at our Thankful Tree! What is one thing you are thankful for?"

Part 2: Group Activity / Body (20 mins)

Activity: Thanksgiving Song and Dance

- **Activity:** Put on some fun music and do a "Turkey Dance."
 - Flap your arms like wings.
 - Waddle around the room.
 - Make gobbling sounds to the beat.
 - Sing all the songs from the week again.
 - This activity is about movement, fun, and celebrating all they have learned.

Part 3: Art Project / Practice (20 mins)

Project: Thanksgiving Placemat

- **Instructions:** "We are going to have a special snack, but first, we need a special placemat for our plate!"
- **Steps:**
 1. Give the child a large piece of construction paper.
 2. Let them decorate it freely using crayons, stickers, stamps, or even by gluing on extra feathers or paper leaves.
 3. Help them write their name on it.
- **Success Criteria:** The child has a decorated placemat ready for a meal. The focus is on creative expression.

Part 4: Conclusion / Wrap-up (5 mins)

- **Recap & Celebration Snack:** Use the placemat for a special snack time. While eating, recap the week one last time.
- **Final Reflection:** "You did such a wonderful job learning about Thanksgiving this week. You made turkeys, friendship bracelets, corn paintings, a thankful tree, and a placemat. Happy Thanksgiving!"

Differentiation

- **For Scaffolding/Simpler Steps:**
 - Pre-cut all shapes (leaves, pumpkins).
 - Guide the child's hand during painting or gluing.
 - Provide fewer choices to avoid overwhelm (e.g., offer two colors instead of all of them).
 - For the Thankful Tree, use pictures from a magazine instead of asking the child to draw.
- **For Extension/Advanced Learners:**
 - Encourage the child to try cutting out simple shapes with safety scissors.
 - Ask more "why" questions: "Why are you thankful for your toys?"
 - Practice counting the feathers or pasta beads.
 - Help them write the first letter of their name on their artwork.