

FOR YOUR THANKSGIVING TABLE

Growing in Gratitude with Theological Horizons

During this season of Thanksgiving, we invite you to gather with friends and family - or simply take time on your own - to count your blessings. May these tools help you to “cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindnesses of God in your daily life” (Alexander Maclaren, 19th c.). We are grateful for YOU!

O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD (3 MINUTES)

Bring your awareness to your five senses. Now craft a prayer to the God who surrounds you with good things and the capacity to savor them!

O God who created this body of mine,

I am thankful that I can TASTE _____

I am thankful that I can SEE _____

I am thankful that I can TOUCH _____

I am thankful that I can SMELL _____

I am thankful that I can HEAR _____

PERSONALIZE THE PSALM (4 MINUTES)

Reflect on prayers you've prayed over the past year - and times when you have been aware of God's provision and protection. As you read Psalm 28:6-9 (The Message), imagine yourself jumping, shouting and singing in gratitude to God - then finish the psalm with your own words of thanks!

Blessed be God— he heard me praying. He proved he's on my side; I've thrown my lot in with him. Now I'm jumping for joy, and shouting and singing my thanks to God:

SHARE YOUR BLESSINGS (4 MINUTES)

“All the blessings we enjoy are Divine deposits, committed to our trust on this condition, that they should be dispensed for the benefit of our neighbors” (John Calvin, 16th c.).

Consider the “Divine deposits” in your life. Can you think of one particular blessing that you might use for the benefit of a neighbor, friend, family member or stranger? How might you put that into action this coming week? Write your intention.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER (15 MINUTES)

#1. Collect notecards, envelopes and stamps.

#2. Take a few minutes to think about the past. Now write a letter of gratitude to someone in your life who has never been properly thanked for their kindness, whether large or small.

#3. Address the envelope and put it in the mailbox. Better yet, deliver and read your letter in person. Emails and phone calls count, too!



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THE SILENT GRATITUDE MAP (15 MINUTES)

Gather into groups of up to 5 people and take a large sheet of paper and pens or colored markers for each group. Follow these prompts:

#1 Silently reflect upon things in life for which you are grateful. As each of you thinks of something, write it onto the sheet, and place a circle around the word/s. Everyone can write at once! Write as many as come to mind.

#2 Now draw a line from your circled items and write a reason why you are grateful for each one.

For example, if Ali writes, 'my home,' she might draw a line to it and write the words, 'I can relax.'

#3 Take a few minutes to silently read others' various responses and draw your own lines and write reasons you're grateful for others' items. Fill up the paper! For example, if Jon is feels grateful for a home, he might draw a line from Ali's circle and write his reason.

#4 Now talk together about what you learned through the exercise.

ITS THANKSGIVING TIME! (8 MINUTES)

When does it feel like THANKSGIVING to you? Read the poem "Thanksgiving Time" by Langston Hughes (1902-1967) then recruit family or friends to help write one more verse of your own. (Rhyming is optional!)

*When the night winds whistle through the trees
and blow the crisp brown leaves a-crackling down,
When the autumn moon is big and yellow-orange and round,
When old Jack Frost is sparkling on the ground,
It's Thanksgiving Time!*

*When the pantry jars are full of mince-meat
and the shelves are laden with sweet spices for a cake,
When the butcher man sends up a turkey nice and fat to bake,
When the stores are crammed with everything ingenious cooks can make,
It's Thanksgiving Time!*

*When the gales of coming winter outside your window howl,
When the air is sharp and cheery so it drives away your scowl,
When one's appetite craves turkey and will have no other fowl,
It's Thanksgiving Time!*

What says THANKSGIVING to you? Write one final verse!

When...

When... _____

When... _____

