

# Eight Part Thanksgiving Devotional – Teacher/Parent Guide

---

**Instructions:** *The following devotional is broken up into eight parts. It compares and contrasts the Israelites' exodus from Egypt to the Pilgrims' journey and beginning in the new world. You could start the devotional eight days before Thanksgiving to teach your children about Thanksgiving and the founding of our country. Older children could do the devotion on their own and then share with the family what they learned on Thanksgiving. If you choose to do this devotion in a group setting or a one time setting (like in Sunday school or as a family devotion), various children can read the Bible passages and Thanksgiving cards and then the questions can be discussed aloud. Download the Thanksgiving Cards needed for this devotion and Student Work Pages here: [www.networkerstec.com/thanks-quote-cards.html](http://www.networkerstec.com/thanks-quote-cards.html)  
To see all our Thanksgiving resources visit: [www.networkerstec.com/thanksgiving.html](http://www.networkerstec.com/thanksgiving.html)*



## **#1 - Read Exodus 5:1-14, 12:1-8 and Thanksgiving Cards 1-2**

**What was similar about the beginning situation of the Israelites and the Pilgrims?** *Both were under a form of slavery. The Pilgrims were under religious slavery in that they could not worship God freely, and the Israelites were physically slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.*

**What was different between the Israelites and the Pilgrims in regard to their last meal before their departure?** *The Israelites were instructed to kill a lamb and roast it on a fire to eat. The Pilgrims decided to spend the day fasting like Ezra 8:21, and to seek God's protection for their journey.*



## **#2 - Read Exodus 14:10-14, 15:1, 19-21, Psalm 100, and Thanksgiving Cards 3-5**

**Throughout the treacherous journey on the Mayflower and amidst the sailors' taunts, the Pilgrims trusted God. How does that differ from the Israelites' attitude to the Lord when they crossed the Red Sea?** *The Israelites were afraid, wanted to turn back, and grumbled against God.*

**What did the Pilgrims do when they first landed in America?** *Fell upon their knees and celebrated by reading Psalm 100.*

**What did the Israelites do after they had been delivered from Pharaoh's army?** *They sang a song to the Lord and the women danced to praise God.*



### **#3 - Read Exodus 18:13-26 and Thanksgiving Cards 6-8**

**Before getting off the boat to establish their new home, what did the Pilgrims do?** *They wrote the Mayflower Compact.*

**What was significant about this compact?** *The Mayflower Compact was designed to show that power flows from the Creator → to the people → then to the leaders, rather than all other societies prior where the power flowed from the Creator → to the King → and then to the people.<sup>1</sup>*

**When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, what did Jethro tell Moses to do?** *To appoint judges from among the people to rule on small disputes so that Moses did not have to judge each one.*

**How does the governing system that the Pilgrims set up compare with what Jethro instructed Moses to do?** *Both realized that God was their ultimate authority and that God was the source of the Moral Law. Both were starting with a government of the people, rather than instituting a King that ruled over the people.*



### **#4 - Read Exodus 15:22-16:4, 16:13 17:1-7 and Thanksgiving Cards 9-12**

**What difficulties did the Israelites and the Pilgrims have to endure?** *The Israelites had want of clean drinking water and food. The Pilgrims also needed food, as well as warm shelters due to the harsh winter and there was great sickness among them.*

**How did God provided for each group during their trial?** *For the Israelites, God provided a log that made the bitter water sweet, manna from heaven, quail to eat, and water from a rock. For the Pilgrims, there was an Indian named Squanto that taught them many of the skills they needed to survive and how to find/grow food in the new world. William Bradford said that Squanto was a special instrument of God.*

*Throughout their trials, the Pilgrims continued to trust God and love others. The Israelites on the other hand often complained, grumbled, disobeyed, and hardened their hearts against God.*

*We should seek to be like the Pilgrims in our trials, not the Israelites.*

*(Learn about Gratefulness - [iblp.org/discipleship-tools/biblical-character/gratefulness](http://iblp.org/discipleship-tools/biblical-character/gratefulness))*

---

<sup>1</sup> Bill Federer - From:AmericanMinute.com- Pilgrim History



## **#5 - Read Leviticus 23:4-15, 41-43 and Thanksgiving Cards 13, 25<sup>2</sup>**

**In Leviticus 23, God gave instructions to the Israelites on how to celebrate various feasts. What was the purpose of these feasts?** *To remind them of their history and what God had done for them during their exodus from slavery in Egypt and during their journey to the Promised Land, for them to teach their children about the goodness of the Lord, to thank God for his provisions, to point them toward the coming of Christ, etc.*

**What were some of the feasts and what did they entail?** *Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Booths; sacrificing a lamb, unleavened bread, food offerings to the Lord, consecration, not working, offerings to the Lord of one's harvest, living in booths, etc.<sup>3</sup>*

**What did the Pilgrims do in 1621?** *In October they had a Thanksgiving feast to thank the Lord for his provisions for them; there was prayer, food, games, and friends (the Indians that had helped them).*

**What did Congress do in 1777 and why?** *They made a proclamation of the First National Day of Thanksgiving to express the grateful feeling of their hearts and to seek God's forgiveness for sin.*



**#6 - Read Thanksgiving Cards 14-19** – **What are some facts that you learned from these cards about the founding of our county and the people that came here?** *Answers will vary.*



**#7 - Read Thanksgiving Cards 20-24** - **What are some facts that you learned from these cards about the founding of our county and the people that came here?** *Answers will vary.*



**#8 - Read Thanksgiving Cards 26-27**

**Why did William Bradford (the first Governor of Plymouth colony) keep a diary?** *So that those after him might not forget what those that came before them had obtained with so much hardship.*

**Why did the Pilgrims come to America?** *"...[For the advance of] the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world." ~Bradford*

*Coloring picture on the Student Version.*

---

<sup>2</sup> To learn more about Thanksgiving Proclamations see this video for kids - [https://youtu.be/SH\\_dOZcpl6I](https://youtu.be/SH_dOZcpl6I)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jewish-festivals.html>