



a simpler
season

Thanksgiving Fun

Easy Ways to Celebrate and Give Thanks



Thanksgiving Fun

Thanksgiving is one of my family's favorite holidays. No school. Great food. The perfect entrance into the holiday season. Who could ask for more?

I loved Thanksgiving as a child. My mom made it so special, often pulling out all the stops to set a pretty table and cook some of our favorite foods. I can remember waking up early, greeted by all sorts of wonderful smells drifting throughout the house. The day was full of excitement as it was the one day out of the year that we all enjoyed together. We're a family of eaters.

Unlike Christmas, which is, of course, a party in itself, we weren't focused on what we were gonna get so much as we enjoyed what we already had -- good food and family fun.

Some of my best memories include helping my mom in the kitchen, playing cards after the feast, taking a walk before dessert. And then, maybe eating a lazy supper of turkey sandwiches or other leftovers.

My kids are no different than I. The day is focused on feasting and fun.

They tell me weeks in advance what they want me to prepare, and request certain uncles to be added to the guest list so they can be assured plenty of fun.

This booklet features a number of printables to help **you** make the feast and the fun the things that you and your children remember most as well.

In the following pages you will find:

- Kid-friendly recipes to add to your holiday menu
- Directions to two fun, edible crafts
- Printable place cards for the kids to decorate
- Printable menu cards for your dinner table
- Printable activity sheets for kids to complete when they get antsy
- A template and directions for a felt busy bag activity for toddlers
- A list of family friendly movies and games to add to your weekend fun

It's my hope that you'll have everything at your fingertips to make sweet memories with the children in your life this Thanksgiving!

Kid-Friendly

Thanksgiving Recipes



Turkey Shaped Cinnamon Rolls

(Serves 5)

1 canister large refrigerated cinnamon rolls, such as Pillsbury Grands

1 canister regular size refrigerated biscuits

chocolate chips or cinnamon red hots

colored sprinkles

Preheat oven according to cinnamon roll package directions. Separate cinnamon rolls and place on cookie sheets, about 5 inches apart. Separate biscuits. Cut 2 biscuits into quarters. Place one quarter in the center of each cinnamon roll with the point facing down. This will be the turkey's face and beak. Add two chocolate chips or red hots for eyes. Cut five biscuits into four thin strips each. Dip each strip into colored sprinkles. Place four different colored strips at the top of each cinnamon roll with the edges touching. These will be the turkey's feathers. Use any remaining biscuits or biscuit pieces to cut bird feet and attach those to the bottom. Bake according to package directions. Serve with frosting on the side for dipping.

Healthier Version: You can make your turkeys out of this [Whole Grain Cinnamon Roll recipe](#). Just substitute one batch of dough and a half-batch of cinnamon roll filling for the Pillsbury Grands, and decorate with colored sugars, raisins and dried cranberries.

Cranberry Sparkly (Serves 4-6)

The children will love it if the “kids’ table” has some grown-up elements. Purchase plastic goblets and treat them to this sparkly juice that they can easily prepare with you. Encourage them to prepare their own toasts to one another.

1 can cranberry juice concentrate

1 can apple juice concentrate

1 2-liter bottle carbonated water or soda water

In large pitcher or punchbowl, pour juice concentrates. Add six cans carbonated water. Serve in plastic goblets.

Quivering Leaves (Serves 8)



Fall is the time when leaves stir in the wind and fall from the trees. Present a beautiful platter of edible gelatin leaves. If you’ve got a big crowd, prepare several batches, using two to three different colors, such as red, orange, and yellow.

4 packages plain gelatin, such as Knox brand

3 (3-ounce packages) flavored gelatin, such as Jell-O

4 cups hot water

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and stir several minutes until gelatin is completely dissolved. Pour into 9x13-inch pan. Chill for several hours until hard set. Cut all the way through gelatin with leaf-shaped cookie cutters. Remove from pan and place on platter. (In order to loosen the gelatin from the pan, it may be necessary to dip the pan bottom in warm water for a few seconds.)

Edible

Thanksgiving Crafts

Nanna's Sugar Cookies

- 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 1/2 cups unbleached flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar



In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine sugar and butter. Add egg yolks and vanilla. Blend. Add flour, baking soda, and cream of tartar. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and chill for at least one hour.

Heat the oven to 375 ° . On lightly floured surface, roll out a portion of the dough to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes. Place on parchment or silpat-lined baking sheet. Bake for 7 to 8 minutes or until lightly browned along the edges. Cool on wire rack. Frost with powdered sugar icing and sprinkles.

Powdered Sugar Icing

- 2 cups sifted powdered sugar
- half and half
- [gel food coloring](#)

In mixing bowl, combine powdered sugar and a tablespoon of half and half. Continue adding half and half until you reach the desired consistency. Divide frosting into muffin cups or small bowls. Tint with gel food coloring. Use small art brushes to paint the cookies.

Turkey Apple Placeholders

Even adults can have fun with this activity! It's amazing to see how people can take the same ingredients and create something unique. Use your finished turkeys as placeholders at your Thanksgiving meal or enjoy them as a pre-meal snack.

Supplies Needed:

- Apples
- Toothpicks
- Cardstock or construction paper
- Tape
- Pens, markers or colored pencils
- Turkey Head Template (next page)
- Ingredients for the "feathers": spice drops, dried apple rings (cut in half), dried apricots (cut in half), raisins, dried cranberries, mini-marshmallows

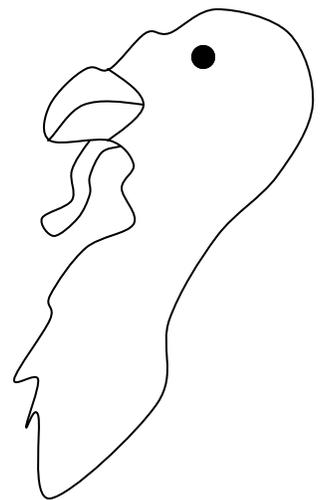
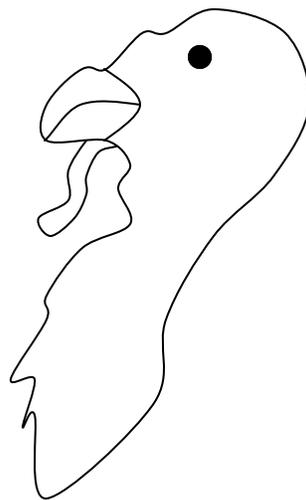
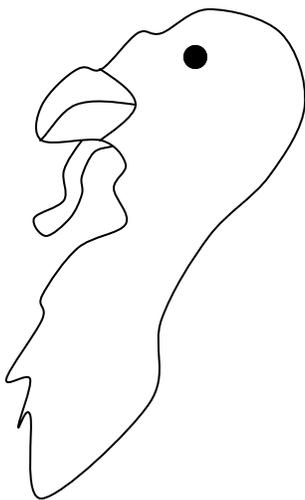
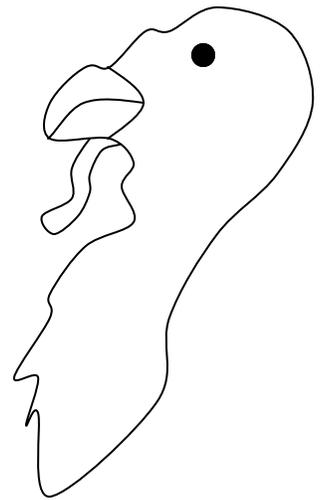
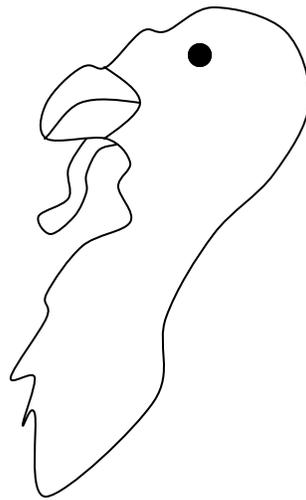
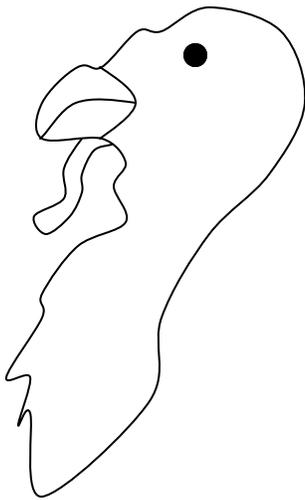


Directions:

1. Use the template on the next page to make the turkey heads. Print onto cardstock, cut out, and color. Or, use the print out as a template, trace onto colored construction paper and cut out.
2. At the bottom of the turkey's neck, place some tape on both sides of the cardstock. This will help protect the paper from the apple's juice.
3. Lay the apple on its side and cut a slit on the stem end of the apple. Stick in paper head into the slit.
4. At the other end of the apple, use two toothpicks for legs to stabilize the turkey on the bottom.
5. On the top, make as many "feathers" as you like by skewering the spice drops, dried fruit and/or mini marshmallows on toothpicks. Stick the "feathers" into the apple.

Turkey Head Template

Print out on cardstock, cut out the heads, and allow the children to color them. Be sure to color both sides of the turkey's head. Alternatively, you can use the head as a template and trace it onto colored construction paper.



Set a Pretty Table

On the following pages you'll find place cards to print out on your computer. Arm your kids with colored pencils or crayons and help them write out a place card for each individual on your guest list.

Kid print is awesome!

Allow your kids to be creative in how they place them on the table. You can punch a hole in each one and slip a ribbon through the hole. Then tie the ribbons around a napkin, a pine cone, or even around the stem of an apple, pear, or small pumpkin.

Include other small but simple touches that your kids can help with, like:

- votive candles floating in mason jars of water
- small vases filled with wild flowers
- real leaves collected on a nature walk and strewn down the center of the table
- sticks and twigs bundled together and tied with a fall colored ribbon
- a bowl of apples and pomegranates
- miniature pumpkins and gourds



Menu

Appetizers

Main Course

Desserts



Menu

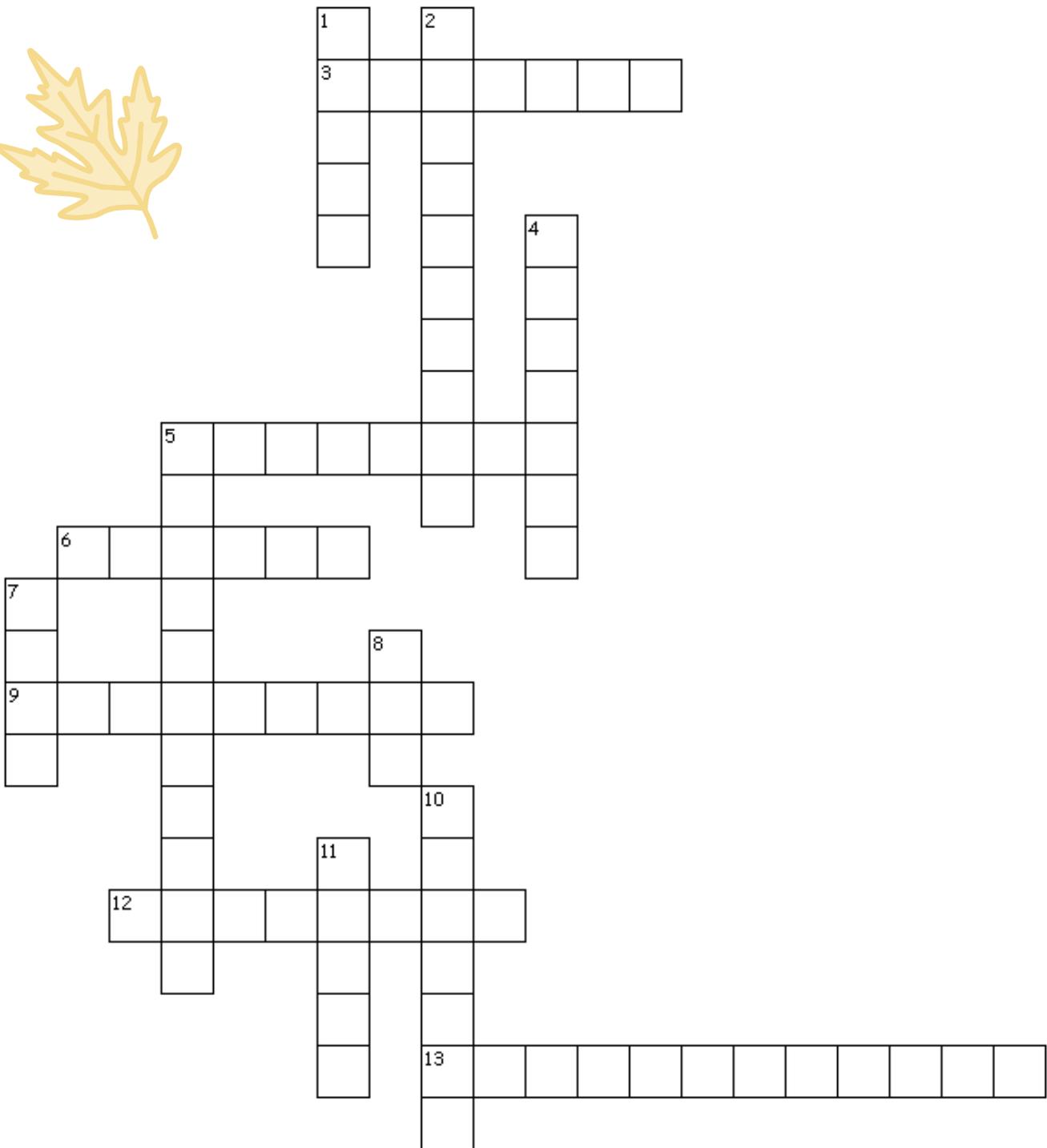
Appetizers

Main Course

Desserts



Thanksgiving Crossword Puzzle



Created by [Puzzlemaker](http://Puzzlemaker.com) at DiscoveryEducation.com

Thanksgiving Crossword Puzzle Hints

Across

3. an event where family and old friends get together again
5. those who travel far, usually for a religious purpose
6. a bird that is roasted and served with mashed potatoes and gravy
9. your mom's favorite blog
12. another word for thankful
13. a time to celebrate and be thankful for what we have



Down

1. a prayer said before a meal
2. traditional Thanksgiving dessert
4. a type of meat that was served at the first Thanksgiving
5. one of the foods served at the first Thanksgiving
7. the season when much food is harvested
8. maker of all things
10. the American Indian who helped the Pilgrims at Plymouth
11. French word for thank you



Thanksgiving Dinner Word Search



M G A Z E T E P L D Y R K S C C Z R G V
L A H R B I S C U I T S W W R P E C K D
P Z S H G I P V U S B E M V A N B C I L
Z B I H E E X N E C E F W M N Q G E J Q
H G Y T E R Y I I T L S R I B P R R A D
S B U J V D P M P K N Q D Y E V S N Y W
K C Q Y A N P O A P P G U O R G L O V A
L U S Y A K T O A U N M J F R N K I A X
S M O C L A X X T I K S U Y Y I L K C Q
Y G E V T E Q O V A V J M P S F V Z Q Y
A P E O X U Y I E T T U N N A F G K R M
G T E O G D G B E Z U O G V U U G O D M
M S Y Y A S C W M Y H R E U C T R O P S
J J Q L K B Z W R R H T K S E S A X K B
E U G N I R E M N O M E L E Y C V X M A
E Z A Q S W A N C P E E I Z Y K Y X G A
Z H G R E E N B E A N C A S S E R O L E
T E R F F I R F M T Z M E J C L M D E N
V Z J X X A M C A X S G H I W W P D M A
I J O N T Q K J J T P O Q P K F W L G R

Find these words:

BISCUITS

CRANBERRY SAUCE

GRAVY

GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

LEMON MERINGUE

MASHED POTATOES

PECAN PIE

PUMPKIN PIE

STUFFING

SWEET POTATOES

THANKSGIVING DINNER

TURKEY

Activity Answer Key



Crossword Puzzle

Across

3. REUNION
5. PILGRIMS
6. TURKEY
9. LIFEASMOM
12. GRATEFUL
13. THANKSGIVING

Down

1. GRACE
2. PUMPKIN PIE
4. VENISON
5. PARCHED CORN
7. FALL
8. GOD
10. SQUANTO
11. MERCI

Word Search

M G A Z E T E P L D Y R K S C C Z R G V
L A H R B I S C U I T S W W R P E C K D
P Z S H G I P V U S B E M V A N B C I L
Z B I H E E X N E C E F W M N Q G E J Q
H G Y T E R Y I I T L S R I B P R R A D
S B U J V D P M P K N Q D Y E V S N Y W
K C Q Y A N P O A P P G U O R G L O V A
L U S Y A K T O A U N M J F R N K I A X
S M O C L A X X T I K S U Y Y I L K C Q
Y G E V T E Q O V A V J M P S F V Z Q Y
A P E O X U Y I E T T U N N A F G K R M
G T E O G D G B E Z U O G V U U G O D M
M S Y Y A S C W M Y H R E U C T R O P S
J J Q L K B Z W R R H T K S E S A X K B
E U G N I R E M N O M E L E Y C V X M A
E Z A Q S W A N C P E E I Z Y K Y X G A
Z H G R E E N B E A N C A S S E R O L E
T E R F F I R F M T Z M E J C L M D E N
V Z J X X A M C A X S G H I W W P D M A
I J O N T Q K J J T P O Q P K F W L G R

Thanksgiving Felt Busy Bag

To create each busy bag, you will need:

- Felt or colored card stock, preferably in bright fall colors of red, green, yellow, orange, brown and blue
- 1 large 9 x 12 piece neutral colored felt for the background
- Gallon size zip-top bag
- Glue (optional)



What to do:

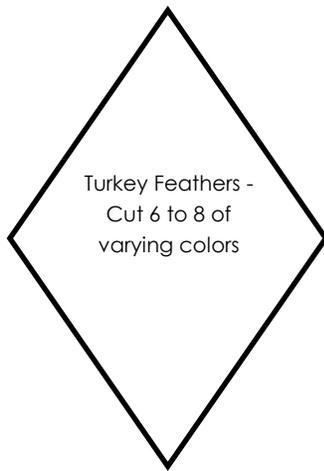
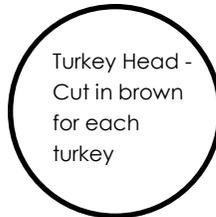
1. Print out the shape templates on the following page.
2. Using the paper shape patterns as a guide, cut out corresponding shapes out of felt.
3. Place all the shapes in the zip-top bag. Include the glue or gluestick if using.

To use the busy bag:

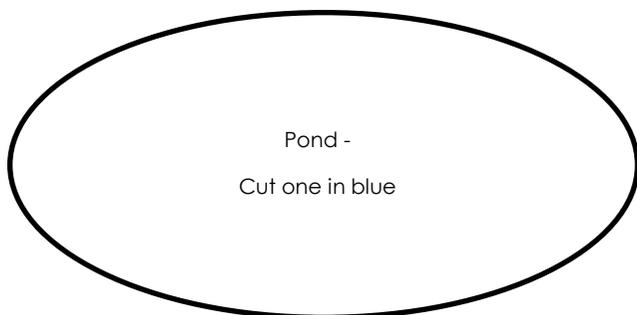
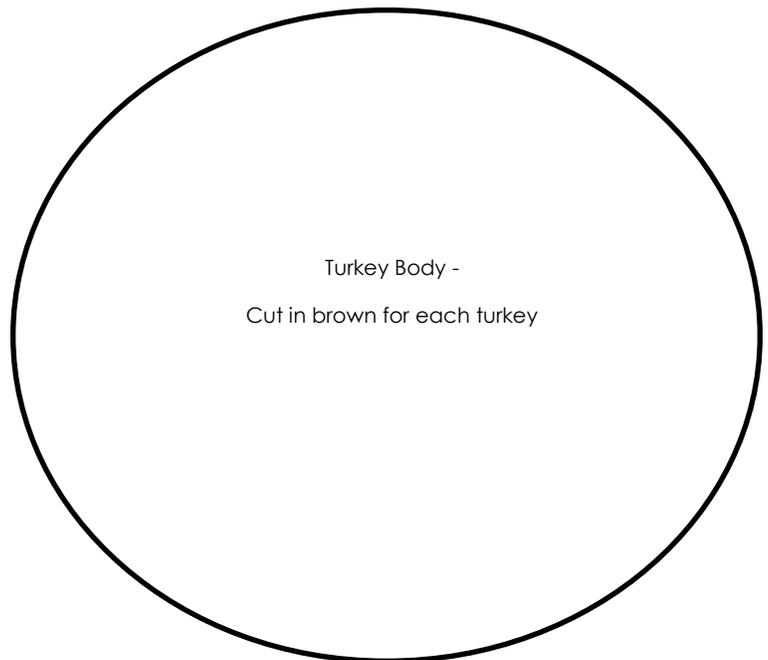
1. Give each child a bag and encourage him to remove the backdrop as well as all the shape pieces and lay them out on a flat surface.
2. Allow the children to construct their turkey(s) and trees in the forest with a pond in the foreground or background. Encourage them to tell stories about their turkeys.
3. Children are also free to make up other designs with the shapes.

Thanksgiving Busy Bag Templates

Turkey eyes - cut 2 for each turkey



Turkey beak and gobble. Cut the beak in yellow and the gobble in red



Tree trunk - cut one in brown for each tree



Family Movies & Games



After your Thanksgiving meal is over, snuggle up on the couch to watch a family flick or gather around the table to play a game together.

(Head's up: these are affiliate links!)

Movies to Watch

- [Elf](#)
- [It's a Wonderful Life](#)
- [How the Grinch Stole Christmas](#)
- [A Charlie Brown Christmas](#)
- [Homecoming \(the Waltons\)](#)
- [The Star of Christmas](#)
- [The Nativity Story](#)

Games to Play

- [Blokus](#)
- [Scrabble](#)
- [Boggle](#)
- [Pit](#)
- [Rory's Story Cubes](#)
- [Settlers of Catan](#)
- [Qwirkle](#)
- [Uno](#)
- [Skip-Bo](#)

a simpler
season

**Looking for other ways to
slow down and celebrate
a simpler season?**

Visit [Life as MOM](#) throughout the coming months for a range of ideas as well as “grab and go” recipes, gift ideas, and family fun. As long as you have a computer, a printer, and some paper, I’ve got you covered.

Together we’ll:

- [Plan ahead for a simpler season](#)
- [Think through the holidays](#) and reflect on Christmases past
- [Count our blessings](#) and practice thankfulness
- Make the days count with [holiday time management](#)
- Keep the kids happy while the turkey cooks
- Countdown until Christmas with easy family fun
- Bake someone happy — in a simpler way
- Plan to have fun and make memories
- Wrap presents in style without a lot of stress
- Create a simple and inexpensive gift for children
- Get supper in the bag
- Serve a make-ahead Christmas breakfast
- Ring in the New Year with kids

Don’t miss a bit of the fun! You can [subscribe for free emails](#) or [get LifeasMOM in your feed reader](#) each morning

This series is brought to you, in part, by:



About the Author

Jessica Fisher is a busy mom of six young children, aged toddler to teen. (Homeschool) mom by day, she moonlights as a freelance writer, blogger, and cookbook author.



Published in over 85 regional parenting publications, Jessica enjoys writing for periodicals as well as the web. She writes about ways to manage a home and family and still keep a smile on your face at LifeasMOM.com and posts “delicious ways to act your wage” at [Good Cheap Eats](http://GoodCheapEats.com). She is a regular contributor on [Life Your Way](http://LifeYourWay.com) and [Simple Homeschool](http://SimpleHomeschool.com). Her writing has also been featured on [5 Dollar Dinners](http://5DollarDinners.com), [Money Saving Mom](http://MoneySavingMom.com), [Organizing Junkie](http://OrganizingJunkie.com), and [Simple Mom](http://SimpleMom.com).

Jessica is the author of a forthcoming cookbook in the *Not Your Mother's* series, published by the Harvard Common Press. She has also authored a number of ebooks, including [Organizing Life as MOM](http://OrganizingLifeasMOM.com), [Summer Survival Guide](http://SummerSurvivalGuide.com), and [FishMama's Guide to Cooking with Children](http://FishMamasGuide.com).

For more information about Jessica, go to Fishmama.com or visit her at either of her two blogs, LifeasMOM.com and GoodCheapEats.com.