

NOVEMBER 2017 DEVOTIONAL IDEAS FOR SENIOR ADULTS

“Heartfelt Gratitude”

Ahead of time: At the front of the room, prepare a display of a Bible and an American flag. Enlist an accompanist to play as the group sings. In large print on 8.5 x 11 white paper, you may choose to print the words to the songs, “America” and “God Bless America”.

DEVOTIONAL TIME

If you don't truly feel it in your heart, it isn't gratitude!

Thanking God for Our Country

- Let's begin by singing and thanking God as we sing, “America” (My Country, 'Tis of Thee) and “God Bless America.” Lead the singing and encourage the seniors to sing.
- Lead the group in pledging allegiance to the American flag. If a person is able, you may choose to ask him/her to hold the flag while the group pledges allegiance to the flag.
- Pray, thanking God for our country.
- The month of November is Thanksgiving time! The first American Thanksgiving was in 1621 at Plymouth Plantation. To celebrate and thank God for His goodness, the pilgrims held a three-day feast and celebration, thanking God for their first harvest.
- By the 1850s, every American state and territory celebrated Thanksgiving, but on different dates.
- On October 3, 1863, President Lincoln announced that the nation would celebrate a Thanksgiving holiday on the last Thursday of November. Every year after that, the president had to declare a national Thanksgiving holiday date, usually on the last Thursday of November.
- In 1939, President Roosevelt declared the last Thursday of November to be our country's official day of Thanksgiving.
- In 1941, the United States Congress made the last Thursday in November our country's official national Thanksgiving holiday.
- Thanksgiving Day in the United States is a day for friends and family, football, turkey and cornbread dressing, what else? (Cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, corn, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie, pecan pie.) and THANKING GOD!
- Thanksgiving Day is a day when Americans officially stop and thank God for our country and for the blessings that God has bestowed on our country and the blessings that God has given each of us.
- Again, pray, thanking God for the USA, our freedom, for all of His blessings, and asking God's guidance for the leaders of our great country.

Considering Our Personal Thanksgiving

- What IS Thanksgiving? It is certainly more than just a one-day American Holiday!
- Henry Van Dyke said, "GRATITUDE is the inward feeling of kindness received. THANKFULNESS is the natural impulse to express the feeling of gratitude. THANKSGIVING is following (expressing) that thankfulness impulse.
- Stop for a moment and think about three things for which you are thankful. (Give the seniors a time to think and then ask them to name some things for which they are thankful. To encourage response, you may need to mention some things: eyesight, food, safety, etc.

Considering Our Personal Thanksgiving

With joy, read and briefly discuss each scripture, but watch the time and avoid taking too much time.

- 1 Chronicles 16:34: *"O give thanks unto The Lord; for He is good, for His mercy endures forever."*
- Colossians 3:15: *"...let the peace of God be always present in your hearts...and always be thankful."*
- Psalm 100: 1-2, 4-5: *"Make a joyful noise unto The Lord! Serve The Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing! Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name! For The Lord is good; His lovingkindness shall continue forever, His faithfulness throughout all generations."*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18: *"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*
- Phillipians 4:6: *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything, tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for his answers."*
- Isaiah 12:2,4: *"...God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for The Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. ..Give thanks to The Lord, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the nations, proclaim that His name is exalted."*
- Pray, thanking God for His Word, The Bible. "Our God is good and worthy of our thanksgiving!"
- Close with the group's singing the chorus: "Thank You, Lord." (If you do not know the chorus, joyfully read the words.) "Thank You, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank You, Lord, for making me whole. Thank You, Lord, for giving to me Thy great salvation so rich and free! Amen."

A Craft Idea: Color a Picture of a Turkey with Its Tail Feathers Fanned Out

Materials needed: A picture of a large turkey printed on an 8½ x 11 sheets of paper. To find a turkey picture, search on Google or in a coloring book. Provide a turkey picture sheet for each senior. Provide crayons or markers in all colors. Encourage the seniors to make their turkey pictures colorful.

As the seniors color their turkeys, talk about the Thanksgiving Holiday and how they celebrated as a child and then with their own families. Remind them that the Thanksgiving holiday was begun so that folks could come together and thank God for His blessings. Happily mention that, to help celebrate Thanksgiving, their turkey pictures will be put on display for the rest of the month of November.

With a smile, ask the seniors to, during the month of November, greet each other and visiting folks with a big smile and say, "Happy Thanksgiving! God is good!"

