

Characters

Father (John)
Mother
Older Child (Owen)
Younger Child (Emma)

Script

(The scene opens with a family gathering around the table for dinner. The youngest child is finishing setting the table.)

Father: How was your day at school? Learn anything interesting?

Older Child: I heard a good joke.

Father: Let's hear it.

Older Child: Why don't people like to eat turkey?

Father: I don't know, why don't people like to eat turkey?

Older Child: Because they taste FOWL. Get it, FOWL?! Ho, ha, ha.

Younger Child: I don't get what's so funny about that.

Father: It's a play on words. Fowl is another name for turkey. But it also means bad, like "foul weather" or bad-tasting.

Younger Child: I still don't get it. What's wrong with turkey? I think turkey tastes good.

Older Child: Well, I don't. Turkey is gross. Are we going to have to eat that this year for Thanksgiving, Mom?

Mother: That's a good question. What would you like to do for Thanksgiving this year?

Younger Child: Maybe we could go out for dinner!

Older Child: Or maybe we could order in Chinese food!

Father: That would be a different Thanksgiving!

Mother: Sounds like you aren't keen on turkey either, John?

Father: Oh, I like turkey. It's just I know it's a lot of work and Chinese food would be novel...

Older Child: But don't we HAVE to eat turkey? I mean, it's a tradition, right? It's what Thanksgiving's all about, isn't it?

Younger Child: Oh, and pumpkin pie!

Father: Oh, yeah! Pumpkin pie! Mmmmmm!

Younger Child: And mashed potatoes!

Father: Oooo, I love mashed potatoes!

Mother: Now, wait just a minute, there. Thanksgiving is NOT all about turkey, or pumpkin pie, or mashed potatoes-

Older Child: Well, if Thanksgiving isn't about those things, then what IS it about?

Mother: Well, a major clue is in the name: Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is all about giving thanks. It's supposed to be about giving thanks to God for all of the ways God has blessed us and taken care of us in the past.

Younger Child: So how did Thanksgiving get started, then?

Older Child: (*matter-of-factly*) I know all about it. See, the Pilgrims wanted to go to the New World, 'cause they heard there was gold. So they jumped on the ship to go, but it hit an iceberg and sank. So the survivors set aside Thanksgiving as a day to say thanks to God for sending the ship to rescue them.

(*The parents exchange incredulous looks.*)

Father: What are they teaching them in school these days?

Younger Child: Yeah. (*Shrugging shoulders*) Like, where does the turkey come in?

Older Child: Oh, that. Well, the Pilgrims weren't allowed to eat red meat because of the mad cow disease, so they just cooked up a turkey.

Mother: *(shaking head incredulously)* I'm amazed at your ability to make things up!

Younger Child: Are you saying that's not how the story goes?

Mother: Not even close. Owen has just mixed up about five different parts of history. And besides, what you are talking about is the history of American Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving in Canada started in a different way.

Older Child: All I know is that we don't have to go to school, and we get to stuff ourselves until we're sick—two great reasons to celebrate, if you ask me!

Mother: It's nice to get the day off from school, and it's nice to share a meal with your family, but those aren't the reason for celebrating. Actually, Thanksgiving wasn't originally meant to be a celebration in any sense of the word; it was supposed to be a day of thoughtful meditation on how God had brought some people through the roughest time any of them had ever experienced.

Older Child: Aunt Edna's Brussels sprouts!

Father: Excuse me?

Older Child: That's the roughest thing I've ever experienced! Yuck...brussel sprouts. We don't have to eat brussel sprouts at Thanksgiving do we?

Younger Child: So is THAT how Thanksgiving got started?

Mother: That was the first Thanksgiving celebration, but it still wasn't an official holiday.

Younger Child: What a good idea! Setting aside a day to thank God for all that God has done for us. I wonder why nobody ever thought of that before then?

Father: Thanksgiving isn't exactly a new idea, Emma. We can read about it in our Bible – how the Hebrews celebrated a festival of thanks to God for delivering them from slavery in Egypt and leading them to the Promised Land. And that was thousands of years ago.

Younger Child: They did? Wow, they ate turkey all the way back then?

Mother: *(rolling her eyes, throwing her hands up in a gesture of futility)* I thought I told you, Thanksgiving isn't about the turkey. It's about the attitude of your heart. THAT'S what the Hebrews were celebrating. An attitude of thanksgiving. Let's hear that story..

Lector reads introduction to the passage and Deuteronomy 8:7-18.

Older Child: Wow! He really gets into it, doesn't he?

Younger Child: Somebody get that guy a tambourine!

Mother: He sure does 'get into it.' He's passionate about giving thanks to God. We all need to be passionate about thanksgiving.

Older Child: I can be passionate about Thanksgiving. *(Yells)* GOD, THANK YOU FOR TURKEY!

Younger Child: AND MASHED POTATOES!

Older Child: OH, AND CRANBERRY SAUCE! I love cranberry sauce!

Mother: Okay, okay, I get it. History lesson over. But, promise me something, all of you, all right?

Older Child: You got it.

Father: What's that?

Mother: Just promise me that when we sit down to that big turkey dinner—or whatever we'll be having this year—that you'll think about what I told you and remember that Thanksgiving is not about the food, or the vacation day.

Younger Child: Can do.

Older Child: No problem.

Mother: Oh, and if you can, remember to have an attitude of thanksgiving, and really thank God for all that God has blessed us with. I'm telling you, doing that will make whatever we're eating taste a hundred times better.

Father, Children: AMEN!

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