

The Story of the First Thanksgiving

A Sound Effects Story

Note: In a "sound effects story," the children are supposed to listen carefully to the reader and listen for certain words to be said. When these words are read, the children should make the indicated sound and/or movement. I suggest that you add a motion to each sound effect that you possibly can! This will help to capture and keep the attention of your active learners. The storyteller should be watching for the underlined words and pause a bit to help "cue" the children that they should be making a sound.

Before reading this story to your students, teach them the sound effects and practice them a little bit. You may also want to tell your children that this is actually a *true* story, which we call non-fiction. Most sound effects stories are fiction; it is most common to use this genre when telling a fable or a silly little story made up by a storyteller somewhere!

Pilgrims- Hi, there!

King of England- Boo! (This is the kind of "booing" sound that you make when the villain appears in a melodrama, not the kind of startling "Boo!" sound we associate with ghosts, etc.)

Mayflower- Splash!

America- Hooray!

Buckets- Ewww!

Bath- Wash, wash!

Sick/Died- Oh, no!

Native Americans- How!

Food- I'm hungry!

Deer- (Silently put your hands on your head to show your deer antlers, or have the kids make the Zoo-Phonics motion for Dee Dee Deer.)

Turkey- Gobble, gobble!

Thanksgiving- Thank you!

Once upon a time, many years ago, some children about your age lived with their parents in England. And they were happy there, but their parents were sad because the mean King of England wanted everyone to go to *his* church, called the Church of England, and worship God in *his* way. Their parents didn't believe the same things about God that the King of England believed, so they decided to get on a boat called the Mayflower and move away to a new land, called America. When they got on the Mayflower boat, there were lots of other people that were leaving England, too. These people that were leaving their homes to travel to America because of what they believed about God and church are the people we now call Pilgrims. There were LOTS of pilgrims and other people on the Mayflower- 102 in all! There were 50 men, 20 women, and 32 children!

The Mayflower was a rather small boat for so many people, and they didn't have very much good food. And what they did have started to spoil and get rotten after a while, because they didn't have refrigerators! There was no such thing back then. The Mayflower didn't have any toilets either, so the people had to go to the bathroom in buckets. When the boat was tossed with the waves, sometimes the buckets would spill! And they couldn't take a bath, because they had to save all of their fresh water for drinking. So since the pilgrims didn't have lots of good, fresh food, and couldn't take a bath, and didn't have any medicine on the boat, lots of them got sick! Two of the pilgrims even died on the journey, and that made everyone very sad. But, then two babies were born on the Mayflower, so that was GREAT!

When they got to America, they were very happy! But winter was coming and it was already very cold, and the pilgrims couldn't build houses for everyone quick enough. So most of them had to spend the whole winter back on the Mayflower boat, even though they weren't sailing anymore, because it was the only shelter that they had. When spring came, the pilgrims came out of the Mayflower and began to build houses for everyone. But they still didn't have enough food! Luckily, they met some friendly Native Americans that helped them by showing the pilgrims how to plant crops that would grow well in America and how to set traps for animals that lived around there, such as deer and turkeys. If it were not for the help from the friendly Native Americans, the pilgrims might have all died because there was nothing to eat! And even with their help, 46 of the 102 people that had come all the way from England died by the next fall from lack of food, shelter, medicine, and because they couldn't keep clean by taking baths.

When fall came and the pilgrims were able to harvest their crops, they were so thankful to be alive, healthy, and have plenty to eat that they decided to have a big party and invite their new friends the Native Americans! So they went hunting and caught ducks, turkeys, and deer, and ate boiled pumpkin. They couldn't make any pumpkin pie, because they didn't have any flour! But they did make cranberry salads and corn bread and lots of good food like that. 56 pilgrims and 91 Native Americans all shared the very first Thanksgiving in America. And that's why we celebrate Thanksgiving today with a big feast, and remember to be thankful for the good things that we have here in America.

By Heidi Butkus

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