



## Grades 9-12 Thanksgiving Activity Gratitude Table Runner or Gratitude Jars Ceated by Erica Hruby



### The #ShineALight Initiative

The #ShineALight Initiative is a national project to create a collective light of celebration spreading the Jewish joy of Chanukah and the beautiful traditions we honor in our homes with our families.

Sponsored in part by the UJA-Federation of New York, the initiative is designed as a counter-expression to antisemitism and other messages of hate acts towards Jews and Israel. The #ShineALight Initiative is leveraging education, community partnerships, workplace engagement, and advocacy among Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

The Jewish Education Project is a proud content partner of the #ShineALight Initiative and is delighted to provide these free materials to parents and other caring adults. We encourage you to utilize this education content in the week leading up to and through Chanukah (this year and in the future), and if applicable, at other times of the year.

### Parent/Adult Background Information

The Hebrew term for gratitude is *hakarat hatov*, which means, literally, “recognizing the good.” The Hebrew word for turkey is *Hodu*, which also means “give thanks.”

There are two activities designed to help your family focus on gratitude. These activities are intended to reinforce the idea that Thanksgiving, leading into Chanukah, is a time for us to reflect upon the blessings we have in our lives and shine a light on all that we are grateful for as we come together for a meaningful festive meal. You may want to choose one of them or make time to complete both. If you decide to do both activities, guests can use the same gratitudes on the table and in the jar. Or maybe they would want to put more personal gratitudes in the jar for their eyes only. At the end of the night the host will have a collective table runner representing all guests and each guest will have their own jar to take home.

[There are few items on the Supply List included below that you may need/want to purchase.]



**Social Media:** If you are comfortable, we would love for you to spread the joy your family is experiencing while participating in this activity. Please take photos and/or videos and share them to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.

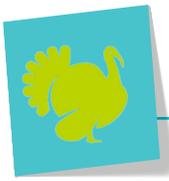


**Prep Time:** 45-60 minutes (purchasing supplies and setting up)

**Activity Time:** (takes place during the meal)

### Supplies

- *Gratitude Table Runner*  
Light colored cloth with medium thickness long enough to lay across the entire table and wide enough for all the guests to be able to reach; feel free to choose a color that matches your Thanksgiving table  
Sharpies or fabric pens; enough for each person at the table to easily access a few
- *Gratitude Jars*  
Small or medium jars with lids, one for each guest  
Small pieces of cut paper (approximately 2”x 4”), at least five pieces for each guest  
Pens, pencils, crayons, whichever writing/drawing implement is best for guests  
Ribbon, burlap, lace, etc. cut in 16”-18” pieces so they can be wrapped around the neck of the jar and tied in a bow or knot



## Grades 9-12 Thanksgiving Activity

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### Activity Instructions

#### Gratitude Table Runner

1. Lay the table runner across the length of the table.
2. Place Sharpies or fabric markers across the runner, near each guest seat so they are easily reachable.
3. The activity can either be introduced at the beginning of the meal as a way to welcome your guests or could be done at the conclusion of the meal.
4. Guests are asked to write at least three things that they are grateful for in their lives, community, and/or world. You may want to encourage Jewish guests to consider at least one thing about the Judaism that they are grateful for. Guests are welcome to draw a picture or outline their thoughts so that they visually represent the guest as well.
  - a. An additional activity would be having each person go around the table and writing something that they are grateful for related to someone else at the table. They can write that gratitude right in front of that person's seat.
5. Once everyone is finished, ask if each person could share at least one of the things they wrote that they are grateful for. Encourage other guests to listen carefully to each person and say "amen" ("I agree") if they want to let the guest know that they are with them.
6. At the end of the evening, either keep the fabric yourself, gift it to a guest, or discard it.
7. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.

#### Gratitude Table Runner

1. Place a jar and lid in front of each guest's plate.
2. Place pens, markers, or crayons near the jar, based on who is going to sit in that seat.
3. Place at least five small pieces of paper next to each jar. Have extras available in case guests want more than five pieces or make a mistake on one or two.
4. Guests are asked to write three to five things that they are grateful for in their lives, community, and/or world. They are welcome to draw a picture if that speaks to them more than writing words.
  - a. An additional activity is to have each person write an extra one or two gratitudes for someone at the table and then give that person the gratitude for their jar.
5. Once everyone is finished, ask if each person could share at least one of the things they wrote that they are grateful for. Encourage other guests to listen carefully to each person and say "amen" ("I agree") if they want to let the guest know that they are with them.
6. The jar is a small gift to guests as well as a visual representation of the experience. Let guests know that the jars are theirs to keep and add to over the course of the year. Maybe next Thanksgiving, they could bring their jar back to share a few more things they added over the course of the year.
7. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.