

## A CELEBRATION OF THANKSGIVING

### Reader's Theatre

The Players:

Reader 1 – Pilgrim boy; turkey

Reader 2 – Indian boy; George Washington, Abraham Lincoln

Reader 3 – Pilgrim girl; Sarah

Reader 4 – Pilgrim girl

Reader 5 – Indian girl; settler

R1 – A day of thanks.

R2 – A time for families and friends.

R3 – A day to reflect upon our blessings.

R4 – And to remember those who have less than we do.

R5 – Thanksgiving!

ALL – A celebration!

R1 – (turkey) Gobble, gobble. Thankful...if I were a cow, I'd be thankful.

R2 – (Indian boy) Their skin is white like a new snow. Their clothing is strange. Grandfather says that they are friendly, and can teach us many things. Their ways are different. Grandfather says they mean us no harm.

R3 (Pilgrim girl) Papa says the savages are people just like us, except they don't know any better, that's all...He says that they know all about the land and can teach us all kinds of things to help us survive. Their ways are so different. I'm not so sure...

R4, R5 – Thanksgiving!

R1 – (turkey) Run for your life!

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) Back in England, we have a harvest festival each year after the last load of grain is carted into the barn. Everyone in the village decorates the cart with ribbons and flowers. We would sing and dance, and give thanks. It was a lot of fun!

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) It was very scary coming to the New World. A lot of people got sick and died.

R5 – (Indian girl) The strangers brought sickness and death.

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) The trip was long...

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) and hard. Mother bought us new clothes for the journey. She said that it would be very cold in the New World.

R1 – (Pilgrim girl) We took everything, even our hornbooks for learning our letters and numbers.

R2 – (Indian boy) They brought many strange things with them. They even brought animals, animals that I had never seen before...

R5 – (Pilgrim girl) When we first came ashore, we were very hungry. Our food aboard the ship had spoiled and was filled with bugs. We found clams and ate them. They made us very sick.

R2 – (Indian boy) We taught the strangers how to cook the clams.

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) The savages taught us how to prepare the clams and shellfish.

ALL – The winter was cold and harsh.

R3- (Pilgrim girl) We were very hungry.

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) The men came upon an abandoned Indian village. They made a wonderful discovery!

R1, R3, R4 – Corn!

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) I am Francis Billington's best friend. The story I am about to tell you is completely true. It happened one day that Francis was quite bored. He asked that I come along, but Mother would not allow it. It was a good favor too, because Francis got into more trouble than ever before! You see, he was wandering around the ship, when he decided to go down below and get out his father's guns and gunpowder. He was making firecrackers, when he spilled gunpowder all over the deck. Then he fired two of his father's muskets. He nearly blew up the entire ship, with himself included! Francis Billington couldn't sit down for a year!

R2 (Indian boy) Samoset was the first of our tribe to meet with the strangers. Some of the men went with him to the stranger's village. Squanto went too. He knew the strangers language.

R5 – (Indian girl) Squanto learned the stranger's language when the white men took him to their village far away. Many moons later, he returned with another white man named John Smith. Once again, he was kidnapped by a group of bad men. This time they took him to a place called Spain. Squanto managed to escape and return to his home. When he arrived at his village, he learned that his people had all become sick with a white man's disease and died. He came to live with my people, the Massasoit.

R3, R4 – Squanto helped our people to survive.

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) He taught us to plant corn and other crops.

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) He showed us the best places to fish, and taught us how to cook the fish.

ALL – Spring came!

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) There were only fifty-four of us left. Everyone else died during the winter.

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) Twenty one of us were under the age of sixteen! Half of us were children, let to survive in the New World!

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) In April of 1621, our ship, the Mayflower, sailed back to England.

R1, R3, R4 – We were left on our own!

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) Governor Carver died of a sun stroke while working in the fields.

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) – William Bradford became our new governor.

R1, R3, R4 – The Spring and Summer of 1621 was beautiful!

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) The Indians were friendly – too friendly!

R2 – (Indian boy) Our people helped the strangers. We taught them to plant and to fish.

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) Those savages kept dropping in and eating our food that we were saving for the winter!

R5 – (Indian girl) After all that we did to help, the ungrateful strangers sent a message to our chief to tell us to stay away.

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) During the summer, John Billington, Francis Billington's brother, escaped into an adventure.

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) Those Billington boys are always getting into trouble!

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) John wandered off into the woods. We looked for him, but he wasn't to be found. An Indian brave brought him back. They were escorted by a "great train of warriors." He was all decorated up with fancy beads. The Billington boys sure did get to have all the fun!

ALL – Autumn arrived!

R1, R3, R4 – We survived our first year!

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) We had plenty of food.

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) We had built strong houses.

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) We made peace with the Indians.

R1, R3 – We had our first harvest festival in the New World!

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) We feasted and offered thanks be to God!

R5 – (Indian girl) The strangers invited our people to their feast.

R2 – (Indian boy) Their feast was much like our Green Corn Dance where we feast on new corn to celebrate the new year.

R5 – (Indian girl) The men killed five deer and gave it to the strangers as a gift.

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) There was lots of food!

R1 – (turkey – holding neck) Gobble, gobble – Yeah! Too much!

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) The feast lasted for three days.

R1 – (Pilgrim boy) The feast ended. The Indians returned to their villages. We settled in for a long, cold winter.

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) July 20, 1623

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) Governor Bradford set this day aside as a special day of thanks.

ALL – Some call it the first Thanksgiving!

R2 – (Indian boy) More of the stranger's ships came.

R5 – (Indian girl) These new strangers stole from us.

R2, R5 – More came...

R3 – (Pilgrim girl) New colonies began to appear...

R4 – (Pilgrim girl) Each colony proclaimed its own day of Thanksgiving.

ALL – War came...

R1, R2, R4 – The United States of America was formed.

R3 – (girl) President George Washington issued the first National Thanksgiving Proclamation, which was set on Thursday, November 26, 1789.

R2 (George Washington) Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all that good that was, that is, or that will be – That we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks – for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation – or the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experience in the course and conclusion of the last war.

R1 (turkey) Gobble! Gobble! The worst!