Gee Whiz™ Education



Thanksgiving Activity Bundle

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Getting Started

We hope that you and your children enjoy the experiences included in this Thanksgiving Activity Bundle. As with all Gee Whiz materials, you will find experiences for all ages groups … infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children in this guide. **Any materials printed in red may require a little more time to gather or prepare.** In the back of this Teaching Guide you will find the following printable components:

- Thanksgiving Placemat
- Turkey Lotto Game
- "10 Little Turkeys" Finger Puppets
- Large Turkey Body
- "I'm Thankful For…" Make It! Sheet
- Thanksgiving Counting Game



At Gee Whiz, we use a series of picture symbols to help you identify the developmental areas addressed by each activity. Below you will find a chart that matches each picture to a developmental area. As you review the experiences presented in this guide, you will quickly see that each experience addresses many different developmental areas. For more information on these developmental areas, please check out our User's Guide: https://geewhizeducation.com/gee-whiz-users-guide/

Program Symbols for Developmental Areas

= Language Development	= Social Studies Knowledge
= Literacy Knowledge	= Social & Emotional Development
= Math Knowledge	& = Music & Creative Arts
= Science Knowledge	= Physical Development & Health
? = Logic & Reasoning	= Approaches to Learning

Exploring Together Activities

These experiences are for your entire group...even your infants! Infants can watch and absorb all the fun!

Little Turkeys

(all ages, 💬 ☺ ? 🎤 🖌 ♫ ♥ 👋)

Materials:
☐ None needed

- Action songs are great because they not only help children build language skills and vocabulary, they also get them moving. This action song invites the children to pretend to be turkeys as they sing and move. Be sure to join in the fun yourself!

- Make gobbling sounds as you move around the room and pretend to be a turkey. As children become curious, see if they can figure out what type of animal you are pretending to be. Then, Sing the song, "Little Turkeys" (below) and invite the children to participate in the movements with you.

LITTLE TURKEYS
(tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Little turkeys, scurry 'round
(children scurry)
Pecking, pecking, on the ground.
(children pretend to peck)
Fan your feathers, so pretty.
(children wiggle bottoms)
Strutting 'round for all to see.
(children strut)
Little turkeys, scurry 'round
(children scurry)
Pecking, pecking, on the ground.
(children pretend to peck)

- **EXTENSION:** To help the children become more familiar with turkeys, watch a short video about wild turkeys like this one: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Hpl0oGcx3o



Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What do you know about turkeys?*
- *What would you like to learn about them?*
- *What would you do if you saw a turkey in your backyard or at the park?*
- *Where do you think turkeys live?*
- *Why do you think a turkey would not make a good pet?*

Exploring Together Activities

Find the Turkeys

(all ages, 💬 ❓ ❤ ☺ 🚶 1️⃣ ✋)

Materials:

☐ **Printed turkeys, hidden** - Print out 1 or 2 copies of the cards from the Turkey Lotto Game (pgs. 18 & 20), cut apart and hide.

- Group games are fun for children and they also require them to practice self-regulation. In addition, this game incorporates positional concepts...which is a mathematical skill.
- Walk around and act like you are looking for something. As children become curious and ask what you are doing, explain that you had some turkeys to show them but they all ran away and hid! Invite the children to help you find the turkeys. As the children look for, and discover, the turkeys talk about where they were hiding (e.g., under the couch, behind the chair, etc.). Using positional words such as these to describe the location of the turkeys is a great way of exposing children to positional concepts in a meaningful, hands-on way.
- Once the children find all of the turkeys, have those children who are developmentally ready count them with you. Then, invite more verbal children to compare and contrast the turkeys. How are they the same? How are they different?
- If the children enjoyed playing this game, you may want to have them hide their eyes as you hide the turkeys again for them to find.
- **EXTENSION:** Go outside, weather permitting, and play another group game, “Follow the Turkey.” Play the game as you would “Follow the Leader.” As you describe where you, and your little turkeys, are going, use positional words such as *around, between, to the left, to the right*, etc. Your more advanced children can also take turns leading the game. This is an excellent way for them to assume a leadership role.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *Where did you find your turkey?*
- *Where do you think a real turkey might hide?*
- *How many turkeys do you think we found all together?*
- *What is the same about the turkeys we found?*
- *What is different about them?*
- *If a turkey was going to hide in our backyard, where do you think it would hide? Why do you think that?*



Exploring Together Activities

We Are Thankful Our Families

(all ages,)

Materials:

☐ Large piece of mural paper OR several sheets of white paper taped together, crayons/markers

☐ **A photo of your family**

- The concept of being thankful is abstract for little minds. This experience helps to make this idea a little more concrete through the use of a rhyme and a hands-on experience where children make, and share, choices. As you conduct this experience, just keep in mind that the younger your children are, the less likely they are going to truly understand what it means to be, "thankful."

- Sit on the floor with your family photo. As children show interest, invite them to join you. Encourage them to look at the photo as you name the people pictured. Explain that you love your family very much and you are very thankful for them. Invite the children to take turns talking about their families as well. Then, introduce the rhyme, "I'm Thankful for My Family" (below). As you say the words, invite the children to clap to the beat.

I'M THANKFUL FOR MY FAMILY

I'm thankful for my family,
I love them so and they love me!
They make me feel so warm and safe;
My home is such a special place.

- After sharing the rhyme, invite more verbal children to share one thing they like to do with their families. Then, set out a long sheet of white mural paper, crayons and markers. Invite the children to draw pictures of their families on the mural and then have each child dictate a sentence to share something they really like about their family for you to print near his/her art. Keep in mind that Toddlers, Twos and even Young Threes will more than likely just scribble to add "art" to the mural and this is totally developmentally appropriate! When writing, be sure to note letter names and talk about beginning sounds in words, if developmentally appropriate. Display the mural with the title, "We Are Thankful for Our Families" where all family members can see it.



Questions to Spur Thinking

- *Who do you think these people are in my picture?*
- *Tell me about your family.*
- *What do you like best about your family?*
- *How do you think your (family members) will feel when they see the mural we made together?*

Small Group Activities

The experiences on the next few pages are designed for small groups of children...toddlers through preschool. Many are child-directed and just require you to assume a supportive role.

Feather Fun

(all ages, 💬 ☺ 🌡 ? ♥ ✋)

Materials:

☐ **Large craft feathers**, playdough (any color), toy rolling pins (if available)

- Children use their senses to learn about their world. This experience invites them to explore while building fine motor control at the same time. In addition, the children will build both expressive and receptive language skills as they share their discoveries with you and each other.
- Set out the materials listed above and invite the children to explore. The children may choose to flatten the dough and then press the feathers into it. They may also just choose to stick the feathers into the dough. Keep the experience open-ended and invite the children to make their own decisions about how to use the materials. As the children explore, engage them in conversations by asking questions such as those to the right.
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can make predictions about what they think they will see if they choose to press the feathers into the dough and then lift them up.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What types of animals have feathers?*
- *Turkeys have big feathers. What other birds might have big feathers?*
- *How did you choose to use the feathers?*
- *What do you think you will see when you lift up the feather?*



Painting with Corn

(all ages, 💬 ☺ 🖌 🌡 ? ♥ ✋)

Materials:

☐ **Dried, decorative corn**

☐ Red, yellow, orange, and brown fingerpaint, fingerpaint paper, white paper, sponge, water

- Using dried, decorative corn when fingerpainting encourages problem-solving and testing new ideas.
- Have each child choose two or three different colors of fingerpaint to spread on dampened fingerpaint paper. As the children fingerpaint, see if they can identify the colors of the paint they chose as well as any new colors that appear when the colors mix. Next, provide dried, decorative corn for children to press or roll in the wet fingerpaint. What happens?
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can take the paint-coated corn and roll or press it on plain white paper in addition to following the directions above. How are the results the same? How are they different?

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *How does the paint feel? Smell?*
- *What do you think is going to happen when you roll the corn in the wet paint?*
- *Tell me about the design you see.*

Small Group Activities

Cooking & Cleaning Up

(all ages, 💬 ☺ 🍴 ? 🖌 🌍 ♥ ✋)

Materials:

☐ **Props to role-play cooking Thanksgiving dinner** (e.g., plastic dishes, toy pots/pans, play food, bowls, etc.)

☐ Water table or container of water, dishtowels

- Children show what they know through dramatic play. This experience invites children to show what they know about cooking, and then cleaning up after, Thanksgiving dinner. As the children interact with one another, they will build key expressive and receptive language as well. Because families celebrate Thanksgiving in different ways, this experience opens the door for you to talk about diversity.
- Add all the materials listed above to your dramatic play area and invite the children to use them as desired to role-play cooking and serving Thanksgiving dinner. As you observe, be sure to ask plenty of questions! After the children finish "eating," they can use the water to wash the dishes and then dishtowels to dry them.
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can compare how families celebrate this holiday, noting likenesses and differences.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *What types of foods does your family eat at Thanksgiving?*
- *Tell me about the food you are preparing.*
- *What cooking tools are you using to help you prepare the food?*
- *What is your favorite food to eat at Thanksgiving dinner? Why do you like that food best?*



Yummy Mashed Sweet Potatoes

(all ages, 💬 ☺ ? 🍴 ❶ ♥ ✋)

Materials:

☐ **Ingredients for making mashed sweet potatoes** (see recipe on p. 16)

☐ Measuring cup, potato masher, large bowl

- When children participate in cooking, they not only get excited about eating the food they help prepare, they also learn more about measurement and following directions.
- Show the children the ingredients and see if any of them can figure out what they are going to help prepare. Then, using the recipe, follow the steps to make mashed sweet potatoes. Have the children help measure, mash and stir. Then, when the potatoes are done, eat and enjoy this yummy treat!
- Advanced Preschoolers: These children can talk about how the potatoes change as they are mashed. This is an excellent way for them to practice using descriptive language. This also helps nonverbal children build receptive language skills.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *How do the sweet potatoes smell? Look?*
- *What other foods are orange like sweet potatoes?*
- *What other foods could we mash like sweet potatoes?*

Infant Activities

The experiences on this page are designed specifically for infants.

Shake n' Rattle Sensory Bottle
(all ages, 👄 ☺ 👂 ? ♥ 🖐)

Materials:
☐ **Shake n' Rattle Sensory Bottle** - To make, put popcorn kernels in a dry, empty clear plastic drink bottle. Put glue in the lid and secure tightly to the bottle. Then, wrap the lid with masking tape...just to be sure.

- Infants are often fascinated with sensory bottles. This very simple learning tool is wonderful because it exposes young minds to the concept of cause and effect (e.g., I move the bottle and it makes noise). While this concept seems very simplistic to you and I, it is new knowledge to infants. Sensory bottles are also great because they help infants build fine motor control.

- Sit on the floor and hold the infant in your lap. Show the infant the sensory bottle. If the infant appears to want to hold the bottle, give it to him/her. Watch to see what the infant does and then describe his/her actions as well as what happens when the bottle moves. Be sure to use plenty of descriptive language! Remember...infants are like little sponges absorbing everything you say!



Gobble! Gobble! Gobble!
(all ages, 👄 👂 ☺ ♫ ♥ 🖐)

Materials:
☐ **Turkeys hanging above the diapering area** - To make, print an additional copy of the individual cards from the Turkey Lotto Game (pgs. 18 & 20), attach a length of string or crepe paper streamer to each and hang above the diapering area.

- Having something to look at during diapering is a great way to reduce the wiggles. Adding a song just gives this everyday experience a new element of literacy and language.

- Make the turkeys move before you begin diapering by touching them gently with your hand. Sing the song at the right as you diaper the infant and he/she watches the turkeys moving above the diapering area.

THE LITTLE BROWN TURKEYS
(tune: "The Wheels on the Bus")

The little brown turkeys go,
"Gobble, gobble, gobble,"
"Gobble, gobble, gobble,"
"Gobble, gobble, gobble."
The little brown turkeys go,
"Gobble, gobble, gobble."
All day long!

School-Age Activities

Over the River...

(all ages,)

Materials:

☐ **Access to a United States map, state map, world map** (on computer/tablet)

☐ Recording of the song, "Over the River and Through the Woods" - Here is one option from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkQS681AotU



- The holidays are a time when many people travel to visit family or friends. Even if the children are not traveling this year, they can focus on past years when they did travel. As the children share their experiences, they will also build an understanding that different families travel in different ways and to different places. This is an great way to expose them to diversity.

- Begin by singing the song, "Over the River and Through the Woods." After doing so, invite the children to share where they plan to travel for the holidays or if someone is coming to visit them. Talk about the types of transportation they will take. For those that know where they are going, pull up maps on the computer and see if you can locate each destination on the map. Talk about who will be traveling the farthest, shortest, etc. You could use Google Maps to calculate the exact travel distance.

- Then, challenge the children to think of other ways they could travel, "over the river and through the woods" that would be fun. For instance, someone might suggest they could travel by space ship or even helicopter! See how many different ways the children can come up with.

Doing for Others

(all ages,)

Materials:

☐ White paper, markers or pencils

- This experience invites school-age children to share their ideas about how they can help others who are less fortunate than they are. During the course of this experience, the children will have the opportunity to demonstrate the character education traits of responsibility, respect and kindness.

- Begin by talking with the children about basic needs. Can they verbalize what they think basic needs are? Then, share that some families do not have those basic things. Invite the children to brainstorm about what they could do to help. For instance, they may suggest collecting canned food to take to a food bank or gathering clothing to donate to a homeless shelter. Have the children write down their suggestions on paper. Then, once the list is complete, have them vote to choose the one they would like to do the most. Over the next week or so, help them organize how they plan to help and then follow through by delivering the materials where they need to go.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *Why do you think a lot of people travel for Thanksgiving?*
- *What types of vehicles do you think people take when they travel?*
- *What do you think it would be like to travel by sleigh?*

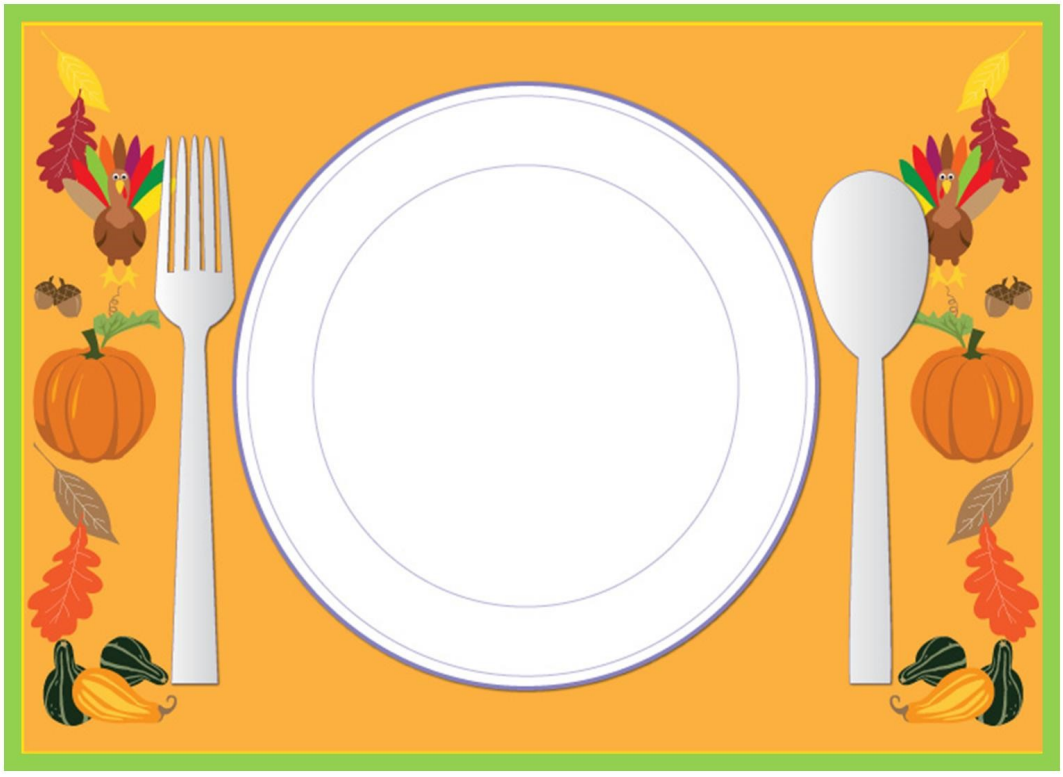
- *What are basic needs?*
- *What would you do if you did not have food to eat?*
- *How could we help those who are less fortunate?*
- *How can I help with your idea?*

Thanksgiving Placemat

The Thanksgiving Placemat is on page 21. To make these placemats last longer, you may want to cover them with clear Contact® paper.

Ideas for Using this Material

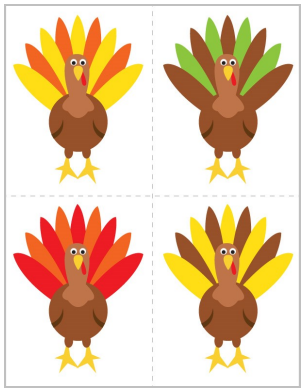
- Prepare a few of these placemats to add to your Dramatic Play area. The children can use them as they role-play preparing Thanksgiving dinner.
- Send home a copy with each child to use during Thanksgiving dinner.
- Create an area where children can use the placemats to practice one-to-one correspondence. Include 2-3 placemats, 2-3 spoons, 2-3 forks and 2-3 paper/plastic plates. The children can place the plates, spoons and forks on top of those printed on the placemats. This will help them practice one-to-one correspondence.
- Mount 2 or 3 of the placemats to heavyweight paper. Cut each placemat into a puzzle. Vary the number of pieces for each placemat to help you address the differing developmental levels of the children in your group. The children can practice assembling the placemat puzzles.



Turkey Lotto Game

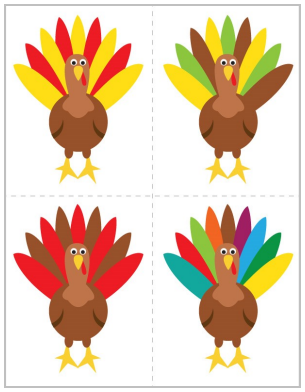
The Turkey Lotto Game is found on pages 17-20.

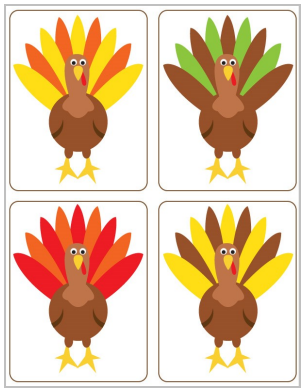
There are several ways you can use this material.

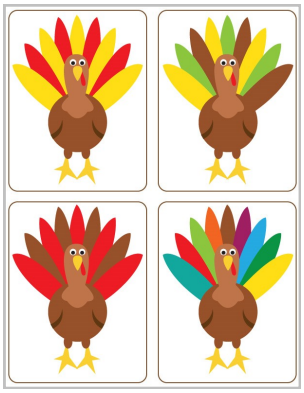


Preparation

- Print the pages included on pages 17-20.
- Mount the pages to heavyweight paper and cut apart where indicated. You will end up with 2 playing cards (with 4 turkeys on each) and 8 individual cards. If you have a larger group, you may want to print out two copies of this material so you will have 4 playing cards and 16 individual cards.







Directions for Use

- To play the game, have the children turn the individual turkey cards face down on the table.
- Have each child choose a card, look at the turkey and then see if he/she has that particular one on his/her card. If not, the child should return the card to the table (face down). If the card is a match, the child should place the individual card on the picture of the turkey it matches on the playing card.

Other Ways to Use This Material

- Print out 2 copies of the individual cards and use them to play a memory game.
- Print out the individual turkey cards, cut them apart and hide them for the children to find.
- Use the turkeys to play, “I Spy” and review colors. For instance, you might say, “I spy a turkey with yellow and brown feathers.” The children can then point to the turkey you describe.

“10 Little Turkeys”

You will find the fingerpuppets for the rhyme, “10 Little Turkeys” on page 22. Print them out, cut them apart and tape so each one fits a finger. Then wear as you recite the following rhyme.

“10 Little Turkeys”

1 little turkey, playing in the dew,
Along came another…
And then there were 2!

2 little turkeys, underneath a tree,
Along came another…
And then there were 3!

3 little turkeys, running by the door,
Along came another…
And then there were 4!

4 little turkeys, passing by a hive,
Along came another…
And then there were 5!

5 little turkeys, doing silly tricks,
Along came another…
And then there were 6!

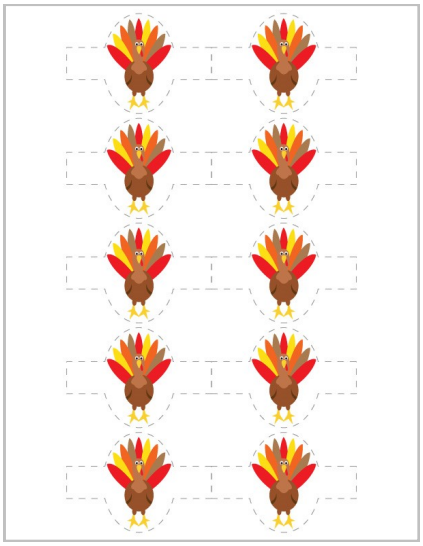
6 little turkeys, studying their lessons,
Along came another...
And then there were 7!

7 little turkeys, dancing by the gate,
Along came another...
And then there were 8!

8 little turkeys, looking very fine,
Along came another...
And then there were 9!

9 little turkeys, having fun with friends
Along came another...
And then there were 10!

10 little turkeys, running as they play,
Having such a great time
On Thanksgiving Day!



Other Ways to Use This Material

- Print out an additional copy for each child so he/she can have his/her own set of fingerpuppets.
- Print out an additional set of fingerpuppets and put them together. Create a simple puppet theater by turning a cardboard box on its side an cutting a hole in the bottom. The children can then use the puppets to put on a puppet show.

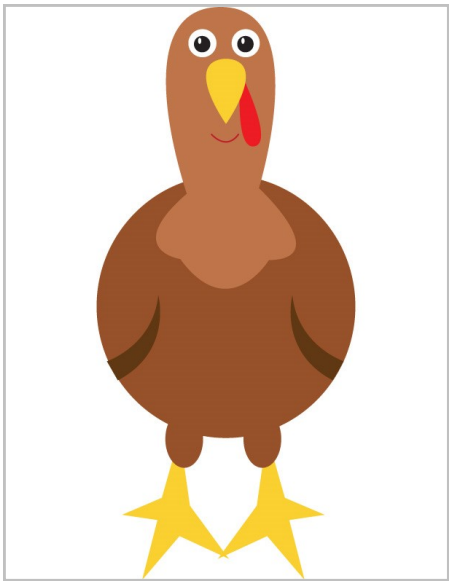
Turkey Body

The Turkey Body printable can be found on page 23.

You can use this material in several different ways.

Pin the Feathers on the Turkey

- Print out a copy of the Turkey Body. Cut out the body, cover with clear Contact® paper (to make it more sturdy) and then use loops of blue painter's tape to attach it to a wall. Make sure to test the painter's tape ahead of time to make sure that it will not damage the wall surface.
- Next, either locate large craft feathers OR cut simple feather shapes from construction paper. Use a variety of colors. Attach a loop of blue painter's tape to the back of each feather.
- To play the game, have the children close their eyes as they try to pin their feathers on the turkey.
- As the children play the game, be sure to talk about the colors of the feathers as well as where the feathers are placed (e.g., to the right of the turkey, over the turkey, etc.). This is a meaningful way to incorporate positional concepts into the experience.



My Own Turkey

Print out an additional copy of the Turkey Body for each child. Then, invite the children to make feathers on their turkey bodies. Here are just a few ideas on how the children may choose to do so.

- Have children press their hands in paint and then around the turkey body to make feathers.
- Have the children press fingers in paint to make fingerprint feathers around the turkey body.
- Have the children use torn pieces of art tissue or construction paper to make feathers around the turkey.

“I’m Thankful for…”

The, “I’m Thankful for…” can be found on pages 24 (English) and 25 (Spanish).
Print a copy out for each child.



Ideas for Use

- Print out a copy of the sheet for each child.
- Working with each child, have him/her dictate something he/she is thankful for you to print on the sheet. When printing the word, be sure to identify letters and talk about beginning sounds (with more advanced preschoolers).
- Then, invite each child to draw a picture of the thing(s) he/she is thankful for on the sheet. Children who are not developmentally ready to draw could cut or tear pictures from magazines. This would help them build fine motor control.

Thanksgiving Writing Center

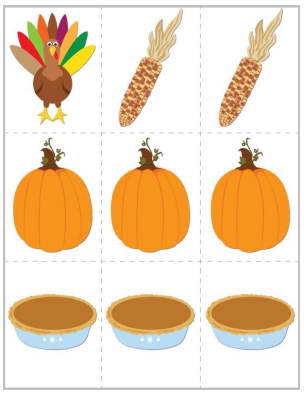
- Set up a writing center where children can make Thanksgiving cards for family, friends, neighbors, etc. Add copies of the, “I’m Thankful for…” sheet, white paper, construction paper, envelopes, crayons, markers, colored, pencils, etc.
- As children create in the writing center, be sure to engage them in conversations. This is the perfect time to talk about letters, letter sounds, words and more! If possible, mail the children’s creations as a special surprise.

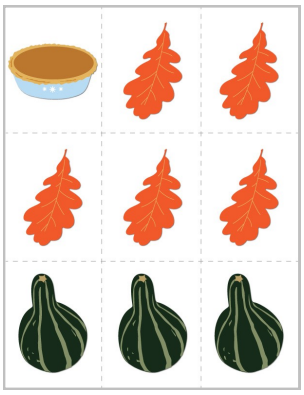
Thanksgiving Counting Game

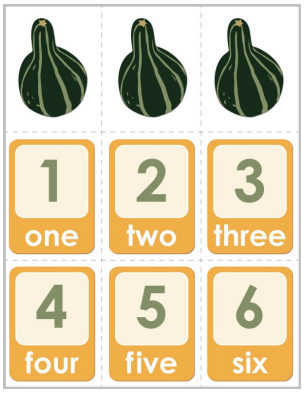
The Thanksgiving Counting Game can be found on pages 26-28.

Preparation

- Print the pages included in the Thanksgiving Counting Game file.
- Mount the pages to heavyweight paper, cover with clear Contact® paper (to make the pieces more durable, if desired) and cut apart where indicated. You will end up with 21 picture cards and 6 numeral cards.







Directions for Use

- To play the game, put all of the picture cards on the table and mix them up. Put the numeral cards in a small cardboard box, basket or paper bag.
- To begin, have the children sort the cards into sets...putting all of the same items in the same set. Talk about the items as the children do so.
- Then, have the children take turns reaching into the box, basket or bag and pulling out a numeral card. Help the children identify the numeral on the card (more advanced children may be able to do this on their own). Then, have the children find the set that matches the numeral on the card. Repeat until all of the cards are matched to the sets.

Other Ways to Use This Material

- Have the children choose a numeral card and then make a set with the matching number of members. They can use any pictures to make the set. For instance, if the choose the numeral 2, they might make a set of two that has a turkey and a pie. That is OK!
- Have the children arrange the picture cards in columns. Then have them put the matching numeral card underneath each column to create a simple bar graph.

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Books, Links & More!

Here is a Book List you may want to use to help you locate books to celebrate Thanksgiving with the children. In addition, links to websites that contain information you may find helpful are also included.

Thanksgiving Books

Pete the Cat: The First Thanksgiving by James Dean

Thanksgiving is for Giving Thanks by Margaret Sutherland

The Night Before Thanksgiving by Natasha Wing

Turkey Trouble Wendi Silvano

Thanksgiving Is… by Gail Gibbons

Happy Thanksgiving by Roger Priddy

T is for Turkey: A True Thanksgiving Story by Tanya Lee Stone

Five Silly Turkeys by Salina Yoon

I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie by Alison Jackson

Mashed Sweet Potatoes

- 8 cups cooked sweet potatoes (keep warm)
- 2-3 Tablespoons honey or brown sugar *(do not use honey for children under the age of 1)*
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Have the children start by using a potato masher to mash the cooked sweet potatoes in a large bowl. Then, have them help measure and add all of the other ingredients listed above. Mash together and then serve.



Helpful Web Links

Here are some links to information and videos you may find helpful...and very funny! The ones of the children sharing may inspire you to have the children in your group create their own video. ☺

The story of the first Thanksgiving: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/history/first-thanksgiving/

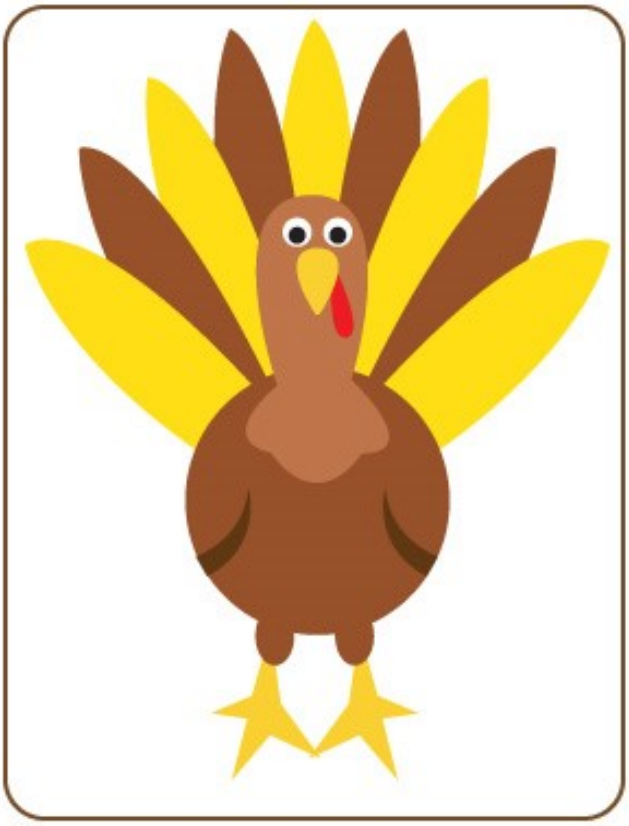
Videos of children sharing what they are thankful for: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIN2ha44juA

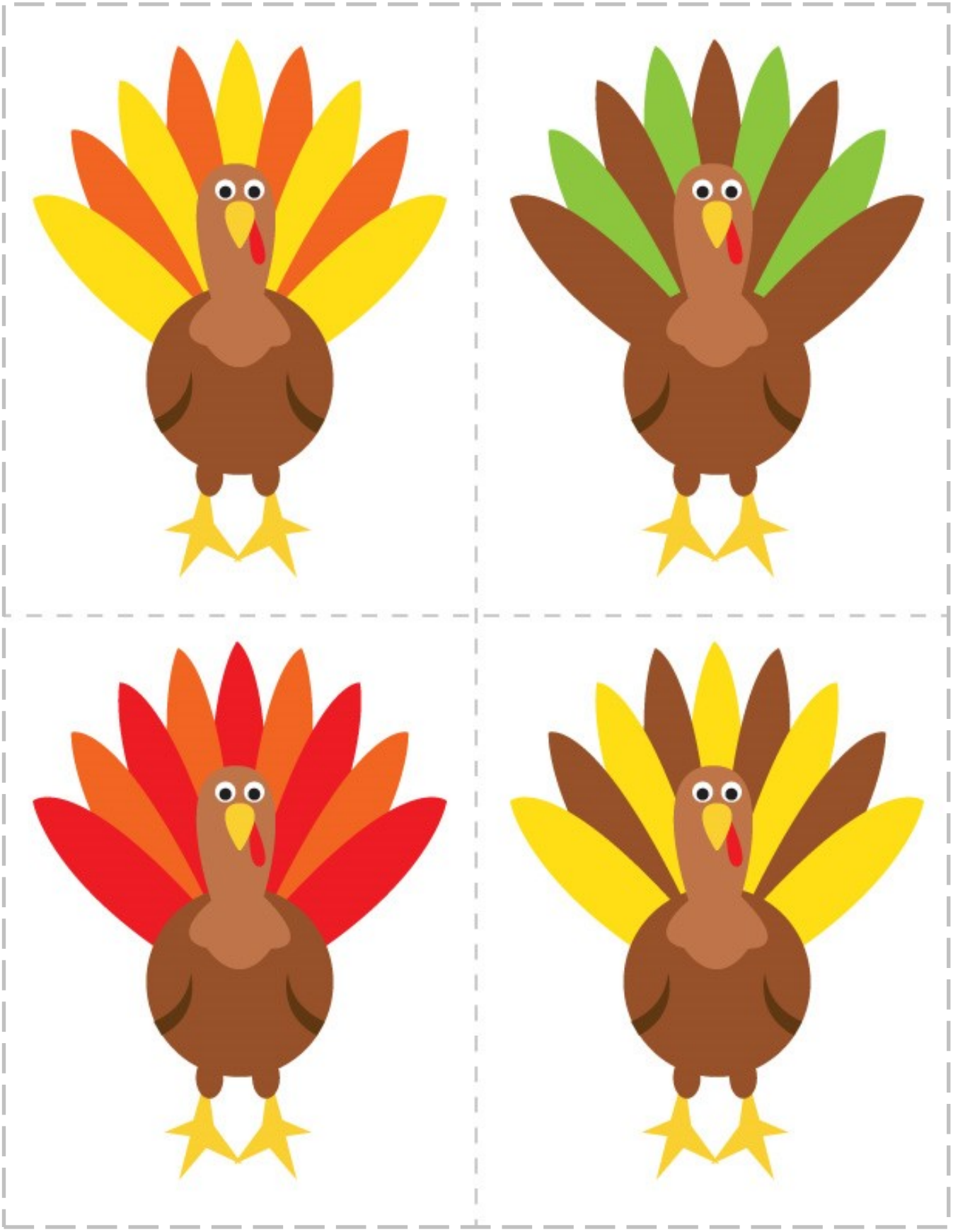
Video of children sharing how they think you cook a turkey: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXFG60ScsFM











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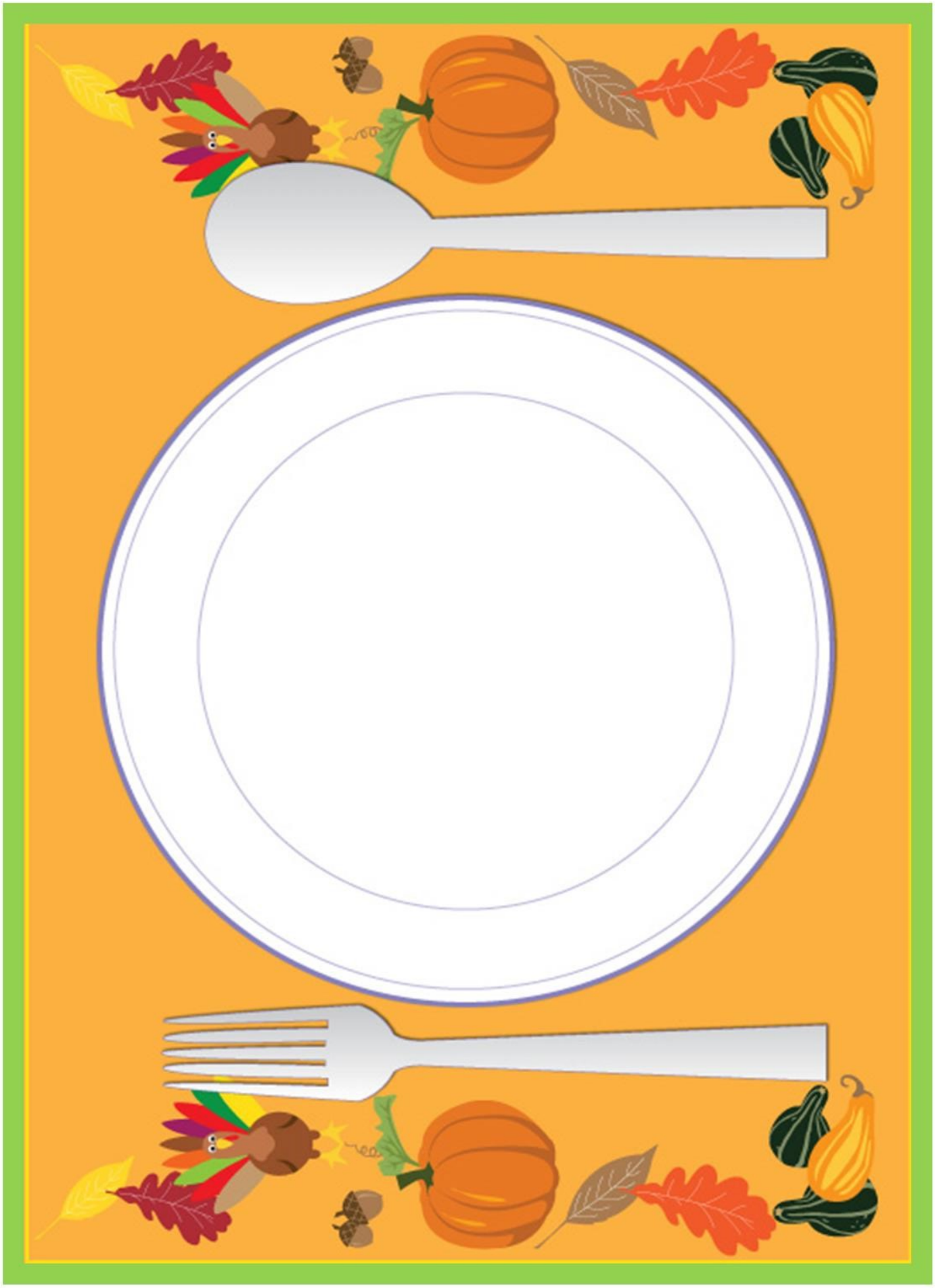


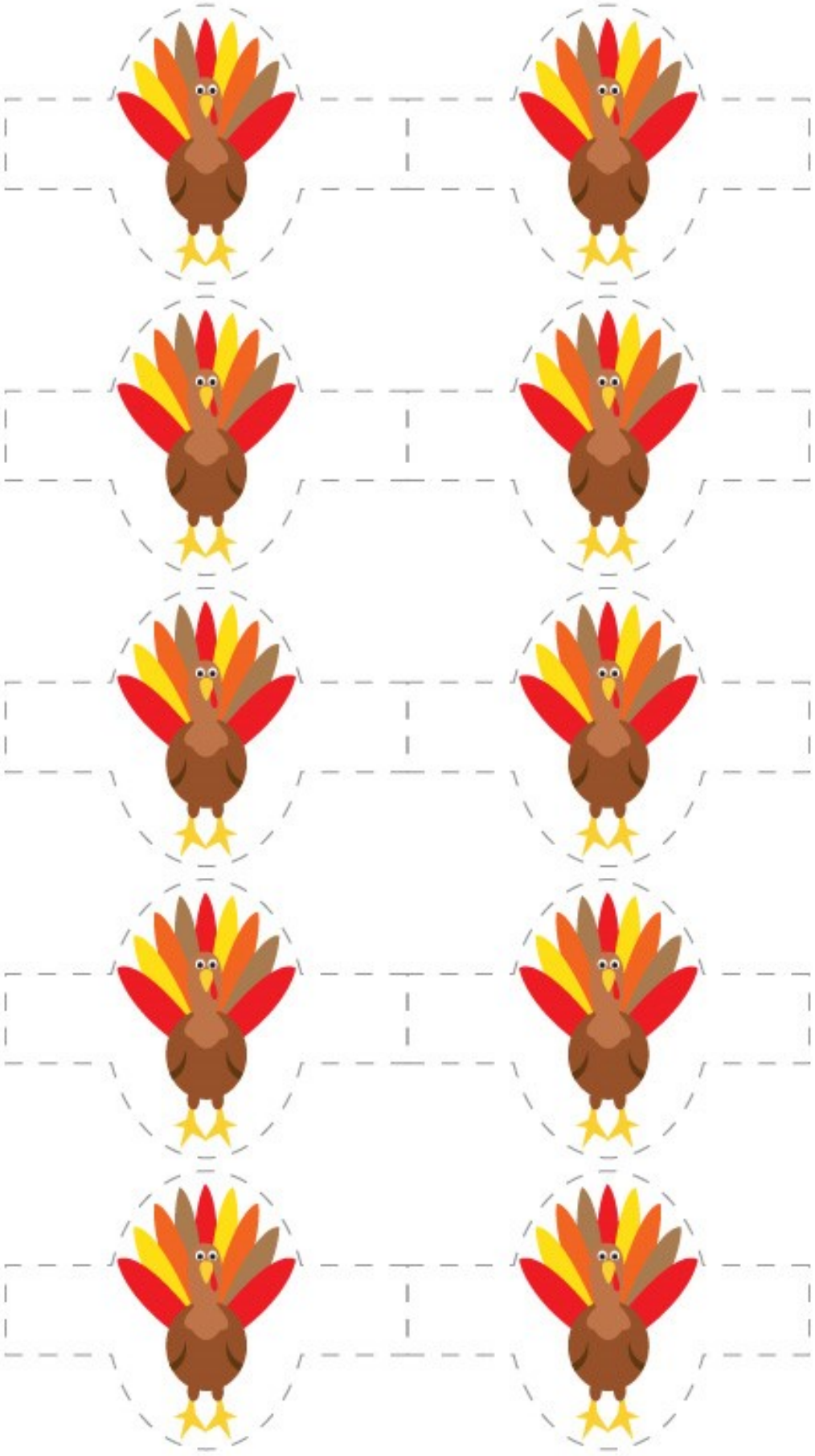














I'm thankful for...

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Estoy agradecido por …



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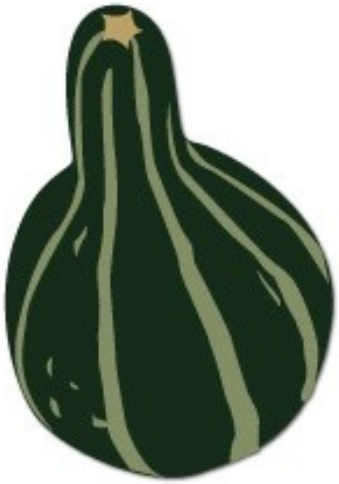


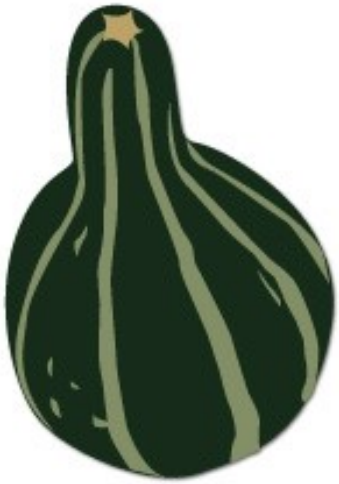


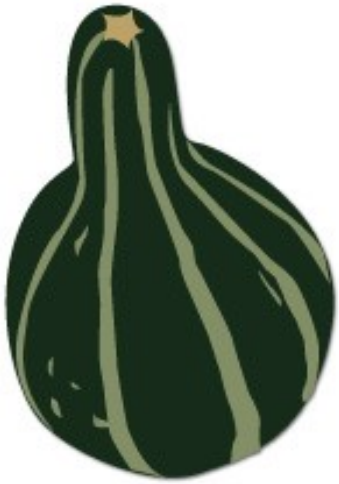












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1 one	2 two	3 three
4 four	5 five	6 six

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