Hello! For those of you that have been receiving this newsletter over a year, you will recognize that I shared some of these resources last year. They are so good that I wanted to share them again with some additional resources I've found! Enjoy & Happy Thanksgiving! ~Kimberly
I have found it difficult at times to preserve the Thanksgiving holiday. Almost every store you walk in to has Christmas plastered everywhere. I love Christmas, but I also love Thanksgiving so I work extra hard as a mom to instill some Thanksgiving traditions and practices.

I did a little reading on the meaning of Thanksgiving and wholeheartedly agree that it's all about expressing gratitude. I particularly enjoyed reading the following 3 points about Thanksgiving customs:

- **To gather in unity** – It is refreshing and invigorating when people come together, in celebration of a common purpose. It is a reconciliation of differences as well as a time of healing. In sharing our victories as well as our struggles, we find strength and hope.

- **To teach the young** – In stories retold, each generation brings purpose and significance to the richness of their heritage. Faded pictures, sentimental knick-knacks, even the [*prayer of Thanksgiving*](#) before the meal all form a Thanksgiving family legacy.

- **To prepare the heart** – In gratitude, we humbly reflect upon all the gifts (family, friends, health) that saturate our lives. By “giving-thanks” we choose to extend ourselves and give to others less fortunate. Out of the abundance of our hearts, we are able to offer our resources to help others.

One tradition I started about 4 years ago was creating a thankful tree. Beginning November 1st, we add to our thankful tree each day (see picture above). I won this tree (it was intended to be a photo holder) at an event I attended and used it to display pictures until I had a different idea! I found some leaf cutouts and decided we'd use this as our Thanksgiving centerpiece. Each night (at least 5 out of 7 nights) we talk about what we are thankful for, write it on a leaf and put it on our tree. I keep it on our table and on Thanksgiving Day we take it with us to my in-laws as a table decoration. I love it when my in-laws ask my girls to explain what's on their thankful tree! They take great pride in sharing what they contribute.

It may seem too simple, but it has opened up some great conversations with my young girls. It's easy to say I'm thankful for my family (yes, family is very important), but I like to get my girls to tell me WHY.... I also like to get them to think beyond
GIVING CONVERSATION STARTERS

Ages 1-5
- What was the best gift you ever received?
- What is something you love that you would like to share with someone else?
- What can you give or do for someone that doesn't cost any money?

Ages 6-12
- Talk about a time when someone did something thoughtful for you. What was it? Then, talk about a time when you did something thoughtful for someone else. How did it make you and the other person feel?
- What is a strength or gift you have that you could teach to others during the holiday season?
- If you could give one present to the whole world, what would it be and why?

Ages 13-18
- Think of a person in your family (living or not) who gave back to others. In what ways did he or she give to others? What could you do to be more like this person?
- Share a story of giving and ask each family member to name a cause that matters to him or her. how could you give your time or money to support one of these causes?
- Save enough local newspapers that everybody can read a front page, and then circle areas of need. How could you help, as individuals and as a family?
- Do you think it's more important to be kind or to be happy? Why? Discuss the importance of kindness and ways family members can display their kindness every day in small ways.

This is one way we focus on gratitude in our home.

This Thanksgiving edition of Parent Perusals will offer some upcoming events and resources I’ve been hanging on to share with all of you, AND it will share some other family ideas and tips that you can consider incorporating in your home to foster gratitude and thanksgiving during this Thanksgiving season.

As I reflect on a professional level of what I'm most thankful for, it truly is the work I get to do to inform and inspire families through education. Thank you for being supporters of this great work!

Blessings,
Kimberly Baumgardner
Talk About: Thanks + Giving

- When is it especially important to say “thank you?” Do you notice when people thank you, or forget to thank you?
- How has your understanding of gratitude changed over the years? What did you feel most grateful for when you were younger? And today?
- If you had superpowers, what would they be and how would you use them to help people?
- What can you give or do for someone that doesn't cost any money?
- Do you know someone who is a giving person? How so? Who is it?

Five Conversation Starters for a Welcoming Table
On Thanksgiving, or any day!

1. Tell me something about yourself that you think I may not know.
2. What makes you feel cared for? What is the most caring thing someone has ever done for you?
3. What was a favorite toy or game from your childhood that you hope will be played by the next generation? Why was it special to you?
4. Imagine people are speaking of you 100 years from now. What do you hope they will say?
5. What’s the craziest gift you ever received?

There is more that unites us than divides us. Connect with everyone at your dinner table and find common ground with these five conversation starters.

MORE GIVING ACTIVITIES!

- Giving Pledge Mad Lib
- Guess Who Game
- Illustration Game
- Place Cards
- Giving Pledge

Learn more: Family Dinner Project.Org #Giving Tuesday
NEW WAYS TO CONNECT AT THANKSGIVING

FILL IN THE BLANKS THANKSGIVING WORD GAME

That Thanksgiving turkey needs time to roast — so while dinner is cooking, keep your little ones busy (and seriously entertained) with this goofy, Mad Libs-style fill-in-the-blank template word game. Who knew nouns and adjectives could be so much fun?!

A fun activity to practice nouns and adjectives! Taken from Scholastic Parents.

Download HERE.

THANKSGIVING GAMES

Whether you’re still waiting for the turkey to roast or looking for a fun post-dinner activity, try these Thanksgiving-inspired takes on Pictionary and charades. Let the games begin!

TEN BOOKS FOR THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is about more than the turkey! Here are ten recommended books for kids ages 0-9 that celebrate sharing, community, and family.

TEN MEANINGFUL THANKSGIVING GRATITUDE ACTIVITIES
We encourage San Antonio to come together and help fight hunger. Food4SA is a city-wide campaign to collect 1M lbs of food through community food drives and monetary support throughout the month of November. You can help us reach our goal by making a donation online or hosting a food & fund drive with your business, school, church, neighborhood, organization, family or friends. Food donations can be dropped off at any SSFCU branch location or area H-E-B.

More Information: Food 4 SA
REMAINING NOVEMBER PARENT TRAININGS AT ESC-20

Tuesday, November 19, 2019, 9:00 a.m.--12:00 p.m.
The Benefits of Being Bilingual

This training session will provide an overview of the state bilingual programs and the research about the benefits of being bilingual.

Session ID# 59577
Webinar ID# 60038

Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 9:00 a.m.--12:00 p.m.
Parental Participation in the ARD Committee Meeting

Parents/guardians have a critical role in the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting process. Sometimes parents can feel uncertain of the process or how they should participate and ask questions. Join us for this session to discuss practical tips for effective communication, conflict resolution, and additional strategies that you can use in your next ARD committee meeting when planning appropriate services for your child. We will also discuss options available to address disagreements, resolve conflict and build consensus while keeping the lines of communication between you and the school open.

Session ID# 58847
Webinar ID# 59723
Be thankful when you don't know something, for it gives you the opportunity to learn.
Be thankful for the difficult times, during those times you grow.
Be thankful for your limitations, they give you opportunities for improvement.
Be thankful for each new challenge, which will build your strength and character.
Be thankful for your mistakes, they will teach you valuable lessons.
Kimberly has worked in the field of special education for 19 years. She has been on staff at ESC-20 for 10 years. She spent 7 years as a special education curriculum specialist and is currently the Family Engagement Consultant.

Kimberly has become quite passionate about empowering families to be more involved in their child's education and future as well as challenging and supporting schools to increase their efforts to involve families in their child's educational journey and focus on Family Engagement as an instructional tool that improves student's academic outcomes.

Kimberly enjoys living out in the country with her husband, Tyson and two daughters, Lynette & Lucy Sue.