



Background

Thanksgiving in the United States is now celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. The first Thanksgiving in Plymouth Colony was celebrated sometime in the autumn of 1621, when the Pilgrims invited helpful Native Americans to a three-day festival.

Making It Work

Students in the primary grades enjoy hearing the simple story of the Pilgrim's trip to America, how they landed at Plymouth, and how they were helped by the Native Americans who lived nearby.

Day 1—The Pilgrims

Materials

- encyclopedias or other illustrated reference materials
- classroom wall map of the world

Activity

This is designed to be an oral exercise to establish a general base of information. See what the students already know and give them the information they don't have. Expand on and discuss the different ideas for reinforcement.

- The Pilgrims sailed from Plymouth, England, on September 16, 1620.
- The Pilgrims were looking for a place where they could have freedom of religion.
- The ship they sailed on was named the *Mayflower*.
- There were 102 passengers aboard the ship.
- The *Mayflower* reached what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts, on December 26, 1620.
- The first winter was very difficult because they had to work so hard with little food and to live in shelters that provided poor protection from the harsh weather.
- In the spring of 1621, two Native Americans made friends with the Pilgrims and showed them how to plant beans, corn, and pumpkins, and how to hunt and fish.
- The harvest was so good that the Pilgrims invited the Native Americans to come to their feast. This was the first Thanksgiving in the fall of 1621.