



## The Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving

*Ann McGovern, Elroy Freem (Illustrator)*

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The Pilgrims' first Thanksgiving lasted three whole days. Ann McGovern's simple text introduces children to the struggles of the Pilgrims during their first year at Plymouth Colony and the events leading to the historic occasion we celebrate today - THANKSGIVING.

## **The Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving Details**

Date : Published October 1st 1993 by Scholastic Paperbacks (first published November 1st 1973)

ISBN : 9780590461887

Author : Ann McGovern , Elroy Freem (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review The Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving for online ebook

### Cristina says

**Summary:** This book informs us of what the first year in America was like for the pilgrims. It tells us the struggles they survived and how they led to the festivity we celebrate today.

**Evaluation:** This book did a great job in showing the students what life was like for the pilgrims and the things that led for them to come to America. The illustrations do a great job in moving the story along.

**Teaching Idea:** I would read this to my lower grades class in the days leading to Thanksgiving. I would ask questions as I read to gauge their comprehension of the text. After reading it, we would write about something we are thankful for and why.

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### Ebookwormy1 says

This version of the Mayflower and Thanksgiving stories focus' on concrete details of the Pilgrims experience. The cramped quarters on the Mayflower, sparse food, uncomfortable sleeping arrangements, lack of ability to care for basic hygiene, hazardous weather and sickness give children evidences of the audacious endeavor the pilgrims undertook.

Additional chapters cover the challenges of the Winter, the hope of the Spring, the joy of Summer and Thanksgiving of the Fall. The text provides concrete details of the hard work of building, tools and resources used, dangers of fire, making of furniture, planting and harvesting. Squanto, a "man who had lived near Plymouth years before the white men came" is referenced favorably as a helper to adults and playmate to children. His enslavement in England (allowing him to learn English) and the death of his tribe (due to disease) are not referenced. Instruction of children in schooling and manners, as well as the tasks included in their work are covered. The Thanksgiving feast includes accounts of the tremendous natural food sources of the area.

Monochromatic teal gradient illustrations complement the text. This book is not perfect, but it is adequate to give a general presentation of the Pilgrims' story. See also Kate Waters' work (which i have reviewed).

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### Jessica says

A beginning picture book about the pilgrims life when they came to the new world

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### Volkert says

The previous edition of this book, published in 1973, has been a favorite introduction to the Pilgrims for primary students in our school for many years. Written at about a third grade reading level, it works as a readable chapter book, as well as a quick read-aloud. The black, white and turquoise drawings in the older

version were adequate, but the text always deserved more detailed and interesting illustrations. While I have not seen this new edition, it appears that this situation has now been remedied.

My students have always taken an interest in the kid's perspective of life aboard the Mayflower and during the first year at Plymouth. They love to know that the Pilgrims took two dogs and a cat with them. They wonder about the "same old salted beef and fish" that had to be eaten. They plug their noses when they think about the Pilgrims wearing "the same clothes every day," even sleeping in them.

They marvel at the straw roofs of the new homes being set on fire by sparks that flew up the chimney. They are stunned to learn that good manners meant children had to stand during meals, and that they could only speak when spoken to by an adult. Then my students smack their lips at the many foods that were eaten at the first Thanksgiving: wild turkeys, geese, ducks, deer, lobsters, clams, oysters and fish, not to mention the many vegetables, and of course, popcorn.

I look forward to adding the new edition of this classic to our library collection. (Written November 17, 2000.)

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### **Leah Sidell says**

The Pilgrims First Thanksgiving is a great book to introduce children to the struggles of the Pilgrims during their first year at Plymouth Colony and the events leading up to the historic holiday we celebrate every year, Thanksgiving. When it gets close to Thanksgiving students can do a fun literacy activity by writing a letter to the Pilgrims about the hard times they went through. Or students can write about what they have learned about Thanksgiving back in the historic days and compare it to now. This book will teach literacy by having them comprehending the story and being able to compare and contrast and also learning how to write a letter.

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### **Alicia Cantu says**

Didn't grab my attention

Genre: Informative

Grade: 3rd and higher

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### **Andrea says**

The writing is very simple as it teaches kids about the history of the first Thanksgiving, so it's appropriate for young kids just learning about the holiday.

I wondered how they know there were two dogs and a cat on board. And the Mayflower was supposedly the size of two trucks, which doesn't seem right at all.

It relayed the living conditions on the ship, that the Pilgrims and sailors were crowded as they slept and ate. The kids didn't have toys and had to leave most of their possessions behind. They had salted beef and fish,

and hard, dry biscuits, a little cheese and butter, until all of the food went bad. There wasn't enough water to bathe with or even drink.

I liked the illustrations, especially the page of the ship showing the sails and lines, and a Pilgrim up in the rigging trying to sight land. I really liked the sea and the beautiful blue color mixed with white to show the breaking waves on the shore, and the ship docked out at sea.

They sailed for just over two months, left in September and made it to land in November. They searched for a place to build their homes, and found a spot by rivers where it was good for planting, and named their settlement Plymouth. While their town was being built they had to sleep on the ship. When winter arrived they didn't have enough food to eat.

Their homes, with the bark and straw, looked more like Indian wigwams. I didn't know they made houses like that. I thought theirs were like cabins.

They worked every day building their homes, except Sunday which was reserved for prayer. The fireplaces were the only source of warmth in the homes, since rain and wind could get in through the cracks. Sparks from the fire could even set the roofs aflame.

They build benches and stools and beds. The kids' beds could be pushed under the adults' during the day. They had leather or wooden mugs, wooden plates and used shells as spoons. They had big iron pots to cook in, and make soap and candles. They planted gardens with the seeds they brought.

The Pilgrims met Squanto, who taught them how to hunt and fish and plant corn, and which plants could be eaten or made into medicine. Squanto apparently lived with the Pilgrims for the rest of his life, which I think I've seen a movie in which he's taken to England as a slave, comes back years later and finds all of his people gone, and goes to live with another tribe.

The children loved him because he taught them Indian words and told them stories. He also taught them how to trap and skin animals.

They didn't have school the first year there, so the adults that knew how taught them reading and writing. Good manners were practiced at table, such as speaking only when they were spoken to, eating standing up and with their hats on, which seems like it isn't good manners. They had to work as hard as the adults, doing things like scaring away animals from the cornfield, and roast the meat over the fire, turning the stick for most of the day. They had to stuff big bags with pine needles and rags and feathers to make mattresses, walk miles to pick grass for the roofs, and gather clams and mussels.

The Mayflower sailed back to England in April, and the Pilgrims all stayed despite all of the hard work they had to do. The picture of the ship sailing away in the pretty multi-colored water with the blue sky and big white clouds, and the Pilgrims waving from shore was really pretty.

More Indians taught the children where to find nuts and wild fruit. The Pilgrims and Indians made flour and corn bread. Summer brought many vegetables and there was plenty to eat. The first Thanksgiving lasted 3 days. They had turkey, geese and ducks, deer, lobsters, clam, oysters, and fish. The gardens yielded cucumbers, carrots, cabbages, turnips, radishes, beets, onions and corn. Popcorn was even made, and wild fruits were had as dessert. The page with the Indian holding a basket of fish, and a basket overflowing with seafood onto the table and the cat standing up and looking at it was cute.

90 Indians attended the feast. The page with the rustic orange trees and the long dinner table, and the food roasting over a fire was pretty. The illustrations definitely enhanced the story. The men and boys played games, such as running and jumping contests, while the women cooked and served the food.

The last page, though pretty, I wish had been a group shot of everything gathered together. It showed the cat licking its leg, sitting on a table with a pumpkin and cooked turkey on it. The text taught that the Pilgrims were thankful for surviving that hard year, and were thankful for friends, food and their homes and their new life.

This is a good book for kids starting out reading and learning what Thanksgiving is about. I would recommend this one because it's informative and there are pretty and engaging pictures to look at. The writing wasn't spectacular since it was geared to such young kids, and most of the sentences could have been said in a better way.

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### **Zahava Davis says**

Personal Reaction: Beautiful illustrations throughout the book! I loved the simplistic, yet realness of the text for younger students.

Purposes:

Read Aloud- This would be an excellent book to start off the Thanksgiving season with younger elementary students. There is a nice amount of toned-down reality in the book, which puts it at an appropriate level of understanding for younger kids.

Independent Reading- I would assign this book with a collection of other books to a student who is doing a project over Pilgrims or early America or a particularly interested student who finds the concept of Thanksgiving or migrating to be fascinating.

For nonfiction- A great foundational book for students first learning about the meaning of Thanksgiving. It really hits on the basics in a way that sticks for kids.

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### **Kate says**

Good basic overview for younger kids or independent readers.

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### **Ashlee Reed says**

Age: Upper Elementary

Genre: Non Fiction- Informational

A very real look into the life of the pilgrims. The story doesn't shy away from those sad parts or the hardships that they experienced.

I read this to my daughter on Thanksgiving and it put into perspective the real aspect of Thanksgiving. The story really showed how much the Native Americans cared for and wanted to help the pilgrims. The true blessing of Thanksgiving.

I liked this story--it is longer and has a lot of words on the page so it is more for the upper level grades.

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## **Lstirl says**

A beautifully illustrated and age appropriate retelling of the famous Thanksgiving story.

Ages 5-11

This book isn't just about the three day long First Thanksgiving celebration, though that is chronicled nicely; It is also about the struggles the pilgrims encountered along their journey to the new world. In an age appropriate manner, this tale briefly shares with children the hardships experienced by these first settlers and the triumph of their success. The story isn't told in a very suspenseful or riveting manner, however, it is accurate and does contain a few interesting details. The inclusion of real life comparisons of the size of the Mayflower and what life was like for the children made the book more relevant to young kids.

The full color illustrations are what make this Thanksgiving book stand out. This was an older book that was re-released with updated illustrations by Elroy Freem. Also the way the story is told from a child's perspective gave the details more meaning. Overall, a good introduction to the Thanksgiving story.

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## **Jill says**

This story begins with men, women, children, and animals getting on the Mayflower. They were leaving their old country because they couldn't pray how they wanted. The ship was as large as two trucks, but it wasn't big enough. The children had nowhere to play and the pilgrims and sailors were crammed together. Their food was terrible, but they had to eat it anyway. There were no beds, everyone slept on the floor. They didn't have a change of clothes either. Then the storms came. Many questioned whether they would ever reach land.

The people on the Mayflower had began their voyage in September and this was November. They had been on the ship for 2 months and 3 days. The next day they saw land. The people were scared. Would they find native people? With winter coming, the Pilgrims needed to work quickly. The Pilgrims designed their town, called Plymouth. The people had to sleep on the Mayflower while they built their homes. Winter was a rough time for the Pilgrims, with many dying.

Spring was a welcomed season with warmer temps and good weather to continue building. The men built one roomed homes out of logs and sticks with grasses and vines for the roof. The homes were cold when the wind blew and wet when it rained. The only heat they had came from a fireplace. The Pilgrims made furniture for their homes, along with eating utensils.

Pilgrims planted and tended their gardens. They met a native name Squanto. This man taught them how to plant corn, hunt, and what wild plants were safe to eat. The Pilgrims learned many things from Squanto. Children also had an important job in Plymouth. They helped cook, made soap, and gathered grass for the roofs.

By summer, the Pilgrim's gardens were bursting with vegetables. They had met more Indians and these new friends showed the children where to find more edible fruits and nuts. They taught the women how to bake cornbread and make flour.

The first Thanksgiving in America lasted three days. The Pilgrims offered wild turkeys, geese, and ducks from the forests. The Indians brought five deer. From the ocean, they brought lobsters, clams, oysters, and

fish. Then they harvested their garden vegetables too. Many wild fruits were used to make dessert. Ninety Indians joined the Pilgrims for the first Thanksgiving. The men and boys played games while the women and girls spent time cooking and serving. The people all gave thanks for their new life and new friends.

This was a very informative historical fiction book. I would use a book like this to introduce the first Thanksgiving to young children. The pictures looked historically accurate and the information appears factual.

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### **Shannon says**

"Shannon 1988." I don't consider myself who necessarily needed bells and whistles to get me interested in a book, but I'll admit that picture books with only one color left me pretty unimpressed.

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### **J. says**

J: I liked that the pilgrims became friends with the Indians.

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### **Marissa Flavin says**

Summary: This book explains the first year the pilgrims came to America. It tells us about the struggles they survived and how they led to the festivity we celebrate today- Thanksgiving.

Characteristics That Support the Genre: This book informs readers of the struggles the pilgrims went through when they came to America. It also includes the three day long first Thanksgiving celebration.

#### Mentor Writing Traits:

Idea- The plot and characters of the story inform students of history about the life of pilgrims when they first came to America and why. Readers learn more background information of the celebration of Thanksgiving.  
Presentation- Illustrations from the story are historically accurate and do a great job of moving the story along.

Classroom Integration: This informative historical fiction book is a great way to introduce the first Thanksgiving to young children. When Thanksgiving time comes around, students can do a fun literacy activity by writing a letter to the pilgrims about the hard times they went through. Otherwise, they can write a comparison piece between Thanksgiving now from what they learned about the historical days of Thanksgiving from the story.

Other Suggestions: I would also suggest reading this book aloud to lower grades leading up to Thanksgiving time. The teacher would ask questions to see how students are comprehending the text and then have students write about what they are thankful for and why.

Book Level: 3.4, Lower Grades

