

## Plimoth Plantation Day and Celebrating the First Thanksgiving at StoneBridge School



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The Purpose is to honor and perpetuate the testimony of God's Providence in the Pilgrim Story through our School Family.

*He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God.*  
(Psalm 78:5-7)

Plimoth Plantation Day at StoneBridge School in Chesapeake, Virginia, is the most extraordinary day in the school calendar. Inspired by a desire to culminate the annual school-wide study of the Pilgrim Story with a "Special Day Program" our first year, tribute was paid to our spiritual forebears. Parents were invited to a student program which included Thanksgiving songs, poetry, prayer, and drama. An authentic New England feast was served, and all donned simple Pilgrim or Indian costumes. Today this annual autumn festival has grown into a Celebration of Thanksgiving as 250 students, over forty faculty members, friends of the school, and honored community members all gather to memorialize our Pilgrim heritage and to honor the American tradition of a Day of Thanksgiving to God.

The following ideas and enrichment, plus the resources available in the Plimoth Plantation Day Packet, offered by Foundation for American Christian Education, may inspire many of you in the Christian History Family to institute a similar celebration in your community of believers in an effort to teach and preserve the account of the founding of our nation as it relates to God's purpose in Christ, His Story. It has proven to be an enriching experience, an inspiring teaching tool, an outreach to the community, and a means to actively involve our parents in the life of our school's philosophy and curriculum.

## Organization

The organization for such a festival is best served by selecting a coordinator who knows the Pilgrim Story well and will plan and communicate all activities for the day. Divide the day's activities into two committees each with a chairman:

1. Schoolwide Program and Curriculum Enrichment-Teacher/Student involvement
2. Feast and Decor-Parent involvement

*Good communication is the key to success:*

- Write a parent communication weeks in advance detailing the events of the celebration and needed involvement and volunteer service. Include a response form requesting each parent to relate his or her contribution to the feast and expected number of family members for dining.
- Write invitations to honored guests with R.S.V.P.
- Have music director coordinate all hymns, choral presentations, and instrumental ensembles.
- Have teachers coordinate their individual class presentations for the school program to include a variety of poetry, Pilgrim and Thanksgiving music, and Scripture. Write or select a dramatic presentation and schedule rehearsal time.

## Thanksgiving Processional

*Come ye thankful people come,  
Raise the song of harvest home. . . .*

The Plimoth Plantation Day Program traditionally begins with a Thanksgiving Processional of all the classes. Singing a Thanksgiving song, the costumed students process down the aisle with their handmade banners and musical instruments followed by the Harvesters bearing the Offering of the First Fruits.

## Offering of the First Fruits

*. . . you shall celebrate a feast to Me. . .  
You shall observe the Feast of the Harvest  
of the first fruits of your labors  
from what you sow in the field;  
(Exodus 23:14,16a)*

Each class together with its teacher decides what to collect for the Offering of the First Fruits. Canned foods or money to be given to a designated family or local organization or a ballad or poem of praise written by individual students are suggestions. The Offering of the First Fruits is carried in baskets by two "Harvesters" from each class to the altar.

## Pilgrim Displays

Out of the teaching of the Pilgrim story emerge many home and classroom projects such as the reconstruction of Plimoth Plantation, the *Mayflower* ship, or a New England Indian village which can be displayed in the hallways of the school. Arrange copies of the Geneva Bible, the Mayflower Compact, and *Bradford's Journal* with a quill pen and a candle on a table.

Assign a historic interpreter or a costumed parent to each of these displays to share their historic information and influence with students and visitors.

Hang posters of Plimoth Plantation and the Mayflower, display student writing about the Pilgrim story, and the art work and crafts created by individual students. Bulletin boards are easily created by junior high students to illuminate the dramatic events of the Pilgrim Story. Using an overhead projector and a coloring sheet or famous painting duplicated on a transparency, students can project the image on bulletin board paper, then trace, and color with oil pastels. The addition of letters to convey a quote from Bradford's journal or a Christian principle creates a beautiful and inspiring visual that can be stored for future use.

## Decor

The school and harvest table can be simply and tastefully appointed using cornucopias and baskets filled with natural arrangements of fall leaves, flowers, fruits, vegetables, nuts, Indian corn, gourds, shells, and shocks of grain. Local merchants will often donate bundles of hay, pumpkins, and flowers when asked to contribute for a school program. One set of our parents built and painted in Old English script a beautiful sign announcing our "Celebration of Thanksgiving—Plimoth Plantation 1623." Placed in front of the school a week prior to our festival, it is flanked with colorful flags, shocks of corn, and pumpkins, heralding the coming special event to our whole school family.

## The Authentic Pilgrim Feast

*If fresh meat is wanting to fill up our dish  
We have carrots and turnips whenever we wish.  
For pottage and puddings and custard and pies,  
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies;  
We have pumpkin at morning and pumpkin at noon,  
If 'twere not for pumpkins, we should be undone.*  
(1630 Pilgrim Ballad)

The food for the authentic feast is prepared and served by a corps of mothers dressed in Pilgrim garb. Attractively arranged on a Harvest Feast table, it is served family style to the primary-aged children and buffet style to the remainder of the students, faculty, and guests. Cider, popcorn, and pie are served in the classrooms where the students and their families eat together. A separate dining area with tables is arranged for invited and honored guests.

Small choral and instrumental ensembles, under the direction of the music teacher, rotate during the serving period providing Thanksgiving and Elizabethan music.

### **The Authentic Pilgrim Feast**

Turkey Venison Eel  
Fish Rabbit Squirrel  
Turnips Parsnips Squash  
Carrots Cabbage Cranberry Sauce  
Corn Pudding Hoe Cakes Pop Corn  
Fruit Pies Apple Cider  
(Recipes in the Plimoth Plantation Day Packet)

### **Five Kernels of Corn** (last verse)

*The raven's gift eat and be humble and pray,  
A new light is breaking, and Truth leads your way;  
One taper a thousand shall kindle; rejoice  
That to you had been given the wilderness voice!  
O Bradford of Austerfield, daring the wave,  
And safe through the sounding blasts leading the brave,  
Of deed such as thine was the free nation born,  
And the festal world sings the  
"Five Kernels of Corn."  
Five Kernels of Corn! Five Kernels of Corn!  
The nation gives thanks for Five Kernels of Corn!  
To the Thanksgiving Feast bring  
Five Kernels of Corn!  
(Hezekiah Butterworth)*

### **Costume Workshop**

Students and teachers are requested to dress as Pilgrims or Indians. New mothers may often become frustrated at the thought of providing costumes for their children, so a Costume Workshop is presented by a creative seamstress-mother several weeks in advance. Have pictures and samples of easy-to-assemble Pilgrim and Indian attire and props.

Our Pilgrim families wore simple but colorful clothes and no record mentions a single buckle on their hats or shoes! They worked in Leyden, Holland, as fabric weavers and the traditional image of generic black and white attire could not be farther from their true appearance. The only Pilgrim who had many black clothes was Elder Brewster, who also possessed a violet cloak, green trousers, and a red cap!

**Boy Pilgrim:** Boots with slacks tucked in or shoes with long socks pulled up over slacks to the knees. A white shirt and Dad's vest or a cape with a black felt hat or stocking cap. White collar can be cut from pellan or interfacing.

**Girl Pilgrim:** Long dress or long skirt and blouse, apron and a large kerchief pinned at the neck with a brooch. A white "Dutch-style" hat can be folded from heavy paper or interfacing material and stapled in the back. Add a baby doll in a blanket or some needlework.

**Indians:** Cut tunic from fabric and fringe hem and sleeves. Boys' can be a vest. Add a pair of slacks for boys. Decorate, adding beads, feathers, and furs. Bedroom slippers and war paint complete the costume. Girls love a papoose attached.

### **Historic Interpreters**

Older students can be selected as historic interpreters to serve as greeters at the front door of the school, to pass out programs and seat guests for student programs, and to visit individual classrooms. Assign characters providing background resource, guide the writing of their presentations, and rehearse. Assist in putting together costumes and props. Pair them off to work together during the celebration to recount the providential story detailing their character's contribution while describing the many interesting facets of seventeenth-century life.

**Suggestions for characters:** Governor Bradford, Pastor Robinson, Elder Brewster, Rose Brewster, Squanto, Samoset, Chief Massasoit, Miles Standish, John Alden, Priscilla Mullins

### **Music of the Pilgrims**

The Ainsworth Psalter, published in 1612, was the only songbook brought with the Pilgrims to America. This psalter was compiled by an Englishman, Henry Ainsworth, while a refugee in Amsterdam. Many of the Psalms were paraphrased by him and the tunes were Hebrew melodies. They were sung in unison with a strong beat and accent. None are found in today's hymnals.

A psalter is a songbook containing metrical versions of the Psalms and the melody lines to be used for congregational singing. These songbooks were a result of King Henry VIII's rejection of the Roman Catholic Church because all hymns were abolished as the new English church struggled to break old traditions.

To the Pilgrims, psalm-singing was not only an act of worship, but the favorite pastime at social gatherings.

### **Teacher Preparation**

A plethora of resources is available to assist in preparing to teach or recount the Pilgrim Story in our homes, churches, and schools. Two original sources are: 1) America's first literary classic, William Bradford's *Of Plimoth Plantation* available from Plimoth Plantation; and 2) *Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims of Plymouth*, edited by Jordan D. Fiore (1985) from the Plymouth Rock Foundation. For a brief and accurate account, read *The Pilgrim Story* compiled and written by William Franklin Atwood (1940), from Plimoth Plantation. Compiled from the documents of Governors Bradford and Winslow, their words are quoted in this booklet making it an excellent resource for the non-educator and for use in reading to students elementary-aged and above. For use with primary-aged children, *The Coming of the Pilgrims Told from Governor Bradford's Firsthand Account* by E. Brooks Smith and Robert Meredith (Little, Brown and Co., 1964) is also outstanding. A thorough list of recommended resources for study and classroom use is included in the *Plimoth Plantation Day Packet* available through the Foundation for American Christian Education.

In the reeducation of each Principle Approach® teacher a thorough knowledge and understanding of God's Hand in the history of liberty for the individual and our nation through the Pilgrim Story is essential. For in-depth study and research we highly recommend the F.A.C.E. syllabus, *The Teaching of Providential History* developed by Rosalie J. Slater. The primary resources needed for this study are the F.A.C.E. books, *The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America* compiled by Verna Hall, which includes fifty-five pages of Bradford's History "Of Plimoth Plantation"; *Teaching and Learning America's Christian History: The Principle Approach* by Rosalie Slater; Noah Webster's 1828 *American Dictionary*, and *The Bible*. The syllabus guides the student's Four-R'ing through leading questions and, upon its completion, the student's mind will be enlightened, a great portion of Bradford's classic will have been read, and a thorough understanding of providential history, which is foundational in *The Principle Approach to American Christian Education*, will have been attained.

For teaching the Pilgrim Story in the elementary curriculum, *The Noah Plan® History and Geography Curriculum Guide*, the fifty-five page excerpt of Bradford's History of Plimoth Plantation in *Christian History, Vol. I*, and the *Plimoth Plantation Day Packet* from F.A.C.E. provide a study for the elementary Principle Approach teacher, and includes the preparation of the teacher's notebook, a chronology of providential events in the Pilgrim Story, a sample lesson plan, the history of Thanksgiving Day, a sample drama, "Meet the Pilgrims," and valuable resources for further research, teaching, and celebration.

### **Overview, Methods, and Enrichment**

At StoneBridge School in Virginia, the Pilgrim Story is taught from a providential view to all the students in their history course each November. Integrated throughout the whole curriculum the study culminates prior to Thanksgiving vacation in a schoolwide celebration called Plimoth Plantation Day. The Pilgrim legacy comes alive for the students through creatively designed bulletin boards which visually portray events in the Pilgrim Story and display student work throughout the school. The literature and poetry of and

about the Pilgrims is read, portions are memorized and occasionally interpreted in sign language, the music of the Pilgrims is sung and played on musical instruments, the famous Thanksgiving hymns are taught, while the art curriculum features harvest time and Thanksgiving projects and crafts. Map work of the three homes of the Pilgrims is completed, highlighting John Smith's contribution as the first American cartographer whose map of the New England area was providentially placed in the hands of the Pilgrims. Being submerged into such an enriched and integrated study, the students' writing reflects inspired compositions, essays, and poetry. The scope and sequence of the history curriculum are designed so that while the whole story is studied each year, a different aspect of the Pilgrim Story is amplified at each grade level, thereby building, year by year, a thorough knowledge and appreciation of the providential view of Christ, His Story in the Pilgrim's contribution to Christian self- and civil government. Employing the Principle Approach, notebook work appropriate for each grade level reflects the students' record of their study and the enrichment provided by each teacher. Following is an abbreviated overview excluding enrichment:

**Kindergarten:** The story is read to the children by the teachers highlighting God's providential Hand. Coloring pages are completed for notebooks.

**First Grade:** An extended unit on Columbus is taught at this level including life on a caravel, navigation, and maps. The Pilgrim Story is read to the children and life as a child on the Mayflower and in Plymouth Plantation is studied.

**Second Grade:** A North American Indian unit is taught in this history course in conjunction with the founding of Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America. A field study tour of the Chickahominy Indian Village at Jamestown is made by the class. The study of the Pilgrim Story features the providential contributions of Samoset and Squanto to the salvation of the colony and to the establishment of the peaceful relationship the Pilgrims enjoyed with the New England Indians as contrasted with the Cavaliers' treatment of the Virginia Indians.

**Third Grade:** Three months of this history course is spent teaching and learning the whole Pilgrim Story from a providential view, tracing the thread of liberty for the individual through our English heritage.

**Fourth Grade:** In preparation for a three-month study on the Revolutionary War and the Principle of America's Heritage of Christian Character, the Pilgrims are highlighted as the model of American Christian character. Bradford, Brewster, Robinson, and Standish are studied.

**Fifth Grade:** During the year a unit on the Spirit of American Invention and Enterprise is studied. Governor Bradford's courageous leadership in the establishment of individual enterprise through private property highlights the study of the Pilgrim Story. This class is traditionally chosen to perform the dramatic presentation of the Pilgrim Story for the

Plimoth Plantation Day program. They learn many details of the fiery trials and tribulations experienced by our Pilgrims and God's intervention.

**Sixth and Seventh Grades:** The Pilgrim Story is reviewed and the Mayflower Compact is studied. As the seed of the future Christian Republic was planted by the Pilgrims, the Principle of "How the Seed of Local Self-Government Is Planted" is taught.

**Eighth Grade:** The Rudiments of America's Christian History and Government Course is taught. Eighth graders are chosen as historic interpreters for Plimoth Plantation Day. Assigned an individual Pilgrim or Indian character to research, each student selected develops a presentation from the view of that character. Dressed as his character, the interpreter greets students and guests upon arrival at school and visits assigned classrooms to relate life on the Plantation to the children and visitors.

### **Plimoth Plantation Day Program**

THANKSGIVING PROCESSIONAL

OFFERING OF THE FIRST FRUITS - Harvesters

WELCOME AND INVITATION TO WORSHIP - Mrs. Adams

HYMN OF PRAISE: "All Creatures of Our God and King" - Recorder Ensemble

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING - 7th & 8th Grades

THEME SCRIPTURE: Psalm 100 - 4th Grade

"Five Kernels of Corn" - K-4 & K-5 Grades

"Old Hundredth," Ainsworth Psalter - Honors Chorus

"Song of Thanksgiving" - Stonebridge Singers

"Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers" - 3rd Grade

"The Pilgrim Saga" - 1st Grade

### ***Authentic Feast***

Turkey Venison Eel Fish Rabbit Squirrel Parsnips Corn Pudding Carrots Cabbage Turnips  
Cranberries Hoecakes Popcorn Fruit Pies

DRAMA: "Providence" - 5th Grade

The Pilgrim Story is a moving account of God's providential hand in history. Our spiritual forebears were English men and women of conscience with a bright vision of liberty for the individual. Enduring the fiery trials and daily discontentments, they sought God's wisdom and guidance and cheerfully followed His leading westward to America. Daily depending

upon His provisions and mercy, they became the stepping stones of future "pilgrims" who would come from around the world. "These things did not dismay them for their desires were set on the ways of God and to enjoy His ordinances: but they rested on His providence, and knew Whom they had believed."

"The Lord is My Shepherd," Bay Psalm Book Sign Language Interpretation -2nd Grade

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING: "Come Ye Thankful People Come"

BENEDICTION AND BLESSING: "Welcome Jesus"

6th Grade RECESSIONAL: "We Gather Together" - Recorder Ensemble

### Resources

FACE, P.O. Box 9588, Chesapeake, VA 23321; (800) 352-FACE;

*Christian History of the Constitution of the United States, Volume I: Christian Self-Government* Includes a fifty-five page excerpt from William Bradford's History of Plimoth Plantation.

*Courtship of Miles Standish Teacher Guide & Poem* Includes: Complete Poem; Biography of Longfellow; Leading Ideas for Study; Leading Ideas for Teaching; Visuals; Suggestions for Student Work.

*Plimoth Plantation Day Packet* Contains assorted materials for planning Plimoth Plantation Day Celebration: Pilgrim and Indian Poetry; Sample Drama, Meet the Pilgrims; Herbs and Medicines of Pilgrims; Feast Recipes; Hymns and Songs; Patterns for Costumes; List of Books and Resources; Organization Materials; Sample Communication Forms.

Plimoth Plantation, Box 1620, Plymouth, MA 02360; (617) 746 1622.

Plymouth Rock Foundation, P.O. Box 577, Marlborough, NH 03455; (603) 876 2598; student-led tours.