

How To: a Virtual Thanksgiving Feast

*You are invited to a virtual Thanksgiving Feast!
This bulletin will be your guide.*

BEFORE the Feast:

1. **Set up zoom in your dining room.** Find a good spot near your dinner table to place your device where your dinner guests can see and hear everyone at your table. Contact a church staff person well in advance if you need help with zoom.
2. Prepare (or order) **dinner.**
3. **Set the table.** You will need:
 - a. **Bread**
 - b. **Cup** for each person with beverage of choice (wine, juice, water)
 - c. **Candle(s)** & lighter for the table
 - d. this **Bulletin** -- paper or digital
4. **Log in** to Zoom by 6 PM by
 - a. Click **this [meeting link](#)**.
OR type to www.zoom.us/join into your browser and entering our meeting ID: **827 4411 0332**
 - b. Enter the password: See Church Email or In-House Facebook Page

DURING the Feast:

After Communion, there are 2 ways you can continue to your feast:

1. **In Small Groups:** We encourage you to stay on zoom and you will be randomly assigned into breakout rooms of about 3 households so you can virtually share your feast in community using the discussion guide if you wish.
2. **As Individual Families:** Alternatively, you can leave the meeting and use this bulletin to finish your thanksgiving meal with your household.

*Either way, you have *no need for clergy at your feast!* Everything you need is right here in this bulletin.

— WE GATHER IN FAITH —

Welcome

Rev. Nikki

Welcome I am Rev. Nikki, Co-Bridge Pastor for Executive Ministries. Happy Thanksgiving. This Thanksgiving, many of us have set out fewer plates and chairs than we have in years before. This meal marks the beginning of the final days of what has been a long and difficult year for many of us. Even so, we still can find reasons to come together through wifi and internet signals to give thanks to God.

Before we start I invite you to go to uccaustin.org/thanksgiving to download your bulletin. For our feast, you will need bread, a cup for each person with a beverage of choice such as wine or juice, candles and a lighter for the table, and you'll probably want to download a bulletin from uccaustin.org/thanksgiving where you will see the full liturgy and the table discussion questions. The words you need, however, will appear on your screen.

Rev. Anna

Welcome, I am Rev. Anna, Co-Bridge Pastor for Worship and Music. Jesus used the parable of a great banquet to which all people are invited in order to talk about what the “kin-dom” of God looks like. Jesus knew that all people need connection and inclusion, and if there is anything we have learned these past 8 months, it is that he was right; we need to come together. Jesus assures us all, saying “you have a place at the table” and challenges us to extend the invitation to all, so that all people know they are welcome in our churches and in God’s family – even if that may be via phone or laptop right now.

— SETTING THE TABLE —

Candle Lighting

Emily

Good evening, I am Emily Jamison Guerrero. Like many of our friends and family this holiday season, Jesus is not physically beside us, yet every time we gather around a table and remember him, he is present. So let us now light a candle on our own tables to symbolize the Holy Spirit who has come to dine.

Music for Candle-Lighting [“In the Lord, I’ll be Ever Thankful”](#)

Emily

As you listen to the music, you may light the candle(s) on your dining table to symbolize the presence of Christ at our feast. Once you learn the song, sing along as a meditative prayer.

A Place at the Table

Pastor Carl

And I am Pastor Carl, minister for congregational care. Many of our friends and family are also not physically present at our Thanksgiving tables. They do not sit beside us because of this virus, because of the miles, or because they have died. Let us now set a place at the table for those loved ones who cannot be with us in body with us tonight, but who dine with us in Spirit -- present in our hearts, and in our memories.

Music for A Place at the Table

[“At this Table”](#)

Pastor Carl

As you listen to the music, you may set places at your table to symbolize the presence of those who would be dining with you this Thanksgiving.

A Ritual for Hand-Washing

Rev. Anna Carl

I'm Rev. Anna, Co-Bridge pastor for Worship and Music. We've washed our hands so many times in the past 9 months. Our skin cracks as we try to scrub away all danger. Let us wash our hands now in a new way, instead rejoicing in God who is Living Water, who has tenderly cleansed us from all our iniquities in the waters of Baptism.

Music for Hand-Washing

[“Down to the River to Pray”](#)

Rev. Anna

As the music plays, you may walk away from zoom to take turns washing and drying one another's hands at a sink. You may use soap and water, mindfully washing between each finger, the palms and backs of each other's hands. Depending on your home, this ritual may be somber or joyful, serious and gentle or playful. There is no wrong way to do this.

As you wash one another's hands (or your own if you are by yourself), say:

All: **May this water cleanse your Spirit.**

Then gently dry one another's hands saying:

All: **May you feel God's tender care.**

After each home has finished the ritual of washing, you may gather back at the table.

— THANKSGIVING COMMUNION —

Three households will be assigned ahead of time as reading households 1, 2, and 3, and are marked by color. All read in the bolded black words, but please remain muted.

House 1 = maroon, House 2 = blue, House 3 = green, and All = black.

Sharing the Feast

Rev. Nikki

The candles are lit, the table is set, we have cleansed ourselves and are ready for the feast and celebration. So now, let us remember.

House 1: **Tonight, we give thanks for all the blessings in our lives,
Remembering that all good gifts come from God above.
We also give thanks for the life of Jesus,
Whose teachings on how to love and live
are re-enacted in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.**

House 2: **Our worship, therefore, circles around the table.
Here we share the bread.
We share the cup.
We share the good news.
And in this way,
we become part of the Eternal Story.**

Prayer of Invitation

House 1: **If you long for company amid isolation,**

All: **We make room for you.**

House 2: **If pray for healing amid a world of illness and brokenness,**

All: **We make room for you.**

House 3: **If you seek hope amid your grief,**

All: **We make room for you.**

House 1: **If you have come here tonight,**

All: **We make room for each other.**

Great Remembrance

House 2: **Indeed Jesus made room for all God's children,
For when he was at table, the doors were open wide
to sinners and saints,
to the proud and humble,
to the rich and poor,
to the young and old,
to the healthy and sick.**

House 3: **Even on his last night,
Jesus even made room for the one who would betray him.
And at that meal,
He took a loaf of bread,
and after thanking God,
he broke it,
and shared it with his friends, saying,**

All: **"Take and eat,
this is my body broken for you."**

House 1: **Later, he took the cup,
gave God thanks again,
and shared it, saying:**

All: **"Take and drink, all of you:
This is the cup of the new covenant,
my poured-out life.
Whenever you break bread,
remember me."**

Blessing our Meal

House 2: **Let us pray...
Bless each soul present this feast,
Even those beyond time and space,
Beyond our human eyes,
Beyond our screens,**

**And may we extend special seats of welcome tonight
to friends and family we miss,
to first responders and medical professionals working,
to the unemployed and underemployed,
to the teachers bravely carrying on,
to the anxious and the lonely,
to those currently fighting this illness,
and to the loved ones of the 1.2 million souls lost to Covid-19.**

All: **Come God, love within us.
Come Holy Spirit, host before us!
Come Jesus, guest beside us!
Amen!**

Serving One Another

Pastor Carl

You are invited to serve one another the bread on your table saying simply:

All: **“The bread of heaven.”**

After all have been served bread, all are then invited to raise a cup and drink together saying simply:

All: **“The cup of salvation.”**

After sharing the bread and cup, dig in and enjoy your meal!

Song of Invitation

[“The Thanksgiving Song”](#)

Emily

At this time, you are invited to continue your feast around your table using the bulletin found at ucaustin.org/thanksgiving. There are coloring pages there also for children. After the following thanksgiving song, you can choose to feast either:

1. **In a Small Group:** We encourage you to stay on zoom and you will be assigned breakout rooms of about 3-4 households so you can virtually share your feast in community using the words found in this bulletin.
2. **In Your Own Family:** Alternatively, you can leave the zoom meeting and use this bulletin to finish your feast with your own family.

*At 7PM, we will regather for a sending song and blessing.

— BREAKOUT THANKSGIVING FEASTS —

Dinner Conversation Starter

Rev. Nikki

- *Who is a person you are thankful for?*
- *What is a place you are thankful for?*
- *What is a possession that you are thankful for?*
- *What is something you weren't thankful for before the pandemic, but you are thankful for now?*
- *What is something that God has done this year in your life that you are thankful for?*
- *What is an experience or memory you are thankful for in this past year?*
- *What is a quality of your personality that you have that you're thankful for?*
- *What is something about your body or health that you're thankful for?*
- *What is a food that you are thankful for?*
- *What is a past time that you are thankful for?*
- *What is something that has to do with church that you are thankful for?*
- *What is something that happened in our country that you are thankful for?*
- *What is something that happened in our city that you are thankful for?*
- *What is something that happened in our world that you are thankful for?*

— WE GO FORTH TO SERVE —

1. Before ending your dinner conversation, you might ask the other households, “how can I/we pray for you?”
2. If/when you sign off, you may say to one another, “Peace be with you,”
3. At 7:00: those who are still in breakout rooms will be asked to rejoin the main room to sing with Emily, “Go in Peace.”

7 PM: Sending Song

[“Go in Peace”](#)

Emily

Benediction

Rev. Nikki

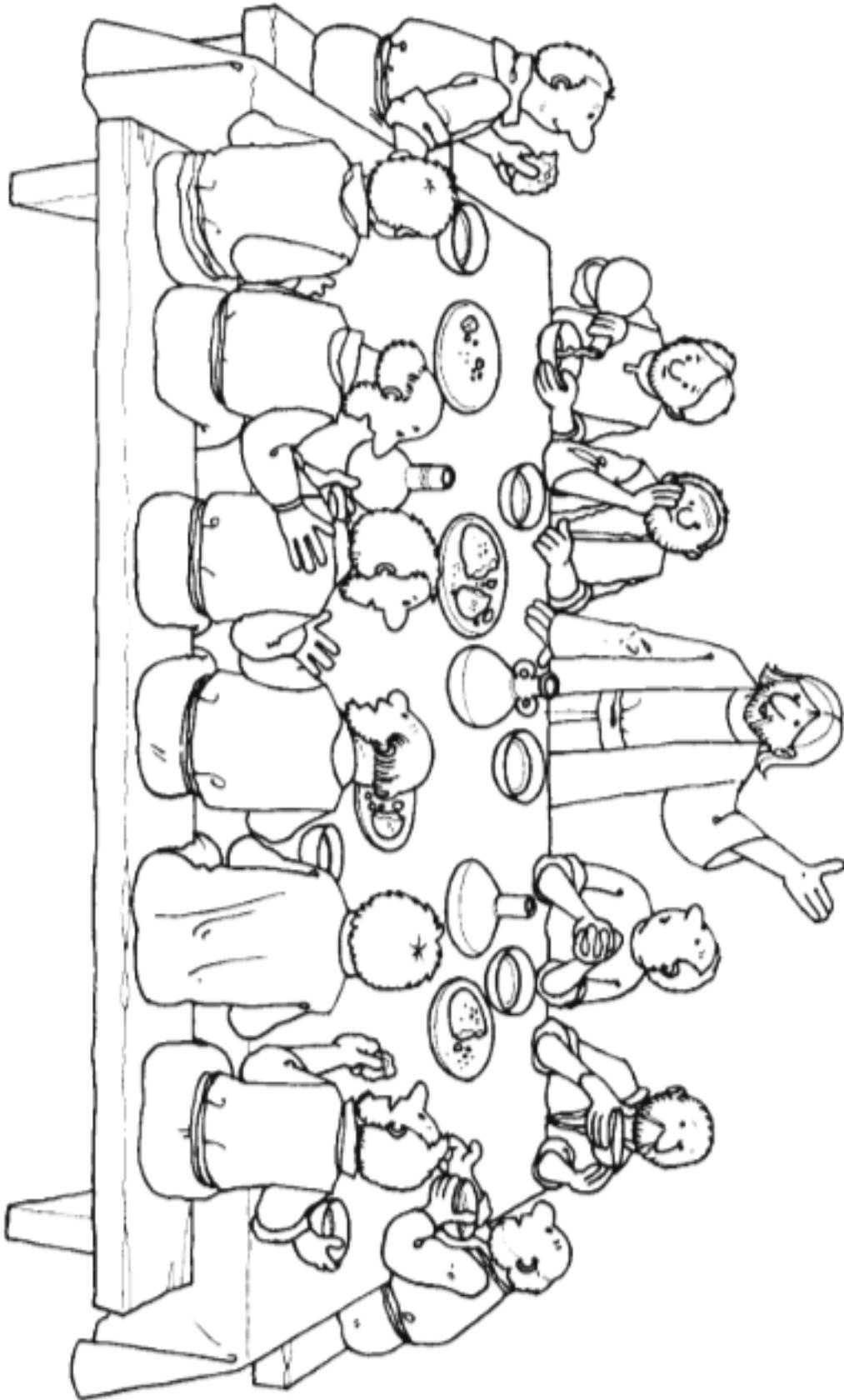
Sending

Rev. Nikki

One: Our worship has ended.

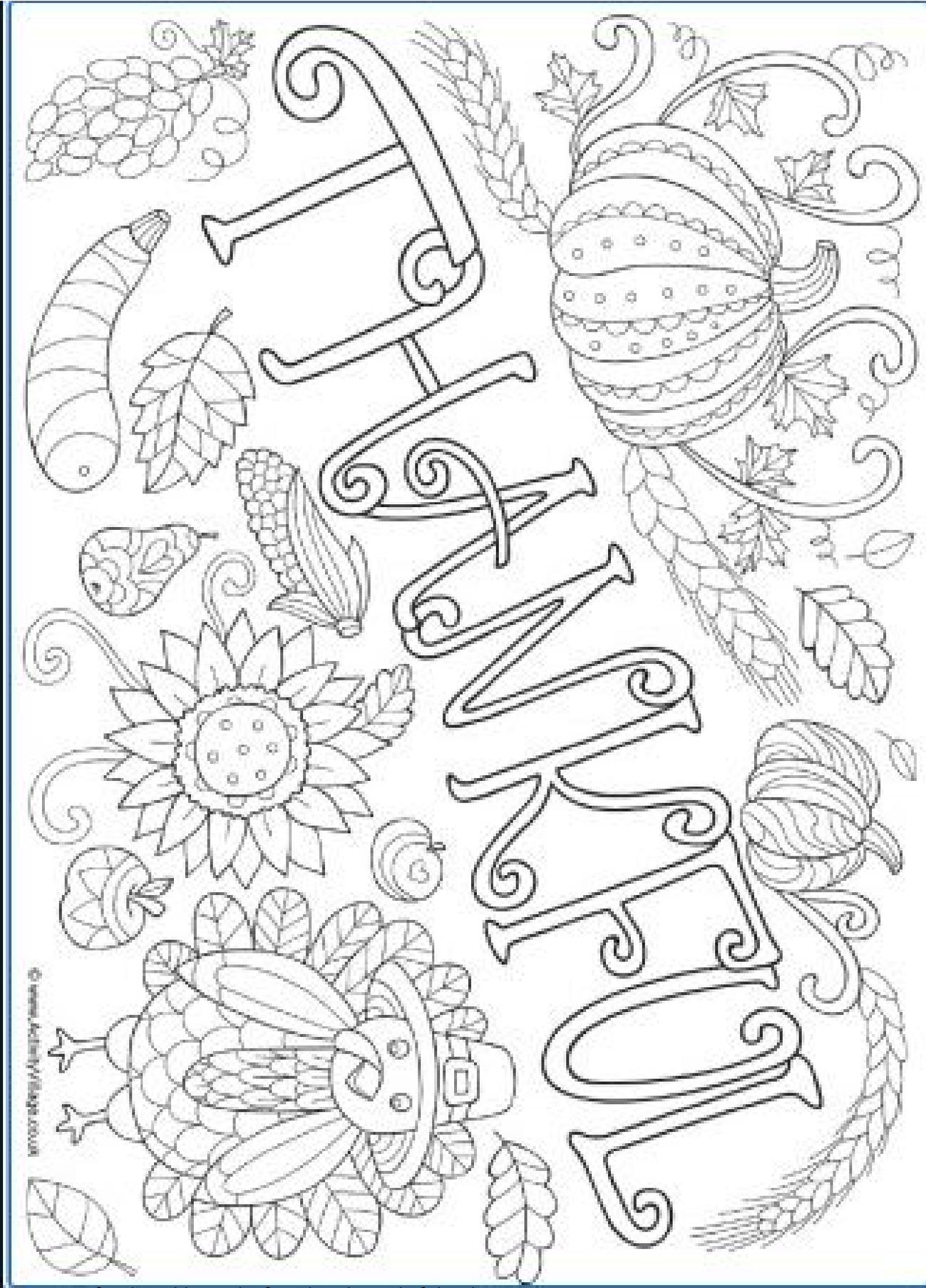
All: Let our service begin.

Liturgy written by Rev. Anna Kreisle Humble.

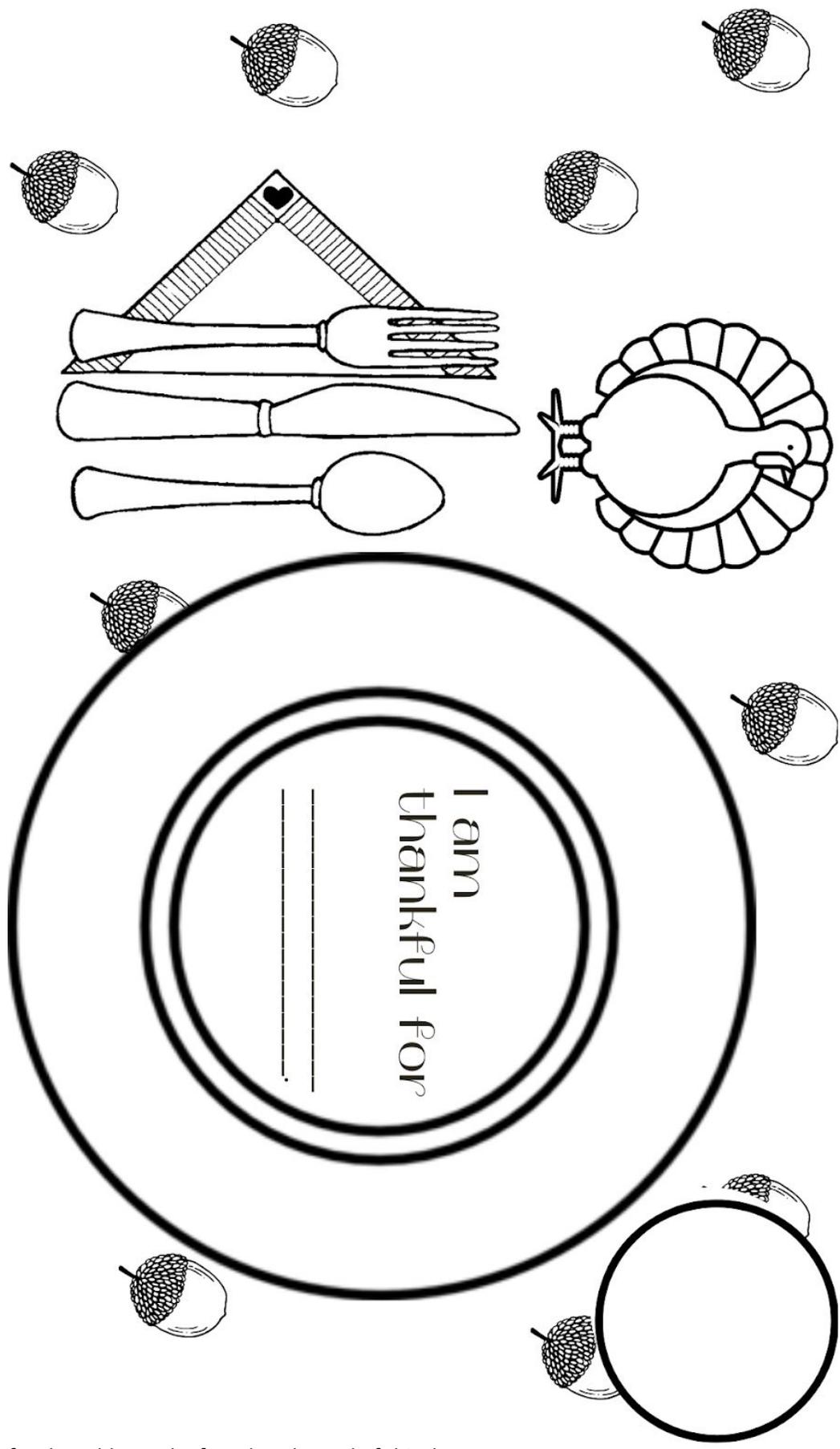


**Coloring pages for the table can be found at the end of this document.*





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