



Harvest Eve Around the Table

A structure for family sharing time

By Bob Ayres

Families need time together to share the stories of the past and their hopes for the future.

Around the Table is designed to encourage family time in preparation for Thanksgiving.

There are five times to gather around a certain theme: Remembering, Peace, Hope, Charity, and Love. The length of time spent sharing will depend on the ages of the children but should never be longer than is enjoyable. When you begin, light a candle and put it in the center of the table as a reminder that **Around the Table** has begun. Tailor the experience to fit the values and priorities of your family. Always remember (and tell your children)...

- Everyone is respected
- Everyone gets a turn
- Everyone's input is valued

Discussion Ideas

Harvest Eve on October 31—Remembrance

Let the children tell about their Harvest Eve characters. If you received any Character Cards from other Harvest Eve children, tell about these characters. Share your earliest memories. Who were the people who influenced your life? What was your favorite part of the past? How has life changed?

First Thursday in November—Peace

Talk about times of war and peace between nations; memories of the adults and older children. What about peace between people? Maybe read a children's book about getting along with others. If the children are old enough, discuss what it means to experience a personal peace in the world.

Second Thursday in November—Hope

What do you hope for most? Is there a way to work hard to make our hopes come true? Tell some stories about people who kept hope alive even when times were tough. End with a blessing of hope for each member in the family. Encourage them to never lose hope and always encourage each other.

Third Thursday in November—Charity

Charity is the respectful care and concern given to others in times of need. Think of some times when others were charitable to you. How did that feel? How does it feel when you share charity with others? Discuss making a family plan to do some charitable work together.

Thanksgiving Day—Love

Thanksgiving is a time to show appreciation for all we enjoy. Share about the things for which you are grateful. Since you are likely with other family members, share with them your experience of Harvest Eve and including the high points of the earlier times of sharing *Around the Table*.