

*A Very Special Thanksgiving*

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*Holidays offer countless ideas for good stories. You can make a holiday even more magical for kids by creating with them a special holiday story. – John McCormick*

It was the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. For ten-year-old Josh Barnett, that meant only one thing—four whole days off from school! Needless to say, Josh arrived home that afternoon in a very good mood.

“Why are you so happy today?” asked Josh’s mom, as she laid out a plate of snacks on the kitchen counter.

“No school ‘til Monday. That’s why I love Thanksgiving,” he said as he nibbled on a carrot stick.

“Thanksgiving is about a lot more than just being off from school,” his mother said.

“What do you mean?” asked Josh between mouthfuls.

“Thanksgiving is one of our most special holidays. It’s a day we as a family give thanks for all we have.”

“But I still don’t see why it’s so special.” Josh waved his half-eaten carrot stick for emphasis.

“Instead of me telling you, why don’t you figure it out for yourself tomorrow? Okay?”

“Sure, mom,” said Josh. “Now may I go watch TV?”

“Run along, dear,” said his mom with a chuckle.

The next morning—Thanksgiving morning—Josh woke up surprisingly early for a day with no school. The weather was magnificent, with clear blue skies and plenty of sunshine.

“Good morning, Mom,” said Josh as he shuffled into the kitchen. “What’s for breakfast? I’m starving.”

“Good morning, Josh. I’m glad to hear you’re hungry, because I’ve made a big breakfast for you and the entire family. I thought you, your dad, your brother and I would all have breakfast together.”

“But we never have breakfast together,” said Josh. “We’re always too rushed.”

“Well, today is going to be an exception,” said his Mom, pleased that she had at last gathered the entire family together.

Josh and his mom, dad, and brother all sat down for a leisurely breakfast. They couldn’t remember the last time they’d spent so much time just talking with one another. They were enjoying themselves so much they didn’t even realize how late it was getting.

“What time is it?” asked Josh’s dad with a start. “We’ve got a game at ten.”

“It’s 9:30” said Josh. “What game are you talking about?”

“A lot of the families in the neighborhood are getting together for a football game at the middle school. It’s the first annual ‘Parents vs. Kids Bowl.’ I’ve invited your uncles to join us.”

“Fantastic,” said Josh. “I love football, and it’s been a long time since I’ve seen Uncle Pete and Uncle Dan.” Pete and Dan were the younger brothers of Josh’s dad. They led such busy lives they often didn’t get to see Josh and his brother. But when they did, they treated their nephews like kings.

The football game was a big success. The kids eked out a six-point overtime win, thanks to a little help from Josh's mom, who was the head referee. Best of all, Josh had a great time playing with his uncles. Josh even convinced Pete and Dan to stay for Thanksgiving dinner.

When the family walked in the front door after the game, they had another surprise waiting for them. Josh's grandparents had arrived for Thanksgiving. Josh loved his grandparents, but since they lived eight hours away, he rarely got to see them. They always brought presents for Josh and his brother when they visited.

There were so many family members staying for dinner that night that they could barely fit around the table. Josh's grandmother said a prayer of thanks before dinner. Grandma always said the same prayer, which was her tradition. Even though Josh didn't understand all the words in the prayer, he always remembered the important ones—thanks, family, and blessings.

After dinner, Josh said, "Let's all watch TV!"

"Not tonight," said his mom. "As a special Thanksgiving treat, I bought a board game we're all going to play together. We can eat our dessert—pumpkin pie that I made today—while we play."

While Josh loved pumpkin pie, he was disappointed. "Why can't we eat our pie in front of the TV?"

"Because if we do, we won't talk or have fun together," explained his mom. "Come on Josh. Just give this a try."

Josh reluctantly agreed. His mom's homemade pumpkin pie put him in a better mood right away. To be honest, he actually had a good time playing the new board game with his

family. He and his brother teamed up with his uncles to play against his parents and grandparents. Josh's team lost, but it didn't matter. The entire family had a lot of fun and plenty of laughs.

Josh was really tired when his mother tucked him into bed that night. His mom asked, "Did you figure out today what makes Thanksgiving so special?"

"I'm not sure if anything special happened today, but I did have a lot of fun. It was great beginning the day with our family breakfast. I loved seeing Uncle Pete and Uncle Dan, and I can't wait to play football again with them and all the families in the neighborhood. I'm always happy when Grandma and Grandpa visit, and dinner, dessert, and the board game tonight were awesome."

"That sounds like a pretty special day to me," said Josh's mom. "It's not often you get to spend so much fun time with your family."

"I guess you're right," admitted Josh. "Thanksgiving is pretty special because there's nothing better and more important than being with your family."

Josh's mom smiled. "I think you just discovered why Thanksgiving is so special."

"Thanks Mom," said Josh.

"Good night son," whispered his mom, bending over to give Josh a goodnight kiss on the forehead. "Happy Thanksgiving."