

# ACTIVITIES

Have the **Talk**  
of a **Lifetime**®

## Gratitude Tree

Start a new tradition for your family by creating a Gratitude Tree, a simple decoration that you can look forward to using each year to remember what you and your family are thankful for. Over the years, your tree will fill up and help provide a lifetime of memories to share.



### How to make one

Collect fallen twigs or branches, dry them and cut them to the desired length. Stick the branches in a vase or a floral styrofoam base inside a sturdy decorative container or have the children decorate a simple coffee can.

Use fall-colored paper to make tags for the memories. Punch a hole at the top of each tag and thread a loop of string through each. Have each guest write something they are grateful for on the tags.

Take turns reading what you wrote as you tie them onto the branches of the Gratitude Tree.

Keep the handwritten tags in a safe place until you share them again the following year.

Thank you for participating in Have the Talk of a Lifetime with your family and loved ones! We hope you and your loved ones enjoyed using this guide as you begin, or continue, to Have the Talk.

We'd love to hear your stories!  
Go to [talkofalifetime.org/your-story](http://talkofalifetime.org/your-story) to share yours today.



## HOLIDAY **ACTIVITY** GUIDE

Any time is a great time to Have the Talk of a Lifetime. The holidays offer a special opportunity for families to talk and to learn more about each other while everyone is gathered together. The special activities in this guide can help families start The Talk and create new memories that will be invaluable when the time comes to honor a loved one.

For more information, tips, workbooks and other materials about preparing for meaningful memorialization, go to [talkofalifetime.org](http://talkofalifetime.org).

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## Holiday Time Capsule

Making a holiday time capsule is a great way to strengthen family bonds and preserve treasured memories, while creating new opportunities for future holidays, when it's time to re-open the capsule, and share again.

### What should you put in a time capsule?

The contents are up to you and your family! You could include:

- Favorite family recipes used for preparing your feast
- A list of family members participating
- Things you're grateful for
- Notes about significant events that happened in the past year, such as the birth of a child, graduations, weddings, etc.
- A copy of the newspaper from that day
- A list of each person's favorite holiday memories
- Pictures, drawings or notes to make the experience more personal and memorable
- Use your imagination! You can include as much as you like!



### How to pack your capsule

Place items in a sealed container or plastic bag to protect items from moisture and mold. You can then place the bag/container in a box that you can decorate and store it in a safe place with your other fall holiday decorations. Be sure to mark the date on the container using the label included above, or make your own!

### When to open your time capsule

We recommend that you wait at least five years to open your time capsule. You'll be amazed at how much can change in that time! You could make this an annual event and create a new holiday time capsule each year. Opening the time capsule and going through the memories together is sure to create even more valuable opportunities to reminisce and share stories.

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## Holiday Memories Tablecloth

The holidays are a wonderful time to show our gratitude for one another, share memories and think about the many blessings in our lives. As you gather around the table for your holiday feast, take the opportunity to capture some memories with a Holiday Memories Tablecloth. Ask each person to jot down a favorite memory or something they're thankful for, then have them sign and include the year. After dinner, talk about what each person wrote. You can even make it an annual event using the same tablecloth and before long, it will be filled with personal memories from the people you love most. You'll find it to be a cherished memory as children grow into young adults, when people can't attend future dinners or when they are no longer living.

### How to make it

Buy an inexpensive white canvas drop cloth in the size needed to fully cover your table or make it in the size of a table runner. Place fabric markers in the center of the table and invite your guests to participate. If reusing the tablecloth year after year, use a different color to represent each new year.



### What someone might write:

- “I'm thankful for my family, who always supports me.”
- “Love you grandpa!”
- “This was a year to remember. I'm thankful for my friends.”

**Tip:** Wash the tablecloth on gentle cycle to ensure the memories don't fade.

**Tip:** Have someone embroider the memories each year before the next gathering occurs.