

T H A N
K S G I
V I N G

Cranberries are sort of like grapes. Grapes become wine. Wine is for Jewish holidays. And Thanksgiving. Therefore, Thanksgiving is a Jewish holiday, and what's a Jewish holiday without JewBelong?

Whether you're all about eating the marshmallows that you surreptitiously scrape off the sweet potatoes, or you go right for the turkey, the meal is naturally the main event at Thanksgiving. Trust us, we love the stuffing and pumpkin pie as much as you do. We're also obsessed with highlighting the thanks part of Thanksgiving, which is why we created this booklet. There are two sections: Readings and Songs. Choose some of each, or use a mix. And don't miss the activity on page five. Most important is to do whatever feels right at your celebration to add a little emphasis into what sustains our hearts and souls as well as our bellies.

Love,

team jewbelong

READINGS

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

RABBI NAOMI LEVY

For the laughter of the children,
For my own life breath,
For the abundance of food on this table,
For the ones who prepared this sumptuous feast,
For the roof over our heads,
The clothes on our backs,
For our health,
And our wealth of blessings,
For this opportunity to celebrate with family and friends,
For the freedom to pray these words
Without fear,
In any language,
In any faith,
In this great country,
Whose landscape is as vast and beautiful as her inhabitants.
Thank You, God, for giving us all these. Amen.

VISIONS OF PEACE

YEHUDA AMICHAH

Don't stop after beating the swords into ploughshares, don't stop!
Go on beating and make musical instruments out of them.
Whoever wants to make war again will have to turn them into ploughshares first.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

MEREDITH GREY

Maybe gratitude has nothing to do with joy. Maybe being grateful means recognizing what you have for what it is. Appreciating small victories. Admiring the struggle it takes simply to be human. Maybe we're thankful for the familiar things we know. And maybe we're thankful for the things we'll never know. At the end of the day, the fact that we have the courage to still be standing is reason enough to celebrate.

PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY

ROBERT F. KENNEDY

Let no one be discouraged by the belief that there is nothing one person can do against the enormous array of the world's ills, misery, ignorance and violence.

Few will have the greatness to bend history, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events.

And in the total of all those acts will be written the history of a generation.
It is from numberless, diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped.

Each time a person stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends a tiny ripple of hope.

Crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples can build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

ANOTHER PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY (BECAUSE WE NEED IT)

RABBI AYELET COHEN

Our God and God of our ancestors, bless this country and all who dwell within it. Help us to experience the blessings of our lives and circumstances, to be vigilant, compassionate, and brave. Strengthen us when we are afraid, help us to channel our anger, so that it motivates us to action. Help us to feel our fear, so that we do not become numb. Help us to be generous with others, so that we raise each other up. Help us to be humble in our fear, knowing that as vulnerable as we feel, there are those at greater risk, and that it is our holy work to stand with them.

Help us to taste the sweetness of liberty, to not take for granted the freedoms won in generations past or in recent days, to heal and nourish our democracy, that it may be like a tree planted by the water whose roots reach down to the stream; it need not fear drought when it comes. Source of all life, guide our leaders with righteousness, strengthen their hearts, but keep them from hardening. That they may use their influence and authority to speak truth and act for justice. May all who dwell in this country share in its bounty, enjoy its freedoms, and be protected by its laws. May this nation use its power and wealth to be a voice for justice, peace, and equality for all who dwell on earth.

May we be strong and have courage to be bold in our action and deep in our compassion, to discern when we must listen and when we must act, to uproot bigotry, intolerance, and violence in all its forms, to celebrate the many faces of God reflected in the wondrous diversity of humanity, to welcome the stranger and the immigrant and to honor the gift of those who seek refuge and possibility here, as they have since before this nation was born. Let justice well up like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF ETERNITY

A TALMUD STORY

One day a sage was walking along a road, and he saw a man planting a carob tree. The sage asked the man, "How long does it take for this tree to bear fruit?" The man replied, "Seventy years." The sage responded, "Are you certain that you will live another seventy years?" The man replied: "I found grown carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted those for me, I too plant these for my children."

THE FINAL ANALYSIS

MOTHER TERESA

- People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.
- If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.
- If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies. Succeed anyway.
- If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you. Be honest and frank anyway.
- What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight. Build anyway.
- If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous. Be happy anyway.
- The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow. Do good anyway.
- Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give the world the best you've got anyway.
- You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

A JEWBELONG PROMISE TO WORK TOGETHER TO END ANTISEMITISM

Antisemitism is on the rise and we must all do our parts to stop it. Jews and allies need to be courageous, to call it out and to never make excuses for it. Antisemitism isn't new, but there are new and insidious strains of it. There's the familiar white supremacy movement that pretty much hates everyone who doesn't look like them, the run-of-the-mill antisemites, the subtle I-don't-really-mean-it-when-I-talk-crap-about Jews kind, and a relatively new form of hate directed at Israel which crosses the line to antisemitism far too often. Antisemitism is hate. Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, atheists... literally everyone is worse off for it. Are we going to end it completely? Probably not. But that doesn't give us permission to throw our hands up and accept it, make excuses, or discount it. It's exactly the opposite. We must talk about it, write about it, learn about it, and call it out. No matter how difficult or uncomfortable, we can't ignore, chuckle along, or accept it. We've already learned the bitter lesson that true hate is never little, it is never unimportant, and it should never, ever be ignored.

BLESSING FOR ANYONE WHO ISN'T JEWISH (‘CAUSE WE KNOW THIS IS A LOT)

ADAPTED FROM RABBI JANET MARDER

May everyone who shares in a Jewish life feel welcome and integrated. We lovingly acknowledge the diversity of our community and are deeply grateful for the love and support you provide by opening your heart to Judaism, no matter how big or small a part it is in your day. Your presence at this Jewish experience is valued. It is not taken for granted because not everyone in this broken world will sit at a Shabbat dinner or attend a Passover Seder. We are a very small people and history has made us smaller. As we once again see a rise in hatred and hear fear in the voices of our community, we are grateful for your presence. We pray with all our hearts that all you give to the Jewish people will come back to you and fill your life with joy. Amen.

ADD WHEN READING TO A FAMILY RAISING KIDS:

We offer special thanks to those who are raising their sons and daughters with Jewish identity. Our children mean hope, life and future. With all our hearts, we want to thank you for your love and willingness in giving the ultimate gift to the Jewish people. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

It's time to focus on the *thanks* part of Thanksgiving! Take turns sharing two (or more) things that you're thankful for this year. Sometimes it's easier to choose something big, e.g. your health, your new job, girlfriend or baby, and then something smaller too...like say, your sourdough starter or that season three of *The Crown* is finally on Netflix. Take your time when it's your turn and don't skimp on the details. Why are these meaningful to you? Don't be afraid to open your heart a little. If you do, others will too, and the connection and warmth at your table will spread faster than your cousin's watery mashed potatoes. You can go around the table, or spice the order up a little (we like to have the person who speaks choose the next person) just to keep everyone on their toes!

WHAT WE HAVE TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

RICK MORANIS

I HAVE two kids. Both are away at college.

I have five television sets (I like to think of them as a set of five televisions).

I have two DVR boxes, three DVD players, two VHS machines and four stereos.

I have nineteen remote controls, mostly in one drawer.

I have three computers, four printers and two non-working faxes.

I have three phone lines, three cell phones and two answering machines.

I have no messages. I have forty-six cookbooks.

I have sixty-eight takeout menus from four restaurants.

I have one hundred and sixteen soy sauce packets.

I have three hundred and eighty-two dishes, bowls, cups, saucers, mugs and glasses.

I eat over the sink.

I try to keep a positive view.

I have two refrigerators.

It's very hard to count ice cubes.

I have forty-one 37-cent stamps.

I have no 2-cent stamps.

I read three dailies, four weeklies, five monthlies and no annual reports.

I have five hundred and six CD, cassette, vinyl and eight-track recordings.

I listen to the same radio station all day.

I have one hundred and eighty-four thousand frequent flier miles on six airlines, three of which no longer exist.

I have "101 Dalmatians" on tape.

I have fourteen digital clocks flashing relatively similar times.

I have nine armchairs from which I can be critical.

I have a laundry list of this that need cleaning.

I have lost more than one thousand golf balls.

I am missing thirty-seven umbrellas.

I have over four hundred yards of dental floss.

I have two kids coming home for Thanksgiving.

SONGS



WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

ROBERT THIELE, GEORGE DAVID WEISS

I see trees of green, red roses too
I see them bloom, for me and you
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world
I see skies of blue, and clouds of white
The bright blessed day, dark sacred night
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world
The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky
Are also on the faces, of people going by
I see friends shaking hands, sayin', "How do you do?"
They're really sayin', "I love you."
I hear babies cryin', I watch them grow
They'll learn much more, than I'll ever know
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world
Yes, I think to myself
What a wonderful world



STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

TAKE A KNEE OR DON'T - IT'S UP TO YOU

O say can you see,
by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd
at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars
through the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we watch'd
were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare,
the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night
that our flag was still there,
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free
and the home of the brave?



Kol od ba'le'vav p'nima,
Nefesh yehudi ho'miyah.
U'lefa-atei mizrach kadimah,
Ayin le'Tziyyon tzofiyah.
Od lo avda tikva-teinu,
Ha'tikvah bat sh'not al-payim
Lih-yot am chofshi b'ar-tzeinu
Eretz Tziyyon v'Yerushalayim.



(WARNING - THE WORDS IN THE FIRST VERSE ARE THE ONES THAT MOST OF US KNOW, AND THEY FLOW REALLY WELL. THE REST OF THE SONG IS A LITTLE HARDER TO FOLLOW BUT IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT.)

This land is your land, This land is my land
From California to the New York island;
From the Redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me.

As I was walking that ribbon of highway,
I saw above me that endless skyway:
I saw below me that golden valley:
This land was made for you and me.

I've roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts;
And all around me a voice was sounding:
This land was made for you and me.

When the sun came shining, and I was strolling,
And the wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling,
As the fog was lifting a voice was chanting:
This land was made for you and me.

As I went walking I saw a sign there
And on the sign it said "No Trespassing."
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

In the shadow of the steeple I saw my people,
By the relief office I seen my people;
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking
Is this land made for you and me?

Nobody living can ever stop me,
As I go walking that freedom highway;
Nobody living can ever make me turn back
This land was made for you and me.

This land is your land, This land is my land
From California to the New York island;
From the Redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me.

JewBelong.com does more than Thanksgiving! (Well, we better, with a name like JewBelong.) Our free booklets add sweetness and meaning to the big four Jewish holidays, and lifecycle events, plus some things you might not even think of as Jewish, like pets, work and heartbreak.

jewbelong.com

For when you feel you don't