

Thanksgiving Table Talk

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Create photographic placemats for Thanksgiving dinner to inspire people to talk about fun times in the past and to dream of even better times for the future.

For
Teen Family

Season
Fall

Needed

Bible, Picasa or other photo arranging software, photos of family celebrations and trips, photo printer or access to photo-printing service. Optional: 11" x 17" pieces of card stock, glue sticks, scissors, roll of clear self-stick vinyl

Prepare in Advance

- Download a free copy of the software photo organizer, Picasa. If you have Windows, download [Picasa for Windows](#). If you have a Macintosh, download [Picasa for Mac](#). You can also use another type of photographic software.
- Mark your Bible to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
- If you are having a photo-printing service make the placemats, plan how to transfer the files.

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin:

God, thank you for the fun times we've spent together. Help us to find new ways to build even deeper relationships with each other. Amen.

2. Ask someone to read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 from your Bible (or see the text below). Discuss: What advice would you give families, based on these verses? When has our family seemed most loving?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

3. Look through photos of family celebrations and trips. Decide if you will create placemats and have them printed and laminated at a photo-printing service or if you will make your placemats by gluing photos onto card stock.
4. If you will use Picasa or other photo handling software, talk with a local printing service about making the placemats. Ask these questions:
 - We'd like to make 11" x 17" placemats using Picasa to create the photo collages. How much will each one cost?
 - What type of format do you need—PDF, JPEG, other?
 - What type of 11" x 17" paper do you have? Ideally you want a heavier weight paper, such as scrapbook paper. Photos printed on 20-pound paper (which is too light) will often bleed through the paper. A heavier paper will look more finished. Use a white paper so that a color doesn't take away from your photos.
 - How much space will get cut off around the edges? Sometimes you'll lose ¼- to ½-inch of space around the collage because of the way something prints.
 - How long does it take to get placemats printed and laminated once I bring them in?
5. Decide if you want all the placemats to be the same or if you want each one to be different. When placemats are all the same, you can create a sense of community and have people talk about what they're seeing. Having different placemats will create even more conversations, but people may end up picking them up and passing them around.
6. If you are using Picasa, type in your dimensions— 17" x 11". Try not to use more than twenty photos per placemat. If you use more, the photos will be too small to see easily. Use the automatic "Mosaic" feature, which will create a collage from all the photos you select.
7. Option: If you prefer to make your own placemats, print extra copies of your favorite photos. Arrange them on 11" x 17" pieces of card stock and glue in place. Have the finished placemats laminated at an office supply store or do it yourself with clear, self-stick vinyl.
8. On Thanksgiving Day, put a laminated placemat under each person's plate. After you finish eating, talk about the photos. Consider asking these questions:
 - Which picture brings back the best memory? Why?
 - What fun times could we have together in the future?

