

CUPS & CLASSICS

CULTIVATING FAMILY CULTURE THROUGH THE CLASSICS



NOVEMBER — GRATITUDE & GIVING

ART • MUSIC • POETRY • STORY • MANNERS • FEAST

KARYN TRIPP

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Created by Karyn Tripp, founder of Teach Beside Me.

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ABOUT CUPS & CLASSICS

Cups & Classics invites your family to rediscover that rhythm through the beauty of art, music, poetry, story, manners, and food. Each month we'll slow down, gather around something beautiful, and fill our minds and hearts together.

Each Cups & Classics month is built around four weeks of study, focusing on one artist, one musician, one poet, and one region of the world. Together, they create a unified cultural theme that helps your family experience beauty, gratitude, and connection in meaningful ways.

This month's theme, Gratitude & Giving, centers on family, work, and the beauty of an ordinary life lived with thankfulness. Through artists, composers, and poets, we'll reflect on blessings both big and small – and rediscover the joy of giving back.

HOW TO USE IT:

Each week includes:

- Artwork – Observe, describe, and wonder together.
- Music – Listen, move, and imagine.
- Poetry – Read aloud and reflect.
- Folk Story – Discover timeless wisdom from the featured region.
- Recipe – Cook or bake a simple dish inspired by the culture studied.
- Grace Note – Practice manners, gratitude, or an act of refinement.
- Family Reflection – End with conversation, connection, and gratitude.

Set aside one cozy hour each week – light a candle, pour some tea, and gather together. Keep it simple and screen-free. This is about connection, not perfection.

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER PLANNING SHEET



Theme: Gratitude & Giving

This month we are studying:

Artist: Norman Rockwell

Composer: Antonín Dvořák

Poet: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Region of Focus: North America

Shopping List for Recipes:

Week 1

Recipe: Cranberry-Orange Tea Loaf

Needed Supplies: flour, sugar (or maple syrup), oranges, cranberries, baking powder, baking soda, salt, oil or butter, loaf pan

Week 2

Recipe: Pumpkin Spice Snickerdoodles

Needed Supplies: flour, sugar, brown sugar, pumpkin purée, cinnamon, nutmeg, baking soda, vanilla, mixing bowls, cookie sheet

Week 3

Recipe: Skillet Cornbread

Needed Supplies: cornmeal, flour, sugar, butter, milk, baking powder, egg, salt, cast iron skillet (or square baking pan).

Week 4

Recipe: Apple Cider Muffins

Needed Supplies: flour, oats, apple cider, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, muffin tin, paper liners (optional)

SUPER TEAM

EXPLORE THE WORLD: NORTH AMERICA

This month, our Cups & Classics journey takes us to North America.

In North America, artists, poets, and musicians found inspiration in the simplicity and strength of everyday life. Rolling farmlands, quiet villages, candlelit windows—shaped the heart of early American art and music. They remind us that beauty often begins in humble surroundings, born of gratitude and belonging.

Here, we meet:

- Norman Rockwell, painting from his studio in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, penning poetry in his home along the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Antonín Dvořák, a Czech composer who lived for a time among immigrants in Spillville, Iowa.

Discuss:

- Find Massachusetts and Iowa on a map.
- Talk about how geography—climate, landscape, and culture—can influence creativity.
- Take a few moments to notice what makes your home special. What sounds, colors, or scents tell you that you belong here? How can we show gratitude for the beauty of our own place in the world?



NOVEMBER–WEEK ONE– EVERY DAY BLESSINGS

Artist Study: Norman Rockwell – Saying Grace (1951)



Rockwell's painting captures a grandmother and young boy pausing to pray in a bustling diner, surrounded by onlookers. The image feels ordinary yet sacred – a reminder that gratitude doesn't need a grand setting. It's in the courage to be thankful in public, in the quiet dignity of shared meals, and in the simple grace of daily life.

Discussion & Observation Prompts

- What do you notice first? Where do your eyes rest in the scene?
- What emotions do the onlookers seem to have? Why do you think that is?
- Where might we pause to show gratitude even when others around us don't?
- How does light and shadow tell part of the story here?

Art Connection – Geography & Culture

Rockwell's studio was in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, a small New England town that inspired many of his family- and community-centered works. Discuss how this image reflects mid-20th-century American values of faith, family, and gratitude.

NOVEMBER–WEEK ONE– EVERY DAY BLESSINGS

Composer Study: Antonín Dvořák “Largo” from Symphony No. 9 (From the New World)



Scan to find the song on YouTube.

When Dvořák came to America in 1892, he was fascinated by the country’s folk melodies and spirituals. The Largo movement – gentle, longing, and full of hope – blends the rhythms of his Czech homeland with the voices he heard in early America. It is both homesick and grateful, expressing the feeling of belonging to more than one world.

Listening Prompts

- Close your eyes. What colors or landscapes do you picture?
- Does the music sound joyful, sad, or both? Why?
- Imagine hearing this on a quiet evening after harvest – what would you be thankful for?

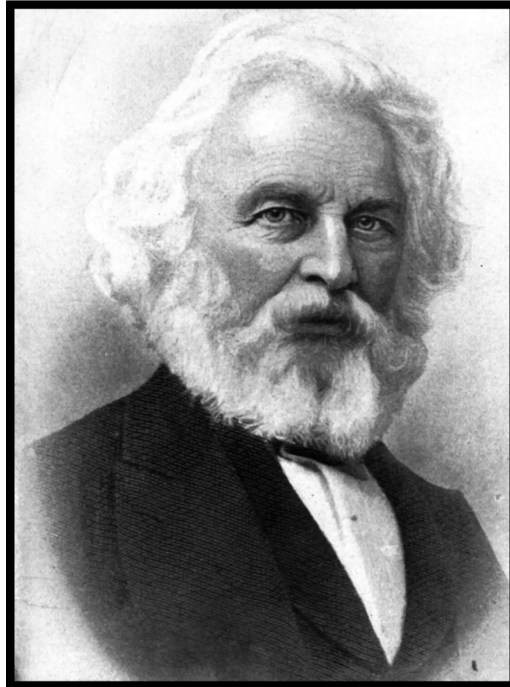
Geography Note

Dvořák lived in Spillville, Iowa – a community of Czech immigrants – where he composed much of this symphony. It’s a lovely reminder of how cultural exchange enriches art.

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK ONE– EVERY DAY BLESSINGS

Poetry Study: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – Excerpt from A Psalm of Life



Excerpt from A Psalm of Life

Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Longfellow's words urge us to live purposefully and gratefully – to make our days count. Even in small acts, our choices leave traces that guide others.

Poetry Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to make life “sublime”?
- How can gratitude guide the footprints we leave behind?
- Who has left “footprints” for you to follow?

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK ONE– EVERY DAY BLESSINGS

Folktale: The Thankful Poor

In a small colonial town, two men attended the same church every Sunday – one was wealthy, dressed in fine wool, and the other a humble farmer in a patched coat. Each week, after service, the rich man watched the farmer bow his head over his simple meal of bread and broth. His lips always moved in quiet gratitude.

One cold autumn day, the wealthy man, curious, approached him. “Neighbor,” he asked, “how can you be so thankful when you have so little?”

The farmer smiled and replied, “Because all I have is a gift – the sun that warms me, the bread that fills me, the friends who bless me. Gratitude doesn’t depend on plenty, but on seeing the good in what you have.”

As winter deepened, the farmer’s small harvest ran low. When the wealthy man heard of his need, he sent a bundle of food and firewood to the farmer’s door. But the farmer, true to his nature, sent half to another family with even less.

When spring arrived, the two men shared a meal together – fine food and laughter mingled with simple thanks. From that day on, they became fast friends, both learning that gratitude grows when it’s shared.

Moral: Gratitude turns what we have into enough – and often, into more than enough.

Reflection Questions:

- How did the farmer’s gratitude change both men?
- What does this story teach about the power of example?
- What might be a modern-day way to share your “food” with others?



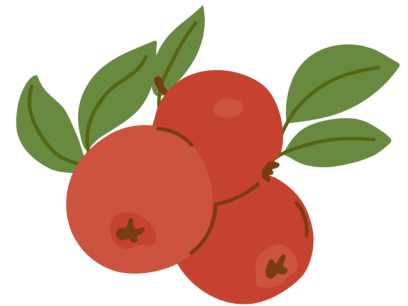
NOVEMBER–WEEK ONE– EVERY DAY BLESSINGS

Recipe: Cranberry-Orange Tea Loaf

Cranberries, native to North America, were first harvested by Indigenous peoples and later shared with early colonists. By the 1800s, cranberry loaves graced autumn tables throughout New England – a symbol of hospitality and harvest. Oranges, once a rare imported treat, added brightness to cold months and represented prosperity and cheer.

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar (or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup maple syrup)
- 1 Tbsp orange zest (from 1 large orange)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 Tbsp olive oil or melted butter
- 1 cup chopped fresh cranberries



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease a loaf pan.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together dry ingredients and zest.
3. Stir in orange juice and oil just until combined. Fold in cranberries.
4. Pour into pan and bake 45–50 minutes, until golden.
5. Cool slightly and serve warm with butter or a drizzle of honey.

Cultural Note: When you serve this bread, pause to remember that gratitude itself is a bridge between worlds – linking the gifts of the land, the hands that harvested, and the hearts that share the meal.

To use dried cranberries:

- Use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dried cranberries (instead of 1 cup fresh).
- Soak them in warm orange juice or water for 10–15 minutes to soften.
- Drain before folding into the batter.

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK ONE– EVERY DAY BLESSINGS

Grace Note: Saying Thank You with Heart

Gratitude is a practice of presence. This week, notice the difference between an automatic “thanks” and a meaningful one.

Practice Together

- Look someone in the eye when you thank them.
- Mention a specific reason: “Thank you for helping me wash the dishes.”
- Write and deliver one handwritten note of appreciation.

Manners Moment: Express genuine gratitude in word and action.



Family Reflection: Everyday Blessings

Gathered around the table with your cranberry loaf and soft music playing, ask each family member to share three things they’re thankful for. Talk about how gratitude can turn ordinary days into something sacred.

Invite children to notice the “unseen blessings” – warm light, shared laughter, the smell of bread baking. Remind them that as we practice thankfulness together, we are cultivating a home culture that values kindness, awareness, and joy in the little things.

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK TWO– GRATITUDE & GIVING

Artist Study: Norman Rockwell – Freedom From Want (1943)



Norman Rockwell painted *Freedom From Want* in the middle of World War II as part of his “Four Freedoms” series. The scene shows a large family gathered around the table for Thanksgiving dinner – grandparents, children, friends – each smiling in gratitude as a golden turkey is set before them.

At first glance, it’s a picture of abundance. But Rockwell’s real message wasn’t about food or luxury – it was about the freedom to live with peace, security, and thankfulness. The meal represents the work behind it: the farmers who grew the food, the cooks who prepared it, and the families who came together to share it.

Discussion Prompts:

- What kinds of work made this moment possible? (growing, cooking, preparing, serving)
- How do you think each person in the painting contributed to the meal or celebration?
- Does “freedom from want” mean having everything you desire – or being thankful for what you have?

Art Connection

This painting was published in *The Saturday Evening Post* and became an enduring symbol of the American spirit: humble gratitude, shared work, and the comfort of home.

NOVEMBER–WEEK TWO– GRATITUDE & GIVING

Composer Study: Antonín Dvořák Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, “From the New World,” Movement II (Largo)



Scan to find the song on YouTube.

Dvořák wrote this famous symphony while living in America, inspired by the beauty of both nature and human perseverance. The Largo movement, slow and deeply emotional, is said to reflect the feeling of homesickness – but also hope.

Listening Prompts:

- As you listen, invite children to close their eyes and imagine a farmer resting after the harvest, or a family gathered at the table.
- Discuss how music can capture both hard work and peace.

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK TWO– GRATITUDE & GIVING

Poetry Study: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – The Village Blacksmith

This beloved poem honors the dignity of honest work and the strength of character it builds. Read it aloud, listening for the rhythm – it sounds almost like the steady hammering of the blacksmith's tools.

Talk about how Longfellow admired people who worked hard, not for fame or riches, but for love of their families and pride in doing something well.

The Village Blacksmith

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands,
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands,
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.



His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan,
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow,
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door,
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys,
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies,
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes,
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close,
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought,
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought!

NOVEMBER–WEEK TWO– GRATITUDE & GIVING

Folktale: The Honest Blacksmith

In a quiet New England village stood a small smithy – its door always open, its forge glowing from dawn until dusk. The blacksmith, a broad-shouldered man named Thomas, was known not for his wealth but for his word.

One autumn day, a wealthy merchant rode into town, his horse limping. “Fix my shoe quickly,” the man demanded, “and I’ll pay double if you finish before sundown.”

Thomas nodded but worked at his usual steady pace – heating, hammering, shaping, and cooling the iron carefully. The merchant grew impatient. “Hurry, man! I have no time to waste!”

Without pausing, Thomas replied, “If I rush the work, it won’t hold. And a job poorly done, no matter the pay, isn’t honest work.”

The merchant scoffed, but when he rode away, his horse’s gait was strong and true. A week later, he returned with a broken cart wheel – and a humbler tone. “Do it your way,” he said quietly.

Word spread of the blacksmith who valued honesty over hurry, and before long, Thomas’s shop became a place where neighbors gathered – not just for repairs, but for advice and friendship.

Years later, when Thomas’s forge finally went cold, the townspeople built a small plaque that read: “He shaped iron with strength, and character with fire.”

Moral: Honest work done with patience and care blesses everyone it touches.



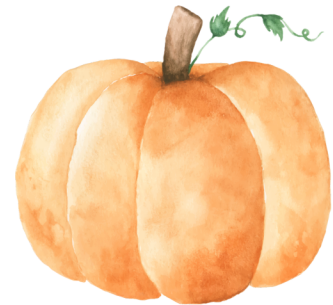
NOVEMBER–WEEK TWO– GRATITUDE & GIVING

Recipe: Pumpkin Spice Snickerdoodles

These soft, spiced cookies are a cozy reward after a day of hard work – just like the blacksmith’s family might have shared by the fire.

Ingredients

- ½ cup butter (softened)
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ⅓ cup pumpkin purée
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1½ cups flour
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ cup sugar + 1 tsp cinnamon (for rolling)



Directions

1. Cream butter and sugars together until smooth.
2. Add pumpkin and vanilla, mixing well.
3. In another bowl, whisk flour, baking soda, salt, and spices.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients, chill dough for 30 minutes.
5. Roll into balls, coat in cinnamon-sugar mix, and bake at 350°F for 10–12 minutes.

Enjoy warm with spiced cider or tea. Share a plate of these cookies with a friend!

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK TWO– GRATITUDE & GIVING

Grace Note: Quiet Acts of Kindness

True gratitude inspires quiet action.

This week, notice the needs around you – a sibling’s undone chore, a tired parent, a neighbor’s empty porch. Do something kind before anyone asks. These small, unseen gestures are what fill homes and hearts with light.

Manners Moment: Notice a need and meet it cheerfully. Let your gratitude move your hands as well as your heart.



Family Reflection: Gratitude Through Effort

Work can feel tiring, but it is one of life’s greatest gifts – a way to serve, create, and give back. Whether baking bread, tending a garden, or studying diligently, each effort can be offered with a thankful heart.

Take a few minutes together at the end of the week to share:

- What kind of work made you feel proud this week?
- How did your work bless someone else?

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK THREE– FAMILY AND HOME

Artist Study: Norman Rockwell – Freedom From Fear (1943)



While the world was at war, Norman Rockwell painted scenes that reminded families of what they were fighting to protect – love, safety, and home. In *Freedom from Fear*, two parents stand beside their children's bed. The mother gently tucks in her little ones, while the father holds a folded newspaper, filled with troubling headlines.

The quiet tenderness of this scene captures what family means – not perfection, but protection, comfort, and care in uncertain times.

Discussion Prompts:

- What emotions do you notice in the parents' faces?
- How do the light and shadows make the scene feel?
- What does it mean to be "free from fear" at home?
- How do your parents or caregivers help you feel safe and loved?

Art Connection – Geography & Culture:

This painting, like so many of Rockwell's, was created in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and published in *The Saturday Evening Post*. It became part of his "Four Freedoms" series – ideals inspired by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1941 address: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

NOVEMBER–WEEK THREE– FAMILY AND HOME

Composer Study: Antonín Dvořák Slavonic Dance in G minor, Op. 46, No. 8



Scan to find the song on YouTube.

This lively piece from Dvořák’s Slavonic Dances bursts with rhythm and joy. He wrote it to honor his homeland’s folk dances – music meant for families and friends to play and dance to together. It celebrates community, laughter, and shared heritage.

As you listen, imagine a family gathering after a long day – someone playing the fiddle, others clapping, tapping, or dancing. Feel how music brings people together just like a warm meal or good story.

Listening Prompts:

- How does this piece make you want to move?
- Which instruments sound like they’re “calling” or “responding”?
- How could joyful music strengthen family and friendship bonds?

NOVEMBER–WEEK THREE– FAMILY AND HOME

Poetry Study: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – The Children’s Hour

This gentle poem describes Longfellow’s daughters coming to his study in the evening, climbing on his lap and filling his heart with love. It’s a celebration of home life – of how family moments, though ordinary, become treasures of memory and joy.

Read it aloud together and notice its rhythm – slow and tender, like a lullaby.

Discussion Prompts:

- What does the poet love most about his children?
- How do you know he treasures these small, quiet moments?
- What makes your home feel safe and full of love?



The Children’s Hour

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day’s occupations,
That is known as the Children’s Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O’er the arms and back of my chair,
If I try to escape, they surround me,
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!

NOVEMBER–WEEK THREE– FAMILY AND HOME

Folktale: The Candle in the Window

In a small colonial town, a woman named Lydia lived in a farmhouse by the main road. Every night, she placed a single candle in her front window. Her neighbors often asked why.

“For travelers,” she said. “So they’ll know they’re not alone.”

One winter, a fierce storm blew across the valley. Late that night, Lydia heard a knock at her door. A young man, lost and frozen, had followed the faint light from her window. “That candle saved me,” he said.

Years passed, and Lydia’s candle burned every evening – even when storms came or she felt weary. One day, she received a letter from a distant town: “Because of your kindness, I now keep a light in my window for others.”

And so, one small light became many, stretching across miles, warming hearts that would never meet.

Moral: Kindness within a home spreads far beyond its walls.



NOVEMBER–WEEK THREE– FAMILY AND HOME

Recipe: New England Skillet Cornbread

Golden, buttery, and simple, cornbread was one of the most common dishes in early American homes. Made from cornmeal ground at local mills, it was baked fresh and shared with family and neighbors. Cornbread pairs beautifully with soups, stews, or just a drizzle of honey – a reminder that home-cooked food doesn't have to be fancy to be full of love.

Ingredients

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar or honey (optional, for a touch of sweetness)
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 1 cup milk (or dairy-free alternative)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter or oil
- 1 egg (or flax egg for vegan option)



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Grease a cast iron skillet or 8x8 baking dish.
3. In a large bowl, mix cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.
4. In another bowl, whisk milk, butter, and egg.
5. Combine wet and dry ingredients until just mixed.
6. Pour into skillet and bake 20–25 minutes, until golden and firm in the center.

Cultural Note:

Cornbread originated from Native American cooking traditions, which early settlers adopted and adapted. It was simple, nourishing, and made from ingredients found close to home – a true taste of gratitude and resourcefulness.

Serving Ideas:

- Serve warm with butter and honey.
- Pair with soup or chili for a hearty meal.
- Save leftovers to toast for breakfast the next morning.

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK THREE– FAMILY AND HOME

Grace Note: The Quiet Gift of Presence

Home isn't only built with hands – it's built with presence.

When we slow down, listen, and really see one another, ordinary moments become sacred. This week, let your presence be the gift: sit beside someone without hurry, share a story, or linger after the meal. The love we give in stillness strengthens the walls of home.

Manners Moment: Look people in the eyes when they speak. Listen fully – not to reply, but to understand.



Family Reflection: The Gift of Being Here

At the end of a busy week, pause together. Turn off distractions, light a candle, and share a quiet moment. Talk about what it means to really be present with one another – to set aside what you're doing and give someone your full attention.

Ask each person to reflect:

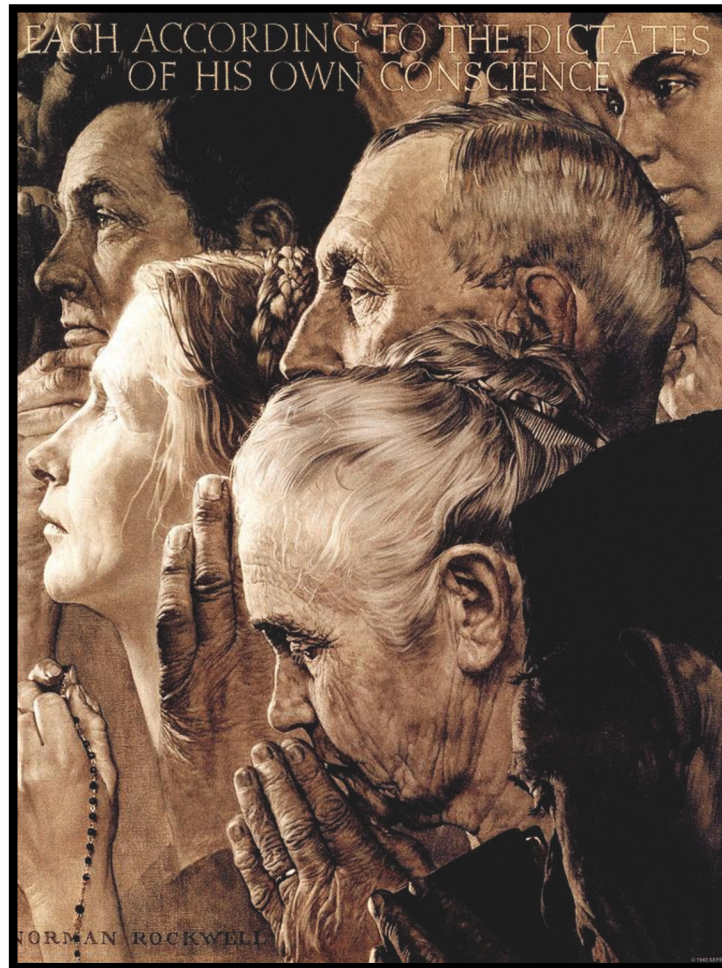
- When has someone's presence made you feel calm or cared for?
- How does it feel when someone listens closely to you?
- What can we do this week to make our home a place of rest and peace?

As you listen, remember that presence is love made visible – not through words or gifts, but through time, attention, and gentle hearts.

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK FOUR– REFLECTION & BLESSING

Artist Study: Norman Rockwell – Freedom of Worship (1943)



This final piece in Rockwell's Four Freedoms series portrays people of different faiths praying quietly in reverence. Their faces are thoughtful, serene, and illuminated by soft light – a picture of inner stillness. Unlike Rockwell's busier scenes, this one invites us to pause. It's a reminder that gratitude isn't only found in grand celebrations, but in quiet hearts turned toward goodness.

Discussion Prompts:

- What do you notice about the expressions and posture of the people?
- How does this painting make you feel?
- What does it mean to "worship freely"?
- How do you express gratitude in quiet ways – not just on holidays, but every day?

Art Connection - Geography & Culture:

Rockwell painted this work in Arlington, Vermont, inspired by his neighbors who represented different walks of life. Published in *The Saturday Evening Post* during World War II, it encouraged Americans to honor diversity, unity, and gratitude – values still relevant today.

NOVEMBER–WEEK FOUR– REFLECTION & BLESSING

Composer Study: Antonín Dvořák Song to the Moon from Rusalka, Op. 114 (1901)



Scan to find the song on YouTube.

In this breathtaking aria, Antonín Dvořák captures the quiet longing of a heart reaching for something higher. The piece is sung by Rusalka, a water nymph who gazes up at the glowing moon and asks it to carry her message of love to the human world.

Dvořák’s music shimmers like light on water. The melody rises and falls like a prayer – tender, patient, and full of hope. Whether heard in its original soprano version or in a gentle instrumental performance, “Song to the Moon” invites listeners to pause and reflect on the beauty of stillness and the gift of love that asks for nothing in return.

Listening Prompts:

- What feelings or images come to mind as you listen – moonlight, reflection, peace?
- How does Dvořák use music to express longing or reverence?
- What do you think the “moon” could symbolize in this piece – faith, hope, connection?
- How might this music serve as a kind of blessing at the end of the month?

Extension Idea:

Play “Song to the Moon” as you enjoy a quiet moment this week. Let the calm beauty of Dvořák’s melody remind you that gratitude can be gentle like soft music.

NOVEMBER–WEEK FOUR– REFLECTION & BLESSING

Poetry Study: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – The Day is Done

Longfellow wrote this poem as a comfort for the weary – an invitation to rest and find beauty in simplicity. He reminds us that we don't always need grand words or deeds, sometimes, a gentle poem, a quiet evening, or a shared moment is enough to renew the spirit.

Discussion Prompts:

- What time of day does this poem describe? How does it make you feel?
- Why do you think the poet compares nightfall to an eagle's feather?
- What does "rest" mean for your heart and home?



The Day is Done

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor,
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start,

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

NOVEMBER–WEEK FOUR– REFLECTION & BLESSING

Folktale: The Blessing Quilt (An Appalachian Tale)

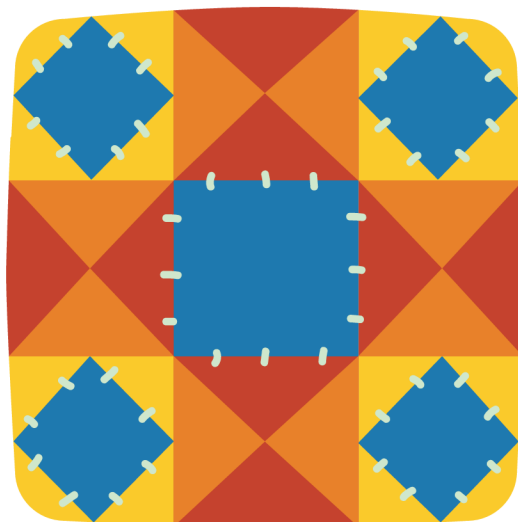
In a small mountain cabin, an elderly woman saved bits of fabric from her family's worn-out clothes – her daughter's calico dress, her son's wedding shirt, her husband's work apron.

As her hands grew slower, she began stitching them together into a quilt. Each square carried a story, and each story became a blessing.

When neighbors visited, she would spread the quilt over her lap and trace the pieces. "This patch," she'd say, "is the laughter from our harvest feast. This one – the tears from the year the rains didn't come. But together, they keep us warm."

When she passed, her children covered the Thanksgiving table with the quilt. They ate, told stories, and remembered that blessings are not things – they are moments, sewn together with love.

Moral: Gratitude remembered becomes the fabric of family.



NOVEMBER–WEEK FOUR– REFLECTION & BLESSING

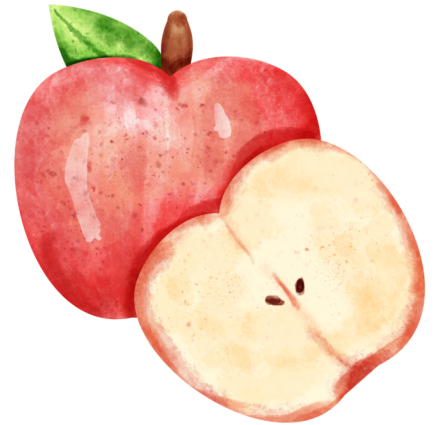
Recipe: Apple Cider Muffins

Warm and fragrant, these muffins bring the flavors of fall full circle – apples, cinnamon, and spice.

They're easy to make ahead for cozy mornings or evening tea, and the aroma alone feels like a hug for the soul.

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ¾ cup brown sugar or honey
- ¼ cup melted butter or oil
- 1 egg (or flax egg)
- ¾ cup apple cider
- 1 apple, finely diced (optional)



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line or grease a muffin tin.
2. In one bowl, mix flour, baking powder, soda, salt, and spices.
3. In another, whisk sugar, butter, egg, and cider.
4. Combine and fold in apples if using.
5. Fill cups ¾ full and bake 18–20 minutes, until golden and fragrant.

Cultural Note:

Apple cider was a beloved autumn drink in early America, often shared at gatherings after the harvest. Baking with it was a way to preserve both flavor and memory as the season turned colder.

SUPER TEAM

NOVEMBER–WEEK FOUR– REFLECTION & BLESSING

Grace Note: The Stillness of Gratitude

As November draws to a close, let stillness become your form of thanks. There is beauty in slowing down – in lighting a candle, savoring quiet, or simply sitting together without hurry.

Gratitude deepens when we pause long enough to feel it.

Manners Moment: Practice being unhurried. Move through your day with calm and care – grace is felt most in gentleness.



Family Reflection: Gathering the Threads

End the month by gathering around the table with warm tea and apple cider muffins. Lay out the art prints and poetry pages from the month and look through them together. Talk about what you’ve learned about gratitude, giving, and family.

Ask:

- Which week or story meant the most to you?
- What blessings do we want to carry forward into the next month?
- How can we keep practicing gratitude when life grows busy again?

Close your time together with this thought from Longfellow:

“Silently, one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels.”

Let your home rest in quiet gratitude – for work, for family, for the simple gifts of every day.

