

How a Thanksgiving Tree Can Inspire Your Prayers

A lovely idea is rapidly becoming a tradition for many families, and the kids really enjoy it. We haul out the Christmas tree in early October (but you could still do this for Thanksgiving and until you're ready to decorate your Christmas tree) and string lights and garlands of artificial autumn leaves on its branches. The photo I've shared is a starting point. Let your imagination take you from there, adding artificial fall flowers, pinecones, birds' nests and feathers, with other things you find on a walk through the woods. Now for the advent of Thanksgiving journey.

What's special to you and your family? Because my father died this year, we collected photographs of special memories with him, a sweet time of thanksgiving. Then we used medium-sized clothespins to attach them to a piece of twine draped around the tree. Instead of twine, burlap ribbon adds a rustic touch. Want to get fancy? Your favorite craft store should have a variety of ribbon from which to choose. It gets better.

Throughout fall, add Scriptures written on pretty papers that are important to your family. Add memorabilia from activities—movie tickets, programs from school events, church bulletins—things that ignite a warmth in your heart. Let the kids decorate blank index cards with Bible verses, drawings or embellishments they choose.

Depending upon the enthusiasm, you may have to add a tree. We did. But in addition to thanksgiving, how can our decorations inspire our prayers?

- **Autumn leaves** can remind us to pray:

Lord of the harvest, Send out laborers to work in Your fields, leading vast multitudes to You.

Here am I. Send me. Send my family.

▪ **Lights:**

*May our families shine Your sacred light throughout the world
so that those walking in darkness may find their way to You.*

▪ **Ribbon:**

*Please bind our families to Your sacred will no matter what
the cost.*

▪ **Flowers:**

Please grant us a relentless passion for Your Word.

*"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God
shall stand forever" (Isa. 40:8).*

▪ **Birds' Nests:**

*A bird's nest and Psalm 84 inspired this prayer that led us to
a young church, Church of the Highlands, in 2002. It has since
played a powerful role in igniting a global awakening,*

My soul faints with longing to enter Your courts.

*Even the sparrow builds her nest in the eaves of Your temple
(church),*

raising her young near Your altar.

Father, that is where I desire to raise my children,

Your children ...

*Not positioned on comfortable pews observing from a distance,
but deep within Your courts in selfless seeking of You
and selfless service for the causes of Your kingdom.*

May we live with a sense of urgency

to fulfill Your Great Commission.

So, are you with me? How will you decorate your tree? It's a wonderful opportunity to decorate our children's hearts and imaginations with beauty, truth, light and love. {eo}

Connie Norris' passion is to mobilize women and children to pray. Please visit her website, "My Home, a House of Prayer for All Nations" . or connect with her on Facebook at

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