

Children can give thanks for a harvest of good holiday books

BY SAMANTHA CRITCHELL
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

It's not too hard to teach children about thankfulness when parents dangle a reward in front of them. The instructions are easy enough for even a toddler to understand: When you want something say "please," when you get it say "thank you."

It might be more difficult, however, to teach children about the first Thanksgiving, an event that happened centuries ago to people these kids never knew. "Why should we care?" children may ask.

Because it's a good story with a better lesson, that's why. There's drama and interesting characters, and by the end of the tale the children will learn that working together offers great rewards — rewards that might include turkey, stuffing and pumpkin pie.

There are several new picture books about Thanksgiving, the parades that lead up to it and the feast that follows to help tell the story of the holiday in words and pictures that youngsters will understand.

A good place to start is *The Very First Thanksgiving Day* (Atheneum, \$15.95, ages 3-6), featuring a cumulative rhyme text by Rhonda Gowler Greene and painting-style illustrations by Susan Gaber.

The book certainly isn't wordy but it covers all the basics about why the Pilgrims and the American Indians sat down together for a meal back in 1621. It explains the hardships of the Pilgrims and how they overcame them with hard work, and it gives credit to the Indians as skillful and strong teachers to the Pilgrims.

The last few pages might even ring familiar with 21st-century families. The grown-ups greet

each other with handshakes while the kids run off to play with their toys. Surely they'll regroup to sit at a very long table that's decorated with corn, sweet berries and turkey.

In *Thanksgiving Day* (HarperCollins, \$5.99, ages 2-5) by Anne Rockwell, a father tells his children about the holiday play he put on when he was a kid.

He recalls his role as the Mayflower, the ship that brought the Pilgrims to the New World. His friends, children of all races outfitted in feathered Indian headdresses and construction-paper Pilgrim hats in illustrations by Lizzie Rockwell, filled out the rest of the cast.

The Pilgrims from England built wood houses and the Wampanoag Indians planted corn. Together, they hunted turkeys for that memorable harvest feast.

The whole animal kingdom cooks the Thanksgiving meal in *Turkeys Never Gobble!* (HarperFestival, \$5.99, ages baby-preschool). In Jennifer Beck Harris' cartoonish pictures, young readers will see alligators sharing their recipes with helpful hippos, and monkeys measuring, mixing and chopping the ingredients for their favorite treats.

But at the table even the well-mannered warblers become wild beasts as one devilish critter calls out "food fight!"

Leftovers are the big treat in *Twice the Day After Thanksgiving* (Little Simon, \$5.99, ages 3-6) by Mavis Smith. As young readers lift the flaps, they'll catch glimpses of a family of mice who eventually grow tired of turkey and its trimming. Sound familiar?

Children — and many adults who are unfamiliar with this part of Thanksgiving's history — learn about Sarah Hale's crusade

to make the fourth Thursday in November a national holiday in *Thank You, Sarah: The Woman Who Saved Thanksgiving* (Simon & Schuster, \$16.95, ages 8-10).

Laurie Halse Anderson explains that Hale was a "dainty little lady" who became the superhero of Thanksgiving through her letter-writing campaigns.

She convinced President Abraham Lincoln, after failing to convince many of his predecessors, that the nation needed a day to come together as one big family.

In return, Hale, at least in Matt Faulkner's illustrations, is honored with what looks an awful lot like a balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

A fictional story with several true historical references brings the famous parade to life in *Milly and the Macy's Parade* (Scholastic, \$16.95, ages 5-8) by Shanna Corey, with pictures by Brett Helquist.

Milly can't bear the thought of seeing her Polish immigrant grandfather and his fellow workers at Macy's, who all miss their native lands, so sad during the holiday season; Mr. Macy can't bear the thought of these grumpy workers turning away customers.

When she suggests the store help stage a parade just like in "the old country," Mr. Macy embraces her idea since he, too, remembers what it feels like to

be homesick.

The result is an American celebration with influences from all over the world.

Other kiddie-themed Thanksgiving books include: *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie* (Puffin, \$6.99, ages 3-8) by Alison Jackson and illustrated by Judith Byron Schachner. Humming a familiar tune, this particular old lady starts out eating a pie, moves on to a whole turkey and still joins in the holiday parade.

The Little Engine That Could Saves the Thanksgiving Day Parade (Grosset & Dunlap, \$3.49, ages 3-6) by Watty Piper and illustrated by Cristina Ong. When the Turkeyland Band gets stuck in Gobbleville, only one Little Blue Engine pulls through.

The Pilgrims and Me (Grosset & Dunlap, \$5.99, ages 6-9) by Judy Donnelly and illustrated by Maryann Cocca-Leffler. A little girl shares her class report on her visit to the Plymouth Plantation.

Tricky Turkey Tongue Twisters (HarperFestival, \$6.99, ages 6-8) by Guillian B. Lee and illustrated by Clive Scruton. Caty phrases that are even harder to say when one's mouth is full of Thanksgiving food — especially mashed potatoes.

A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving (Little Simon, \$5.99, 3-8) by Charles M. Schulz. The book adaptation of the TV special in which Peppermint Patty invites the gang over for dinner at Charlie Brown's.

Theater patrons say humbug to hunger

Meadow Brook Theatre will sponsor a food drive for the Food Bank of Oakland County during the 21st annual production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Patrons can bring non-perishable food items to collection bins at Meadow Brook Theatre and Meadow Brook Hall, from Nov. 29-Dec. 22.

"The Food Bank of Oakland County is thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Meadow Brook Theatre once again. The generosity of the theatre patrons is inspiring," food bank director Helen Kozlowski-Hicks said in a written statement. Last year's food drive garnered more than 1,300 pounds of food.

Meadow Brook Theatre,

Michigan's largest professional theatre, is located on Oakland University's campus in Rochester. To buy tickets for *A Christmas Carol*, call Meadow Brook Theatre's box office at (248) 377-3300. Group tickets are available at (248) 370-3316.

The Food Bank of Oakland County is one of 197 America's Second Harvest National Food Banks. Last year it distributed 6.3 million pounds of food throughout Oakland County. Its mission is to alleviate hunger and poverty by securing, storing and distributing food, information, personal care items and household products to emergency food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in Oakland County.

Homes all decked out for the season

The Plymouth Symphony League Holiday Home Tour, a driving tour of six local houses decorated for the holidays to benefit the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra, is noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24.

The tour features homes in Plymouth and Northville. Tickets are \$15 in advance

and \$18 the day of the tour. For additional information or to buy tickets, call (734) 451-2112.

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Oleg Maisenberg piano

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Ravel: Sonata for Violin and Piano (1923-7)
Stravinsky: Suite from L'histoire du soldat
Berg: Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 5
Schoenberg: Phantasie for Violin and Piano, Op. 47
Webern: Four Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 7
Bartok: Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano

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