

A Family to be Thankful For

By Cynthia Cutts

I knew putting together a traditional Thanksgiving dinner would take extra organization, what with four kids (two still in diapers) and my husband, Jerry, working long hours. So I wrote a to-do list and stuck it on the fridge at the beginning of the week. I figured I'd cross off a few items each day.

But now it was the day before Thanksgiving and nothing was done. Not the fresh cranberry sauce. Or the homemade dinner rolls. Not even the most important thing on our family's menu—the pies. Pumpkin and apple, made from scratch using recipes passed down from my mom and Jerry's.

I put Halley and Casey down for their naps. *Now I can start the pies*, I thought, setting the ingredients out. The phone rang. Justin, my 13-year-old.

"Mom, can you bring my basketball uniform to school? I just found out we have a game tonight."

"Sure," I said, stifling a sigh. I hung up and saw that a stack of newspapers had been dropped off in the drive for my nine-year-old, Corbett, to deliver. The papers were bulging with Thanksgiving ads. Corbett couldn't carry them on his bike. I'd have to drive him.

I took out the trash, hauled in the papers, then cleaned sticky fingerprints from the fridge. There, practically smirking at me, was my to-do list. I checked my watch: 3:45 *already*?! The door slammed. "Hi, Mom," Corbett said.

"Corbett, your brother has a game so let's get your paper route done," I said. I bundled the babies into their car seats, then ran back for Justin's uniform. I looked at the apples, pumpkin and spices on the counter. "Guess I'm not making those pies now," I grumbled.

Jerry got out of work early enough to go to the game, but by the time we got home, ate dinner and tucked the kids in, it was almost 10:00 P.M. The sight of the pie ingredients on the counter made me want to cry. I sat down and buried my head in my arms.

"What's wrong?" Jerry asked.

"I wanted Thanksgiving to be perfect," I moaned, "but I never even had time to make pies!"

"Don't worry, honey. I'll just buy some," he said.

"We can't buy Thanksgiving pies!"

"Sure, we can," Jerry said.

"But they won't be our family's pies."

Jerry gave me a hug. “The kids won’t care. They’ll eat anything. You’re so busy taking care of everyone. Let the boys and me take over this Thanksgiving.”

“Fine,” I said, too tired to argue.

The next morning I surrendered the kitchen to the guys. Six hours later Corbett came to get me. I followed him into the dining room. There on the table was a Thanksgiving feast. A beautifully browned turkey, Jerry’s handiwork. Cranberry sauce and hot dinner rolls, both straight from a can and proudly prepared by Corbett. Sweet potatoes topped with melted marshmallows, and instant mashed potatoes, whipped up by Justin. And on the sideboard sat the pies—apple and pumpkin, store-bought.

We sat down and Corbett said grace. “Dear God, thanks for all the food, especially the yummy pies. Thank you for a great mom who does so much for us. Thanks most of all that we get to be together. Amen.”

I opened my eyes and looked around the table. Corbett was right. Being together was what mattered. I’d gotten my perfect Thanksgiving after all.