



Hello! Welcome to *Thanksgiving with the Pilgrims*. My name is Sharon Gibson. I am the founder of Homeschool Legacy, author of Once-a-Week Unit Studies and [Once-a-Week Micro-Studies](#), and I believe learning should be fun, don't you?

Unit studies are a great way to do exactly that! They provide you with fun, hands-on learning experiences and involve the whole family, regardless of age. They also cover several subjects while immersing you in a central theme.

We found learning with unit studies to be a great way to bring our family together, make learning more fun, and help our children better remember what they had learned.

Unit studies are unique in that you can cover and check-off several subjects while immersing your children in one central theme. You will notice that aspect as I clearly identify specific subjects over the course of this study.

As is characteristic of Once-a-Week Unit Studies, this Once-a-Week Micro-Study suggests some delightful family read-alouds to further your children's knowledge of the Pilgrims, their voyage, and the first Thanksgiving feast (A Christmas classic is also suggested for the month of December). Older children may want to further their knowledge by reading a biography about one of the Pilgrim leaders. Younger children may enjoy these [coloring pictures](#).

Over the next few weeks you will learn about some of the brave men, women, and children who dared to cross the Atlantic Ocean and do what none before them had ever done. They would establish a colony based on Biblical principles, a land where they could worship God free from persecution. Their successful settlement and Mayflower Compact will, in fact, lay the foundation for the future United States Constitution.

You will also meet their friends and neighbors: Samoset, Squanto, Chief Massasoit, and the Wampanoag Indians. These friendships will mean the difference between life and death, success and failure.

Over the next few weeks, I will provide you with an assortment of creative activities and hands-on assignments that will help you celebrate thanksgiving with the Pilgrims. I will also help you jumpstart your Christmas celebrations by introducing you to the English origins of some of our most beloved Christmas traditions.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas!

Blessings,

Sharon Gibson

Owner and Author | [Homeschool Legacy](#) | [Once-a-Week Unit Studies](#)

Week 1: The Scrooby Separatists

Literature (Family Read-Aloud)

Suggested literature to read aloud to your children as you approach Thanksgiving:

Eating the Plates: A Pilgrim Book of Food and Manners, by Lucille Recht Penner

If You Sailed on the Mayflower in 1620, by Ann McGovern

If You Were at the First Thanksgiving, by Anne Kamma

History/Geography

Back in the 16th century King Henry VIII ruled England. When he became disgruntled with the Catholic Church he decided to establish his own church...a state church. It was and still is known as the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church was the official state Church of England and the king was its ultimate authority.

That power was passed down from one monarchy to the next, so in the early 17th century King James I found himself in control of the Anglican Church. King James as you probably already know was the king responsible for the Bible being translated into English for the first time (KJV). That was awesome! That meant everyone, not just priests, could now read the Bible. Well, that got many an Englishmen to doing just that. And the more they read the more they believed the church had strayed too far from that of the early Christian church.

They wanted the Church of England to hearken back to those early days, which included Scripture reading, praying, and doing away with manmade rituals. Some argued one did not need a priest or bishop to serve as a *go-between*. Instead, they believed Scripture taught that anyone could go before God and speak directly to Him.

A group known as the Puritans believed the Church of England could be changed by purifying it. But another group, known as the Separatists (Saints to each another), did not believe the church would change. So they decided to separate from the Church of England and began holding their own church services elsewhere.

Choosing to attend a different church doesn't seem like a big deal to those of us living in America today. We have the Pilgrims to thank for that. But, in 16th century England it was very dangerous indeed! At that time all Englishmen were forced to attend the same state-controlled Church of England. There was no other church. To do otherwise meant imprisonment or even death! Due to the constant threat of danger, the Separatists saw no other choice but to flee their beloved hometown of Scrooby, England and set sail for the more religiously tolerant Holland, in the Netherlands. The Dutch people in Amsterdam, and later in Leiden, warmly welcomed the Separatists and allowed them to worship as they pleased.

- Using a [world atlas](#) locate the following places:
 - Locate the country in which Holland is located.
 - Locate the capital of the Netherlands.
 - Locate England and its capital.
 - Locate Amsterdam and Leiden in the Netherlands.
 - Locate the town of Scrooby, England.
 - Locate and name the body of water the Separatists had to cross when fleeing England. (They would cross it again in preparation for boarding the Mayflower in England.)

History/Vocabulary

After a few years of living in the Netherlands, however, the Saints felt their children were becoming too Dutch. They spoke Dutch and began dressing and acting like the Dutch. The Separatists were concerned their children were forgetting they were English and feared secular influences might also be affecting their children spiritually. As kind as the Dutch had been to them, the Separatists were feeling drawn to another land. That land was the one they had read about in John Smith's book, *Description of New England*. That land was America.

So, after much prayer and thoughtful planning the Separatists decided to leave Holland and set sail for America to settle in John Smith's *New England*.

But how would they finance such an ambitious endeavor? They settled on an agreement with a London-based investors group called the Merchant Adventurers. The company provided two ships (the Speedwell and the Mayflower), a master and crew, and supplied the Separatists with food, tools, and other supplies. In return, the Separatists agreed to a life of [indentured servitude](#) for seven years. During that time, the Pilgrims were to send the Merchant Adventurers fish, furs, timber, and other natural resources. Until those seven years were up, the Merchant Adventurers would own their land, homes, and any additional assets.

A new life ahead of them, the Separatists boarded the Speedwell en route to pick up additional passengers and the Mayflower in England. This historic moment was not lost on the soon-to-be governor of Plymouth Colony for William Bradford said, "This is an important thing we're doing today. We're making a pilgrimage to a distant land. We are now Pilgrims following their Lord." This was a significant moment for it was the first time these people would be referred to as *Pilgrims*.

- Look up the definition of the words *pilgrim* and *pilgrimage*. Write those definitions in your own words.

American Government

- A *state church* is one where the state (or government) has absolute control over a state-sanctioned church. That was the case with the Anglican Church in the 17th century.

Such a church had proven an inherent lack of liberty. That is why a state-free nation was front and center in both the settler's minds when establishing Plymouth Colony and our Founding Fathers' minds when crafting the United States Constitution. Because of these brave men and women, we have the freedom in America today to attend the church of our choice.

Freedom *of* religion, not freedom *from* religion, was of utmost importance to the early settlers and the founding of America. It is no coincidence that our Founders etched that freedom into the very first words of the First Amendment. This Thanksgiving, remember to give thanks to the Pilgrims and our Founding Fathers for their convictions and foresight.

- Read and discuss your [First Amendment](#) rights.