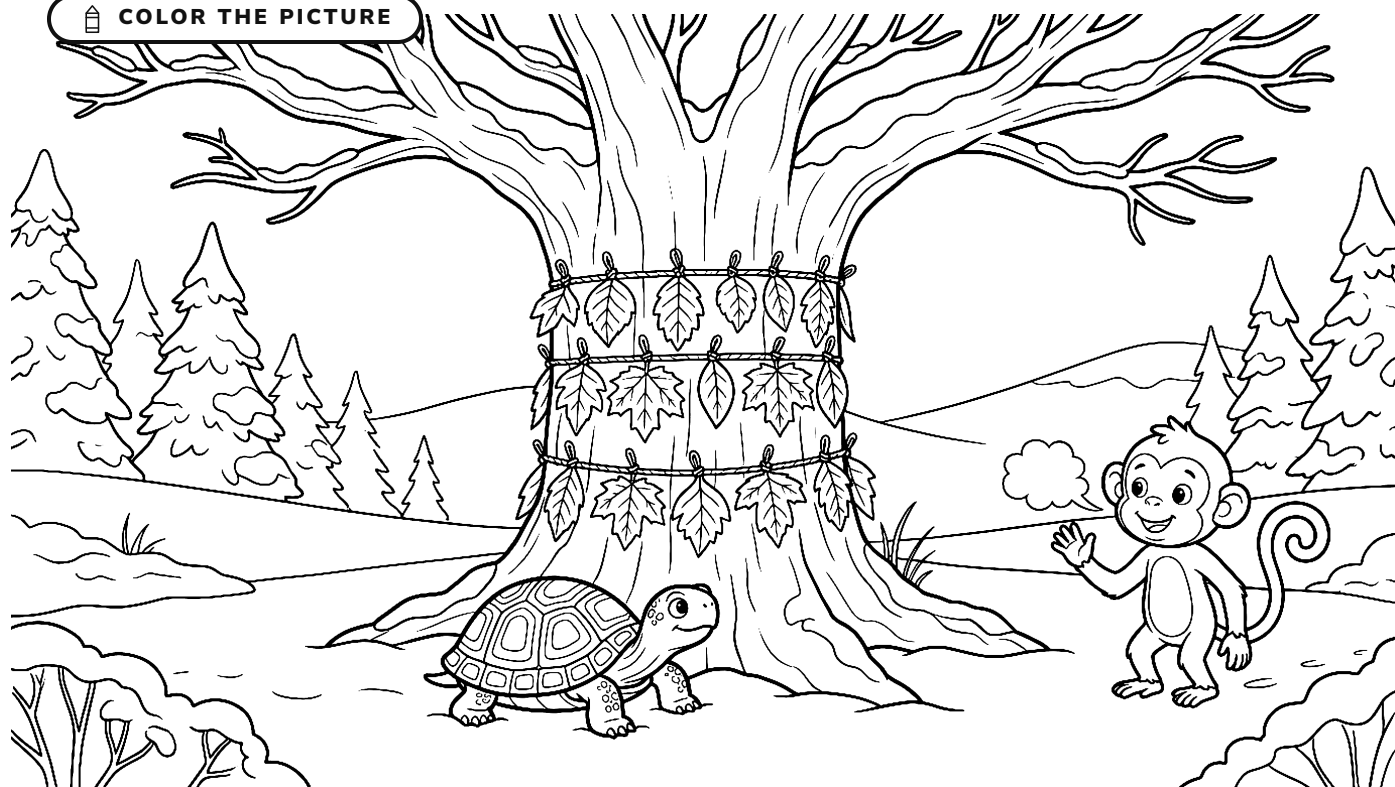


The Great Big Pile-Up

COLOR THE PICTURE



In the morning, Wonderful Woods was white. Snow covered the grass and the roofs and every branch of every tree, and the whole world was so quiet and sparkly that Mr. Monkey's breath made little clouds in the sunshine.

Before breakfast, before anything, everybody came to the Wishing Tree.

Tessie was already there, sitting in the snow by the trunk.

"Tessie!" said Mr. Monkey. "When did you get here?"

"Last night," said Tessie. "I left... on Monday."

Mama Moose stood beside the tree. Its trunk was covered all the way around with painted leaves, faces out and secrets in. "Today," she said, "we don't open these to see what we're going to get. We open them to see what we've already been given. Find every leaf with your own face on it."

Dottie found hers in one second. She sniffed once, and her nose went *right there*. "Mine! Mine! Mine!"

Bruno looked at every single leaf. "Is that me? Is that me? Is THAT me?" Then he found one with a big purple paw print on the front. "That's me," he said.

Mr. Moose reached up high for his, and his antlers went right through the vines. When he pulled his head back out, he had three leaves stuck on his antlers, and none of them were his.

"Shiloh," he said, bending down. "This one's yours. Hazel, this one's yours. Benji..."

"Ha-ha-ha!" he laughed. "I'm the delivery moose."

Then everybody turned their leaves over.

It got very quiet under the Wishing Tree.

Daddy Moose looked at the back of his leaf for a long time: a log, a brook, and a big moose standing in the water, with little shiver lines all around him. He didn't say anything. He couldn't.

Mama Monkey held hers against her chest: the striped blanket, and the lumpy, crunchy leaf blanket in the corner.

Daddy Monkey found the treehouse leaf. In the corner was a tiny sleepy monkey with a moss mustache. "The Moss Boss," he whispered.

Ricky had two leaves. On one, somebody had painted him in the middle of a giant pile of presents, with a leaf stuck on his tail. On the other, a long row of friends, with nobody left out. He looked at them, and then at the pile, and then at the leaves again.

Mr. Monkey sat down in the snow with his leaves in his lap. One from Mama. One from Daddy. And one from Mr. Moose, with two friends sitting in a leaf pile, their shoulders touching. He looked at them until his toes were cold. He didn't look up at the branches even once. Somewhere up there, almost hidden under all the leaves, was a big bark banana. He forgot it was there.

All day long, the woods got ready. And when the sky turned pink, everybody came to Sunny Square. The fire crackled inside its sparkly gravel ring. The big pot of squash stew bubbled. And everybody sat down on the long log, each one on the stone with their own face painted on it. Mr. Monkey sat on his stone, and Benji sat on his, right next to him.

Mama Monkey looked down the whole long row, at everybody, all together. "This was my wish," she said softly. "And I got it."

Then Ricky stood up. He had eaten his pie, and he was ready.

"And now," he said, "the GREAT BIG PRESENT SWAP!"

He climbed up the side of the pile. It was enormous now, lumpy and leaning, taller than the Feast fire, taller than Daddy Moose's antlers. Ricky stood on the very top and unrolled his list.

"Rule one," he began. "Everybody..."

"RIBBIT," said the pile.

Ricky stopped. Everybody looked at the pile.

Way down at the bottom, one little present gave a hop.

"RIBBIT."

It hopped again, right out from under everything. And the whole pile went *creeeeeeak*.

"Uh-oh," said Ricky.

The pile leaned left. Ricky leaned right. The pile leaned right. Ricky leaned left. "Whoa-whoa-whoa-WHOA!"

And then the Great Big Present Swap came down.

Presents tumbled everywhere. They bounced across the snow. They rolled under the log. Five of them landed on Daddy Moose's antlers, one after another, *plunk, plunk, plunk, plunk, plunk*, until he looked like a present tree. Sammy surfed all the way down the side of the pile on a big flat one, shouting, "WHEEEEE!" A whole bunch stuck in Shiloh's woolly coat, so that he stood there covered in presents from his ears to his tail. And Tessie disappeared under a great big heap, and a long, long time later, she walked slowly out the other side with a present sitting on her shell like a hat.

All the little name leaves went flying up into the wind, like a flock of birds, and blew away over the river.

And Ricky came sliding down last of all, *shhhhhhhhh*, and landed flat on his back in the snow with his list across his face.

Nobody said anything. The fire crackled. Everybody looked at Ricky.

Ricky lifted the list off his face. He looked at the presents, all over Sunny Square. He looked at the empty sky where the name leaves had gone. Nobody knew whose present was whose anymore. Nobody ever would.

Then the little present hopped right up onto his tummy. The leaf fell open, and a small green frog looked out at him.

"RIBBIT."

"Rule nine," said Ricky. "No presents that are alive."

And then Ricky laughed. He laughed first, before anybody. "*Hi-hi-hi-hi-hi!*"

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno.

"Hee hee hee... *SNORT!*" went Hazel.

"Ha-ha-ha!" went Mr. Moose, and all five presents wobbled on his antlers.

"Heh... heh... heh," went Tessie, with her present hat.

Nobody tried to sort the presents. They just left them where they fell, and everybody squeezed in close around the

fire with their stew. And what everybody wanted to talk about was the leaves.

"Did you see the brook on mine?" said Daddy Moose. "Twenty-two times."

"Did you see the blanket?" said Mama Monkey.

"Mr. Moose," whispered Mr. Monkey. "I forgot about my banana. All day."

He put his hand on his tummy. It didn't feel heavy at all.

Tessie lifted her head, very slowly. "This morning," she said, "I got a leaf."

"That alone would have been a gift," said Mama Moose.

"We got stew," said Bruno.

"That alone would have been a gift," said everybody.

"And we're all together," said Mama Monkey.

"That alone would have been a gift."

The fire burned lower. Mama Moose stood up and looked at everyone. "We have received enough," she said. "Now we are ready to give."

Mr. Monkey looked at the fire. It was getting small. Soon it would go out, and everybody would go home in the dark, and the Thankful Feast would be over. He didn't want this feeling to go out with it.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "Can we keep some of it?"

Mr. Moose looked at the fire, and then at the door of his house, where the hollow squash shell was sitting in the snow. He thought about how you carry something warm without burning your hands.

"We could carry it," he said slowly. "In something."

Daddy Monkey cut little leaf-shaped holes all around the squash shell. Bruno gave a lump of wax from his honeycomb, and Mama Moose rolled it into a candle. Mr. Moose held the squash steady. And Mr. Monkey took a little twig, lit it from the very last of the Feast fire, and carefully, carefully, lit the candle inside.

The lantern glowed. And all over the snow, all around them, little leaf-shaped lights appeared, gold and flickering.

They hung it on the lowest branch of the Wishing Tree.

"Where's it going?" asked Mr. Monkey.

"Somewhere that needs it," said Mr. Moose.

"What a day!" said Ricky, still with snow in his whiskers.

"The leaves came down, and the presents came down, and so did I. A frog hopped out of the pile, and Daddy Moose turned into a present tree, and Tessie got a hat. Nobody got their Swap present. And it was the best Thankful Feast ever."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

*We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.*

And under the Wishing Tree, the little squash lantern glowed all night in the snow, scattering golden leaves of light across Sunny Square.

Let's Talk

- 1 Nobody got their Swap present. Why was it still the best Thankful Feast ever?
- 2 Name one gift that would have been enough, all by itself.

Your Turn

Draw your family's Thanks Giving Tree the way it looked this morning, full of leaves!

SAMMY'S JOKE

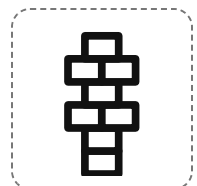


What game do frogs love to play?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!



CLUE



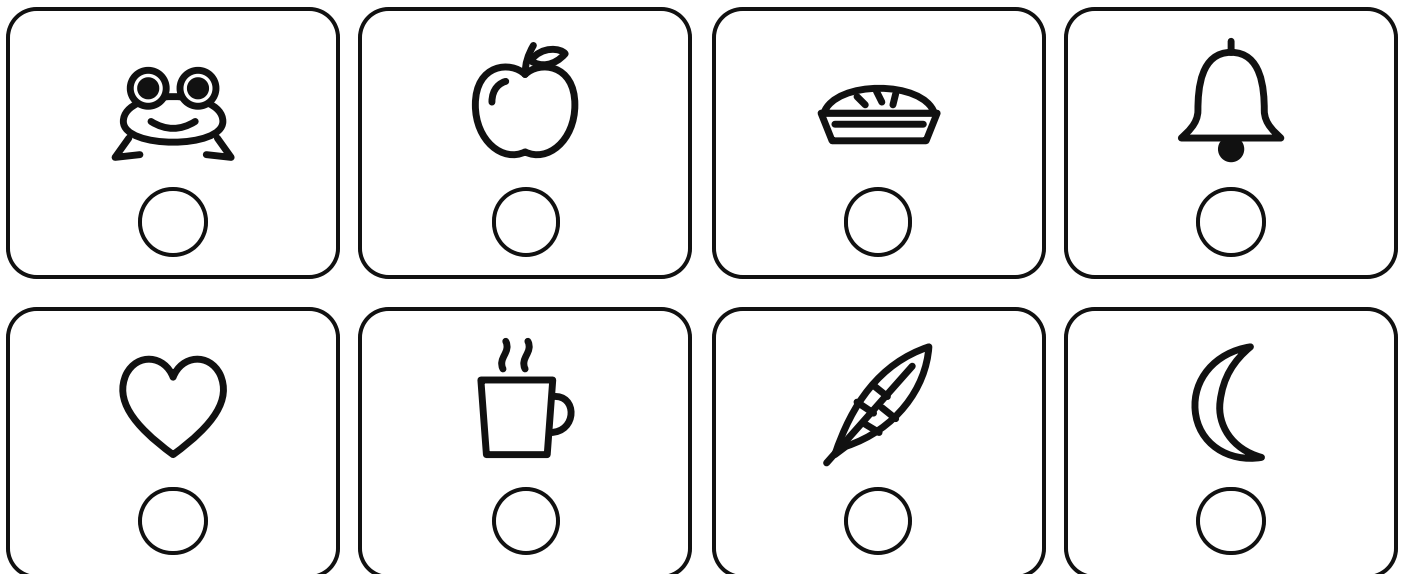
___ scotch!

👁 Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Hop! Hop! is on top of the gifts.

A frog hops in the gifts. Hop, hop, hop!

The gifts tip. Bam! Bam! Bam!

Gifts drop on Dad.

A gift drops on . It is a hat!The frog is on .  grins.PICTURE WORDS  Ricky  Tessie

Color a star each time you read it.

♥ My Thank-You

Trace the dark word, then the light words. What is one good gift you got this year? Write it or draw it on the line after "I got."

I got _____

That would have been enough

to give thanks.

♥ Today's Big Words

This morning, your family says the big words together one more time.

Grace comes in, gratitude sees it, and graciousness passes it on.



Grace

a gift you didn't earn



Gratitude

noticing the gift



Graciousness

passing it on

DRAW YOUR FAMILY SAYING THE BIG WORDS TOGETHER.

Thanksgiving Morning

Before the big Thanksgiving meal, your family does three things at home:

1 Remember: Enough Echo

2 Rejoice: The Opening

3 Ready: Pack the Giving

Remember: The Enough Echo

At the Feast, the friends said, “That alone would have been a gift.” Your family does it like this: a grown-up reads a line about something you have been given, and after every line, everyone says the same answer together:

That would have
been enough
to give thanks.

Color your answer card before you start. Then say it after every line!

Color a box each time you say it. The pictures go in order:



the sun



air and water



helpers



farmers



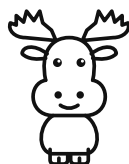
each other



the notes on
the tree

At the very end, everyone says:

We have more than enough!



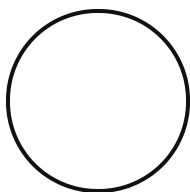
Rejoice: The Opening

Now go to the Thanks Giving Tree! Find every leaf and photo with **your** name on the front. Take them down, turn them over, and read the backs. A grown-up can read them with you.

I found  leaves and photos with my name!

Write the number, or draw a dot for each one.

My favorite one is from:
(Draw their face or write
their name.)



WHAT DID IT SAY? DRAW OR WRITE IT.

Ready: Pack the Giving

Some leaves are for people you will see today. Help put them in the bag by the door. When you see each person, hand them their leaf and say, “We wrote this for you!”

Who gets a leaf today? Draw their faces or write their names.

