



W H A L E C L A S S

Circle Time Guide

Thanksgiving Day

Week of Nov 23–27 · 13 minutes a day · ages 2.5–6

thank you · please · share · turkey · pie

Everything you need, one page per day

Week Overview

 Print · laminate · ring-bind · hold this all week. One page per day, in your hand, at the circle. Every script here is word-for-word the same as the teachers' page. 🦃 Thanksgiving Day itself is **Thursday 26 November** — the day the pie comes out. 小雪 passed on Sunday 22 November: the harvest is in, which is Monday's reason for saying thank you.

Five words they'll own by Friday

thank you

please

share

turkey

pie

Littles (2.5–3)

One word + a gesture is a win: **“Thank you!”** (flat hand from your chin, forward), **“Please!”** (palms together), **“Share!”** (hand it straight to the child beside you).

Bigs (4–6)

Sentence frames: **“Thank you, ____.”** · **“Please may I have some?”** · **“Here you are.”** · **“You're welcome.”** · **“I want to share with you.”**

Never ask a little for a sentence. They will get there by watching the bigs.

The week at a glance

- Mon Thank You!** — Magic Box: a real handwritten thank-you card with a child's name on it. Game: thank-you ball toss (no name, no roll). Shelf: Tray 1 · Grace and courtesy passing tray.
- Tue Please · the Corn** — Magic Box: an ear of corn still in its husk. Game: pass the corn, one leaf per stop. Shelf: Tray 2 · Shuck the corn.
- Wed Turkey Feathers** — Magic Box: a hand-print turkey and real feathers. Game: the turkey's tail — one feather, one thank-you, written on it. Shelf: Tray 4 · Feather grading.
- Thu Share the Pie** — Magic Box: a real pie and a tablecloth. Game: the sharing plate — each child serves the next, nobody eats until everybody has some. Shelf: Tray 3 · 3-part cards and the action cards.
- Fri Gratitude Tree + Review** — everything from the week in one box + the bare tree cloth. Game: hang your leaf and say who it is for. Full song, top to bottom.

The 13 minutes, every day

- 2 min Magic Box hook** — chant, shake, sniff, dramatic peek.
- 4 min Teach** — the day's word, dramatised with the object. Get it wrong once on purpose.
- 3 min Song** — chorus → today's new verse → chorus.
- 3 min Game.**
- 1 min Close** — whisper → normal → shout.

MONDAY

Day 1 • Thank You!

Today's words: **thank you**

Grab: a **real handwritten thank-you card** in an envelope, with one child's name on the front, in the Magic Box; a basket of small things to hand out (a leaf, a pine cone, a card each); the 谢 character card. 小雪 was Sunday — the harvest is in.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is **thin and light**, and something slides about inside when you tilt it. Whole class chants:

EVERYONE "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Shake it — one soft paper slither, nothing more. Peek in for a long time, then look up, astonished.

TEACHER "There's a **letter** in here... and it has somebody's **name** on the front." (*read the name out slowly; that child comes and fetches it*)

They open it, you read it out loud to everybody: "Dear ___, thank you for helping me carry the chairs on Friday. Love, Teacher."

Flat hands from chins, forward. **"Thank you!"**

4 MIN TEACH • THANK YOU

Teach the gesture first, before the words: a flat hand at your chin, moving forward and down, as if you are handing your words over to somebody.

Somebody **grew** it... (*hold up an apple in two hands*)
somebody **picked** it... (*mime picking, high up*)
somebody **carried** it here to me... (*carry it across the circle*)
so I say **THANK YOU!** (*flat hand from the chin, forward*)

Littles: the gesture and the one word, **"Thank you!"** Bigs owe you the name on the end of it: **"Thank you, Lily."** Never let the name drop off — that is the whole difference between a manner and a habit.

Then the basket. Go round the circle putting one small thing into each pair of hands; it does not let go until the thank-you comes. Ten seconds each, all the way round.

Teacher fails: hand somebody the apple and immediately say **"You're welcome!"** yourself, very warmly, before they have said one word. Beam at them. Wait.

Chinese moment: lay the 谢 card down. Everybody says 谢谢 once, with the same gesture. Then tell them: Sunday was 小雪 — the food is picked, the vegetables are salted away, the store is full. That is exactly why this week we say thank you.

3 MIN GAME • THANK-YOU BALL TOSS

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" Everybody sits in a tight circle with their legs out. One soft ball.

TEACHER "Roll it to a friend — but you may not let go until you have said their **name**." (*roll it slowly to one child: "Thank you, Austin!"*)

Littles say the two words and roll: **"Thank you!"** Bigs must land the name: **"Thank you, Stella!"**

Keep it going until every single child has had the ball at least once — keep a quiet tally on your fingers so nobody is missed.

*The rule that makes this work is **no name, no roll**. Hold the ball gently in place and wait; the name always arrives, and after two days they start using each other's names all day long.*

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody's hand flat under their chin, ready. Whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE "Thank you... thank you... **THANK YOU!**" (*all twenty hands fly forward from their chins on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? Bear Says Thanks (Karma Wilson) — Bear has nothing to give, and by the last page they will have worked out what he gave anyway.

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice with the actions, then Monday's verse — "Thank you for the sun, thank you for the rain, / thank you, thank you — again and again!" — then the chorus again. Full song on page 8.

TUESDAY

Day 2 • Please • the Corn

Today's words: **please** (*thank you comes back every day*)

Grab: an **ear of corn still in its husk** in the Magic Box (two or three if you can get them); a bowl for the kernels; music you can start and stop; the 请 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is **long and heavy**, and whatever is inside *rolls* when you tilt it. Chant:

EVERYONE "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Shake it — a dry, papery rustle, like leaves. Sniff the opening. Peek in, and frown, puzzled.

TEACHER "It's long... it's heavy... and it's wearing a **coat**." (*lift out the corn in its husk and turn it slowly; peel ONE leaf back in total silence*)

Palms together in front of you. **"Please!"**

4 MIN TEACH • PLEASE

Palms flat together, a small bow of the head. Then the four-line exchange, which is the real lesson of the whole week:

Please may I have some corn? (*palms together, small bow*)

Yes — here you are. (*hand it over with both hands*)

Thank you! (*flat hand from the chin*)

You're **welcome**. (*open both palms, warm*)

Do it once with one Big, slowly, while everybody watches. Then peel the husk right down, leaf by leaf, and rub a handful of kernels off into the bowl so they can hear them drop.

Littles say the one word with the hands: **"Please!"** Bigs take the whole frame: **"Please may I have some?"** and, when they are the one holding it, **"You're welcome."**

Teacher fails: *snatch the corn straight out of a child's hands with a big delighted grin and no word at all. Freeze exactly there. Wait for the shouting.*

Chinese moment: the 请 card goes down beside yesterday's 谢. 请 and 谢谢 are the first two words of politeness in any language on earth — say each one once, together, and leave them on the mat.

3 MIN GAME • PASS THE CORN

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The corn goes round the circle hand to hand while the music plays.

TEACHER "When the music stops — whoever is holding it **peels one leaf**, and asks the next friend nicely." (*stop the music*)

The holder peels one leaf, drops it in the middle, and passes on with **"Please!"** Bigs give the whole line: **"Please may I have some?"** and the receiver answers **"Here you are."**

The game ends when the corn is completely naked and everybody cheers. The kernels get rubbed off into the bowl and go straight onto Tray 2 for the rest of the week.

Nobody is ever "out". The corn just keeps going round losing its coat — and because the leaves come off one at a time, the game lasts almost exactly three minutes on its own.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody's palms pressed together. Whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE "Please... please... PLEASE!" (*palms thrown wide open on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Little Red Hen — who helped plant it? who helped grind it? who gets to eat it? They will have very strong opinions.*

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus → Tuesday's verse — "Yellow, yellow corn from a field so wide, / pull the leaves back — look inside!" (peel slowly, whisper "look inside") — → chorus. Full song on page 8.

Day 3 · Turkey Feathers

Today's words: **turkey** (*thank you · please come back*)

Grab: a big **hand-print turkey** on card in the Magic Box (draw round your own hand — the thumb is the head, the fingers are the tail) and a handful of **real feathers**, five of them cut shortest to longest; a marker pen; the 羽 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box weighs almost nothing and gives the softest dry whisper when you tip it. Chant, shake twice, then peek in for a very long time.

EVERYONE “What's in the box? What's in the box?”

Lift out **one** feather. Hold it right up above your head, let go, and everybody watches it float all the way down to the floor in silence.

TEACHER “Whose feather is that? There's a whole **tail** in here... and here is the bird it belongs to.” (*lift out the hand-print turkey and hold it up*)

Elbows out, wobble them. **“Turkey!”** and the whole class gobbles.

4 MIN TEACH · TURKEY

Stand up for this one. Everybody copies, one line at a time:

A turkey is **fat**, (*round arms out in front of your tummy*)
 a turkey is **brown**, (*pat yourself all over*)
 a turkey says **GOBBLE** — (*wobble a hand under your chin*)
 and his tail fans **ROUND!** (*one big fan opened out behind you*)

Now show them the trick: your **hand** is the turkey. Thumb is the head, four fingers are the tail. Everybody makes one in the air and gobbles with their thumb.

Then the five feathers, laid out in a fan shortest → longest, counted along the row. Littles: **“Turkey!”** with the gobble. Bigs: **“The turkey has a big tail.” “This feather is the longest.”**

Teacher fails: *push the feathers carefully into the turkey's beak, one at a time, standing back to admire it. “What a beautiful tail.” Hold it. Wait.*

Chinese moment: the 羽 card joins 谢 · 请 on the mat — 羽毛, a feather. Then tell them a turkey in Chinese is 火鸡, a fire chicken. That is worth exactly one enormous laugh and no drilling whatsoever.

3 MIN GAME · THE TURKEY'S TAIL

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” The hand-print turkey is propped up where everybody can see it, with a bare tail and a basket of feathers beside it.

TEACHER “Take a feather. Put it in his tail — and tell us **one thing you are thankful for.**” (*do the first one yourself: “I am thankful for Whale Class.”*)

Littles give one word and it counts completely: **“Mama!” “Milk!” “Dog!”** Bigs owe the sentence: **“I am thankful for my baby brother.”**

No feather goes into the tail silently. By the end the turkey has a full fan of feathers and the whole class's week is written on it.

Write each one on its feather as they say it, in front of them, in big letters. Friday's gratitude tree is built out of these — do not skip the writing or Friday loses half its material.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody's hands fanned out behind them like tails. Whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE “Gobble... gobble... **TURKEY!**” (*the tail-fan hands thrown right open on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? 10 Fat Turkeys (Tony Johnston) — count them down on ten fingers and let them do the falling-off noises.

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus → Wednesday's verse — “Gobble, gobble, gobble — a turkey so fat, / a big brown tail — fancy that!” (each gobble lower than the last) — → chorus. Full song on page 8.

THURSDAY

Day 4 • Share the Pie

Today's words: **share** · **pie** (*thank you* · *please* · *turkey come back*)

Grab: a **real pie** (or a loaf, or a plate of steamed buns) in the Magic Box — enough for one small piece each; a **cloth tablecloth**; one serving plate, one serving spoon, a napkin per child; a knife you keep hold of; the 分 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is **warm**, and it **smells**. Do not shake it. Carry it slowly round the circle and hold it under three or four noses on the way.

EVERYONE "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

TEACHER "Sniff... sniff... oh. Oh my goodness." (*lift the pie out with both hands and hold it high, saying nothing at all for one long beat*)

Then the tablecloth: two children take a corner each, shake it right out, and lay it in the middle of the circle. The pie goes in the middle of the cloth.

Hands passing sideways. **"Share!"**

4 MIN TEACH • SHARE & PIE

The whole four minutes is the real thing, done slowly, with the food in your hands.

One **pie**... (*hold it up on two flat hands*)
and lots and lots of children! (*sweep one arm right round the circle*)
So we cut it, and we pass it, (*cut once, then pass sideways*)
and we **SHARE** it! (*hand a piece to the child beside you*)

Cut it where they can all see, and count the pieces out loud until there are enough for every person in the room, you included. Then the exchange, one child at a time, and **nobody eats until everybody has some**:

EVERYONE "Please may I have some?" — "Here you are." — "Thank you." — "You're welcome."

Littles do **"Please!"** and **"Thank you!"** with the two gestures, and that is a full turn. Bigs give all four lines, and the child serving gives the answers.

Teacher fails: take the biggest piece first, sit straight down and start eating it happily while nineteen children stare at you. Chew. Wait.

Chinese moment: the 分 card goes down — 分享, to share. Then count the pieces round the circle in Chinese, 一人一块, one person one piece, until it comes out exactly right.

3 MIN GAME • THE SHARING PLATE

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" One plate, one snack, one serving spoon, for the whole class.

TEACHER "You do not serve **yourself**. You serve the friend **next to you** — and then they serve the next one." (*hand the plate to the first child*)

The plate goes right round: each child holds it for their neighbour, who says **"Please may I have some?"**, takes one piece, and answers **"Thank you."** The server says **"You're welcome."** Littles hand over a napkin instead of the spoon and say **"Please!"**

Bigs may hold the serving spoon on their own. The last child in the circle serves *you*, and you say the words properly too.

Slow it right down. Leave a whole silent second between each line — the silence is what makes them listen for the words. This is Montessori grace and courtesy, and it works precisely because it is real food and a real plate.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everybody sitting round the cloth, hands cupped as if holding something to pass. Whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE "Please... thank you... SHARE!" (*hands pushed out flat, offering, on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? Stone Soup — everybody puts one thing in the pot and everybody eats. Read it sitting on the tablecloth.

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice sitting round the laid tablecloth → Thursday's counting verse — "One for you and one for me, / sharing, sharing — one, two, three!" — → chorus. Full song on page 8.

Day 5 • Gratitude Tree + Big Review

Today's words: **thank you • please • share • turkey • pie** — the whole week

Grab: the folded **gratitude-tree cloth** (a big bare tree, no leaves) in the Magic Box with every prop from the week underneath it; Wednesday's written-on feathers; a basket of paper leaves, a pot of pegs and a marker; the awards (print pack page 17); the 心 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box comes out fat and bulging and will not quite shut.

TEACHER "Today the box is **FULL** — it has our whole **WEEK** inside it!"

Pull each prop out and hold it up in complete silence. They will supply the word long before you can.

The thank-you card → **"Thank you!"** The corn → **"Please!"** The feathered turkey → **"Turkey!"** The empty pie plate → **"Share!"** **"Pie!"**

Last of all, a folded cloth. Shake it right out — a big bare tree with no leaves on it at all. Everybody waits. Hands over hearts: **"Thank you!"**

4 MIN TEACH • THE WHOLE WEEK, THEN THE TREE

Everybody stands. We tell the whole week with our bodies, twice — slowly, then fast:

Thank you — for everything! (*flat hand from the chin, forward*)

Please — may I have some? (*palms together, small bow*)

Turkey — gobble, gobble! (*wobble your chin, fan your tail*)

Pie — mmm! (*round shape in the air, then rub your tummy*)

And we **SHARE** it, every bit! (*hand it to the person beside you*)

Littles do the five gestures and shout the five words. Bigs owe a whole sentence each: **"Thank you, Teacher."** **"Please may I have some?"** **"I want to share with you."**

Teacher fails: on "and we share it", sweep everything on the cloth back into your own lap with both arms and hold on tight. Look pleased. Wait for it.

Chinese moment: the 心 card joins the row — 谢 · 请 · 羽 · 分 · 心, the whole week laid out on the mat. Read along it together, pointing, and finish on 谢谢 said to the person sitting next to you.

3 MIN GAME • THE GRATITUDE TREE

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The tree cloth is pegged up on the wall at child height. Wednesday's feathers are already on one branch.

TEACHER "Come and hang **your** leaf on our tree — and tell us who it is for."

One child at a time: peg a leaf on and say it out loud. Littles give the one name: **"Mama!"** Bigs give the sentence: **"I am thankful for my grandma."** Write each one on its leaf as they say it.

Add the families' own thank-yous from the notes you asked for, read out one by one. By the end the bare tree is covered and the whole room's gratitude is hanging on the wall.

Leave it up. Parents find their own name on it at pick-up time and read the entire week off the wall — and nearly every leaf says mama or baba. That is your parent report done, for free.

1 MIN CLOSE + AWARDS

Every child gets a "You are a STAR!" award to take home. Then, standing in front of the finished tree, with all five gestures:

EVERYONE "Please... share... **THANK YOU, EVERYBODY!**" (*all twenty hands fly forward from their chins at the tree on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? Read the whole tree out loud, leaf by leaf, with the class chorusing "thank you!" after every single one.

Today's song moment (3 min): the finale — chorus → Monday's thank-you verse → Tuesday's corn → Wednesday's turkey → Thursday's sharing → Friday's verse ("Please" is the word that opens the door, / "thank you" brings you so much more!) → chorus, standing in front of the gratitude tree. That run-through IS the week's review.

★ Theme Song · “Thank You, Thank You”

The one song of the week — sung at every circle. Same chorus daily, one new verse each morning, full song on Friday.

C (0003)

F (2010)

G7 (0212)

Strum: Down · Down · Down-Up (“thank — you — thank-a”). Can’t manage it yet? Four slow downs per bar works fine — the kids only hear the fun.

Tempo: warm and rolling, like people passing dishes round a table — not a march. **There is no Am this week at all:** the whole song is C, F and G7, and all five daily verses use only C and G7, so the ukulele is easier than it has been all month. Chant it without the uke first; add the chords once they know the actions.

CHORUS — SING IT EVERY SINGLE DAY

C Thank you, thank you — F thank you to C day! (flat hand from the chin, forward)

F Please and C thank you — G7 that’s what we C say! (a small bow)

C Share the F corn and share the C pie, (pass your hands left, then right)

F Every C body eats — G7 you and C I! (rub your tummy)

Sing the chorus twice each time. The actions are the whole point — a two-year-old who does the thank-you hand and the little bow has understood the entire week, whether or not a single word comes out.

ONE VERSE A DAY — EVERY ONE OF THEM ONLY C AND G7

Monday · Thank you

C Thank you for the sun, thank you for the rain, (circle overhead, then falling fingers)

G7 Thank you, thank you — a C gain and again! (the thank-you hand, twice, big)

Tuesday · Corn

C Yellow, yellow corn from a field so wide, (both arms opened right out)

G7 Pull the leaves back — C look inside! (peel a husk, then peer in)

Wednesday · Turkey

C Gobble, gobble, gobble — a turkey so fat, (three gobbles, then round arms)

G7 A big brown tail — C fancy that! (fan your tail, then palms up)

Thursday · Share

C One for you and one for me, (point out, then at yourself)

G7 Sharing, sharing — C one, two, three! (three fingers, one at a time)

Friday · Please

C “Please” is the word that opens the door, (push a door open)

G7 “Thank you” brings you C so much more! (both arms opened right out)

The build: each day sing chorus → today’s verse → chorus. By Friday they know five verses without ever “learning” the song — and Friday’s finale, sung standing in front of the finished gratitude tree, doubles as your review of the whole week.

IF YOU'RE BRAND NEW TO UKULELE

Practice this loop for five minutes tonight: C (4 strums) → F (4 strums) → C → G7 → C. That is the entire chorus, and the verses are only C and G7 — two chords, one finger’s difference. If your fingers get stuck, put the uke down and do the hand actions instead: the class will not notice, and the thank-you hand and the little bow carry the meaning either way.