

Breathe Life Into the Story

Regan Rose and the Thanksgiving Three-Pointer

By McKinley Manor

One pink basketball. Three turkeys. One unforgettable trip through time! Invite children into Regan's fictional adventure with simple props, imaginative play, and conversations about gratitude, helping, and sharing our talents.

Before the story: set the scene

Set out a selection of Thanksgiving books for children to browse. Invite them to explore the pictures and talk about giving thanks, sharing food, and helping others. Then introduce Regan's story and wonder what might happen when a basketball player takes a surprising trip through time.

For the classroom library

Offer a mix of books about gratitude, family gatherings, sharing food, and helping others. Include stories that reflect different families and traditions. For Thanksgiving history, choose accurate, age-appropriate titles that include Wampanoag perspectives and recognize Native people as part of life today.

Gather what you have

- The storybook and a comfortable reading space.
- A large cardboard box or paper doorway; a pretend telephone is optional.
- A pink ball, or any soft, lightweight ball you already have.
- Play food, pots, spoons, bowls, cups, and napkins.
- Construction paper, crayons or markers, glue, and child-safe scissors.

Keep the invitation simple

Choose the activities that fit your group. Spread them over several days if you like. Children may join through movement, words, drawing, observing, or pretend play from their seats.

A note for the reader: Introduce this book as a made-up time-travel adventure. Use separate, reliable nonfiction resources for questions about history and Wampanoag people; distinguish those sources from the story's imagined events.

Step Into Plymouth Harbor

Four invitations to play

Build a Time-Travel Booth

Turn a large cardboard box into a doorway to Regan's adventure. An adult can cut the openings. No large box? Frame a pretend doorway with paper.

Bring the Pink Basketball

Use a pink ball to practice rolling, passing, and gentle tosses in an open play space.

Cook on a Pretend Hearth

Create a cardboard hearth with tissue-paper flames. Add play food, pots, and spoons to imagine cooking together.

Set the Gathering Table

Gather bowls, cups, and pretend food. Make a place for everyone!

Become a time traveler

Children decorate paper headbands with a clock, a pink basketball, or the year 1621. The reader can wear one, too, as the time-travel guide. Paper strips and crayons are all you need.

Enter the story

Gather by the booth. Walk through or travel in imagination from wherever you are. Count down: **"Three, two, one - Plymouth Harbor!"** Settle into the reading circle and introduce the adventure: **"One pink basketball. Three turkeys. Where will this trip through time take us?"**

While you read

Keep the first reading moving. Welcome children's reactions and keep questions brief. Save longer conversations and dramatic play for later readings. Children can pretend to stir a pot or practice a basketball motion without a ball.

Head, Heart, Hands

Choose a few questions rather than asking every one. Give children time to think, talk, draw, or point to a picture.

Head - What did we discover?

- How did Regan travel into the past?
- What did she discover about cooking on a hearth?
- How did her basketball skills become useful?
- Which parts of this adventure are make-believe?

Heart - What did we feel?

- How might Regan have felt arriving in an unfamiliar place?
- How do you feel when someone welcomes you?
- How does it feel to share something you're good at?
- Who or what are you thankful for today?

Hands - What can we do?

- How could we welcome another class to our table?
- What could you help prepare for a shared meal?
- How could you use one of your talents to help someone?
- How could you show someone you're thankful for them?

Bring your talents along

Regan brings her basketball skills into an unexpected adventure. Ask what children could bring: helping hands, creative ideas, a friendly smile, or a knack for making others laugh. Everyone has something to offer!

Gather, Play, and Look Closer

Gather for a Friendship Feast

Invite another class to share a meal or snack. Each classroom can contribute one simple item, or enjoy regular school lunch together with a special addition. Children can make invitations, decorate tables, and welcome guests. Follow school food and allergy guidelines. The magic is in gathering, helping, and giving thanks together.

Take the Three-Pointer Challenge

At recess or outdoor playtime, set up a child-sized hoop, perhaps borrowed from a classroom family, and a soft, lightweight ball. Mark a nearby two-point line and a farther three-point line with chalk or securely placed tape. Let children choose where to try. Adjust the hoop and distances so everyone can participate. Take turns cheering and retrieving the ball. Count points if children enjoy it, and celebrate practice and persistence.

Read again: look closer!

On a second reading, slow down and explore the illustrations. Search for hidden turkeys and details children missed before. Pause at the car that sped by and invite ideas without giving away an answer.

- Where is a turkey hiding?
- What do you notice about that car?
- What makes you think that?
- What new detail did you discover this time?

Make a Thankful Hand Turkey

Trace each child's hand on paper. Turn the thumb into a turkey's head and the fingers into colorful feathers. Children draw or write something they are thankful for on each feather; an adult can record their words. Display the turkeys together or decorate the Friendship Feast tables.

Make Something With Love

Make a Paper-Loop Squirrel

Supplies: Brown construction paper, paper scraps, glue, crayons, and child-safe scissors.

1. Cut two brown paper strips about 3 inches wide, one longer than the other.
2. Curl each strip into a loop and glue the ends together. Glue the smaller loop on top of the larger body loop.
3. Cut out a face and ears. Draw the eyes, nose, and smile, then attach the face to the front of the smaller loop.
4. Add paper feet underneath and arms at the sides.
5. Cut out a big, bushy tail and glue it behind the body. Draw lines for fur.
6. Add a paper acorn to hold, if you like!

Let children choose their own shapes and expressions. An adult can help with cutting and hold the loops while the glue sets.

Take the magic home: a Thanksgiving card

Use the separate **Thanksgiving Family Card** printable or fold plain paper to make a card. Children can choose a family member or someone who cares for them. Invite them to draw, write, or dictate their own messages:

- I love when we...
- Thank you for...
- You make me smile when...

Color the front, sign the card, and take it home to share. For the two-page printable, print double-sided, flip on the short edge, and fold in half.

Family invitation: Ask your child about Regan's adventure. Share something you appreciate about one another and choose one small way to help at home.