# THE WILD TURKEY

Episode Guide



**When many people hear the word turkey, they think of a holiday meal.** But in our house? We think of magnificent feathers! Wild turkeys are truly wild. They can run faster than most humans, fly through the forest at incredible speeds, and make gobbling calls that can be heard up to a mile away. That's why we're spending this episode discovering the amazing lives of North America's wild turkey, including why males show off their shimmering feathers while females prefer to blend in.

In our story, we meet Albert, a rather grumpy wild turkey who is not a fan of gratitude despite making his home in a town called Grateful Falls. When his friend Hazel suggests that saying thank you might actually make him feel good, Albert decides to put her theory to the test. Over three days, he conducts the Great Gratitude Experiment and makes a surprising discovery: gratitude isn't just about saying two little words. It's about caring for one another! And it feels a *lot* better than he expected.

In this week's episode extension, we're exploring the colorful world of turkey plumage. Young explorers will discover how male and female turkeys use their feathers differently, create their own colorful plumage with items around the house, and make a special Gratitude Turkey.

## AFTER YOU LISTEN, TALK ABOUT IT:

- Albert was tired of everyone telling him to be grateful. Why do you think he didn't want to say thank you? Have you ever felt that way?
- During his experiment, Albert discovered that saying thank you *and* helping others made him feel good. What did Albert learn about gratitude?
- Gratitude isn't just about saying thank you. It's also about showing others we care! What's one way you could show someone you're grateful for them?

## WHAT TO READ NEXT

**Ages 3-5**

*The Thank You Book* by Mo Willems

In this adorable conclusion to the Elephant & Piggie books, Piggie wants to thank everyone who has made her life special, but Gerald worries she might forget someone important.

*Ask:*

- Piggie has so many friends to thank! Who are some people in your life you'd like to thank, and why?
- How do you think Piggie's friends felt throughout the story?
- Piggie and Gerald thank one very special person at the end of the story. Who? How did it feel?

**Ages 6+**

*Gobble, Gobble* by Cathryn Falwell

Follow a flock of wild turkeys through the seasons in this beautifully illustrated book. Discover how turkeys live, what they eat, and how their appearance and behavior change throughout the year.

Ask:

- What differences did you notice between the male and female turkeys? How might their feathers help them survive?
- Wild turkeys depend on forests and fields for food and shelter. What's one way we can show our gratitude for the natural places animals call home?

## A FEATHERY SHOW

If you happen upon a turkey in the wild, you might have the chance to see a dazzling display. Male turkeys, called toms, will puff up their feathers like a fan and, when the sun hits them just right, they can appear bronze, copper, green, and gold. They might even shake them and turn in a circle!

Those beautiful feathers are part of the turkey's **plumage.**

It's only the males that put on that dazzling display. Female wild turkeys, called hens, usually have softer brown feathers. Why do you think male and female turkeys have such different plumage?

Let's take a closer look and find out!

### Speak Like a Scientist

**PLUMAGE:** All the feathers that cover a bird's body

**TRY IT:** The male wild turkey spread his tail feathers into a giant fan, showing off his beautiful, shimmering plumage.

## TURKEY DETECTIVES

Take a close look at the wild turkeys below.

- Compare their colors! What colors can you spot in each turkey's plumage? Which turkey has more shimmering feathers?
- Examine their tails! What do you notice about the shape and size of their tail feathers? Can you spot a turkey showing off its fan?
- What differences do you notice?

**THINK LIKE A SCIENTIST!** Male turkeys use their colorful plumage to impress females. Female turkeys have more muted brown feathers that help them blend into their surroundings. Why might blending in be especially important for a female turkey?



*Tom*



*Hens*



*Hen*



*Tom*

## PLUMAGE: THREE WAYS!



Male wild turkeys have spectacular plumage! Their feathers shimmer with beautiful shades of bronze, copper, green, and gold. When they want to impress a female, they spread their tail feathers into an enormous fan.

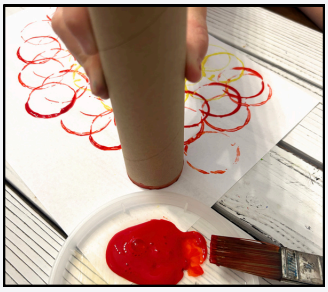
Now it's your turn to create a turkey with some spectacular plumage of its own!

We've got THREE different ways to make a colorful turkey. But here's the twist: You only need to choose ONE!

In our story, Albert discovered that gratitude isn't just about saying thank you. It's also about showing we care. And one way we can show our gratitude for our amazing planet is by using what we already have instead of buying new things or creating unnecessary waste.

So take a look around your home, gather some supplies, and choose your turkey adventure!

**Option 1: Stamp Your Plumage (Ages 3-5)**





Use an empty toilet paper roll to paint a spectacular fan of feathers!

**You'll need:** An empty toilet paper roll, washable paint, paper, and scraps of construction paper.

1. Dip the end of your toilet paper roll into paint.
2. Stamp overlapping rings onto your paper to create a colorful fan of feathers. Think of it like a rainbow of stamps.
3. Keep stamping with different colors until your turkey has a magnificent tail!
4. Cut a turkey body, beak, and wattle from construction paper scraps. Glue them onto your painted feathers.

**As you work, talk about it:** What colors would help a wild turkey blend in in *your* backyard?

**Option 2: Hands-On Plumage (Ages 3-5)**





Turn your own handprints into a turkey's colorful tail!

**You'll need:** Washable paint, paper, and scraps of construction paper.

1. Paint your hand with your favorite feather color.
2. Press your hand onto the paper to make a handprint.
3. Wash and dry your hands carefully and then select your next color.
4. Add more handprints in different colors, arranging them into a big fan.
5. Once the paint dries, add a construction paper turkey body, beak, eyes, and wattle.

**As you work, talk about it:** How many feathers can we create with each hand? Wild turkeys have between 5,000 - 6,000 feathers!

**Option 3: Nature's Plumage!**





Let nature provide the feathers for your turkey!

Y**ou'll need:** Fallen leaves, small pinecones, twigs, or other natural treasures. For this option, the foraging is half the fun.

1. Head outside and collect a few natural treasures that have already fallen to the ground.
2. Arrange your treasures into a beautiful fan of turkey feathers.
3. Use leaves, twigs, or other materials to create your turkey's body and face.
4. Take a picture of your creation! You can leave your natural treasures outside when you're finished.

**TIP:** We used air-dry clay to "glue" our creations together and then carefully removed the clay when finished.

**WILD AND KIND CONNECTION:** Showing gratitude for the Earth doesn't have to be complicated! Sometimes it's as simple as using what we already have, making less waste, and appreciating the materials nature provides.

## MAKE A GRATITUDE TURKEY

In our story, Albert discovered something surprising: gratitude can help us feel happier and more connected to the people around us!



Now it's your turn to try a gratitude experiment of your own.

We're making a special turkey with feathers full of things we're thankful for. But there's a twist! We're keeping our gratitude messages a secret until Thanksgiving or another family moment.

**You will need:**

- An empty toilet paper roll
- Strips of colorful paper (scraps work great!)
- Markers or crayons
- A stapler or tape
- Scraps of construction paper for a beak and wattle
- Googly eyes or a marker
- Glue

1. **Build your turkey!** Start with an empty toilet paper roll. Add eyes, a paper beak, and a wattle to give your turkey a face.
2. **Think thankful thoughts!** Give each family member a few strips of colorful paper. On each strip, write or draw something you're grateful for. It could be a person, a place, a favorite memory, or something wonderful about nature!
3. **Make your feathers!** Curl each strip into a loop with the thankful message on the inside. Secure the ends with a staple or tape so your message stays hidden.
4. **Give your turkey some plumage!** Attach your colorful loops to the back of your turkey, spreading them out to make a magnificent fan of gratitude feathers!
5. **Save the surprise!** Put your Gratitude Turkey somewhere special. On Thanksgiving or at another family or friendship event, carefully open the loops and read your messages aloud. What wonderful things is your family grateful for?







**WILD AND KIND CONNECTION:** After opening your 'feathers' to share your gratitude, you can carefully remove any non-recyclable parts and recycle your turkey. Or, save the scraps for another craft!

## YOUR WILD AND KIND MISSION

**Gratitude isn't just about saying thank you.** It's also about what we do.

In our story, Albert discovered that showing gratitude helped him feel happier and more connected to his friends. Scientists have found that practicing gratitude can help people feel happier, strengthen relationships, and inspire kindness.

And we can show gratitude to our amazing planet Earth, too! After all, nature gives us so much to be thankful for.

### YOUR CHALLENGE: THE THREE-DAY GRATITUDE EXPERIMENT!

- **Day 1: SAY IT!** Thank someone who makes your life better. Tell them why you're grateful!
- **Day 2: SHOW IT!** Do something kind for someone else. How does it make you feel?
- **Day 3: SHARE IT!** Show your gratitude for the Earth by reusing something, reducing waste, or caring for nature.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** Did practicing gratitude change how you felt? What did you discover? Because when we appreciate something, we can also help take care of it!

