A Pilgrims Unit Study is perfect for the month of November, culminating in the Thanksgiving feast. Here are the activities that we enjoyed during this unit.

**Book suggestions:**
You can go to your local library to find some of these books, or maybe they are already on your bookshelf:

For younger students:
- *The Light and the Glory for Children* (Peter Marshall)
- *If You Lived in Colonial Times* (Anne McGovern)
- *If You Sailed on the Mayflower in 1620* (Anne McGovern)
- *Three Young Pilgrims* (Cheryl Harness)
- *The Very First Thanksgiving Day* (Rhonda Gowler Greene)
- *Giving Thanks* (Kate Waters)

For older students:
- *Of Plymouth Plantation* (William Bradford)
- *The Light and the Glory* (Peter Marshall)

**Build a Mayflower ship and create simple costumes:**
- Create a *Mayflower* ship off your back deck with an old bed sheet and PVC pipes. (See “Designing a Mayflower Ship PDF” for specific instructions.)
- Re-enact the Pilgrims coming over on the *Mayflower*. Create simple costumes like a black construction paper hat with buckle or buy Pilgrim hats and bonnets at a costume shop or Goodwill. Otherwise just skip the hats and have the kids dress in white shirts and black pants or skirts.

**Pack a trunk to take on the Mayflower:** Ask your children to brainstorm what they would need in the New World. Here are some of the ideas we came up with:
- seeds (for a garden, for food, to survive)
- knife (to cut branches for making a fire, to cut food)
- ax (to chop down trees to make a cabin)
- rifle (to hunt for meat)
- large cooking pot (to make stew or soup, to cook food)
- blankets (to keep warm, especially in winter)
- extra pairs of shoes (especially for the adults who won't outgrow them)
- Bible (to draw closer to God)
- parchment and ink (to write a diary, to draw a diagram for planting, to keep records)
- spoons and forks (for eating)
- fishing hook and fishing line (to catch fish)

**Make Pilgrim foods:**
- **Corn:** Make foods out of corn, like corn bread. Read *Corn is Maize* by Aliki. Grow your own
corn in your backyard, or visit a corn field and see how tall the corn grows. Read about how Squanto told the Pilgrims to put fish heads into the ground when planting corn, so that the corn would grow better.

- **Make butter.** Buy some heavy cream from the grocery store. Place it into a container with a lid. Put a marble into the container. Take turns shaking the container until the liquid turns into solid butter. Eat it on fresh bread.
- **Make an entire Thanksgiving dinner.** Cook wild turkey, squash, beans, venison, fish, corn, nuts, berries, and bread. You can have some people dress up as Native Americans and Pilgrims to get into the mood of this time period.

**Creative writing assignments**
- Write a **pageant** to re-enact the *Mayflower* story.
- Write a **monologue** of what it would be like to be a Pilgrim on the long voyage over the ocean, and how the Pilgrim felt to be on dry land again.
- Younger kids can do copywork from *Psalm 100*.
- Write about how Squanto was such a big help to the Pilgrims, and how the Pilgrims might not have survived without him.
- Write a **thankful journal**, with a list of things that you are thankful for. Decorate the outside cover of the journal.
- Write a **newspaper** for the Pilgrims, giving news and ads that fit into that time period.
- Write a **how-to essay**, describing how to play a game of marbles, how to make corn bread, how to catch a rabbit in a trap, or how to do any other Pilgrim activity.
- Write a **comparison-contrast essay**, comparing and contrasting the Pilgrims and the Native Americans. Start by drawing a Venn diagram (two overlapping circles), with similarities in the overlap, and differences inside the circles where they are not overlapped.
- Write a **description** of the first Thanksgiving dinner.

**Other hands-on activities for Pilgrims:**
- Play a game of **marbles**. Draw a circle in the dirt with a stick. If you are doing this indoors, you can use masking tape to mark out a circle. Spill some small marbles into the circle. Give each player a large marble (a “shooter”) to knock out the smaller marbles from the circle. Keep the marbles you knock out, and see who has the most marbles at the end of the game.
- **Make candles.** It's easiest if you buy a candle-making kit from a craft supply store, but you can make candles with a tin can, wax from crayons and wicking. (I give you instructions with pictures in the video.) You can make easier beeswax candles by buying a kit, and rolling the beeswax around a wick. These beeswax candles are so easy, even a toddler could make them.
- Get a **soap-making** kit from a craft supply store. This is super easy and only takes five minutes. You liquefy the chopped soap in the microwave, then add fragrance or color, and pour it into a mold. The soap shapes are nice to give away as gifts.
- Play a **board game** about Pilgrims. Either make your own game, or play *Made for Trade*.
- Make **tin can lanterns.** Grab an empty tin can, and remove the label. Grab a black Sharpie marker and draw dots in a nice design. Fill the empty tin can with water, and place it in your freezer for two days. Using a hammer and large nail, pound a hole in each dot. Allow the ice to melt, and place a tea light into your finished lantern. Turn out the lights one evening, and just use lanterns and candles to light your home. My kids loved this activity and begged to do it more often!