



PRINTABLE VERSION

HOLIDAYS IN SCHOOLS PART 1: PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Cleve Bryan (cbryan@nbc40.net) - 11/19/07 05:32 pm

Last Updated - 11/19/07 07:13 pm

[E-mail Story](#) [Print Story](#) [Watch Video](#)

CAPE MAY - At our Lady Star of the Sea Regional School, prayer comes before and after meals.

With 199 pre-school to 8th grade students, each young child is paired with an older prayer partner.

"We have to help her understand that we're here because of God and God creates us and we're telling her that we're all coming together to give thanks for just this school and our life and over parents and everything," says 8th grader Gabrielle Adams.

Today's meal was a special Thanksgiving luncheon thrown by the school for the students and outside guests who might not otherwise have people with which to celebrate thanksgiving.

How to teach kids about holidays has become a contentious topic in public schools throughout the country, were many have interpreted the separation of church and state to mean keeping quiet about God, but that's not the case at this school.

"We're allowed to mention the Pilgrims and religious freedom and how faith shaped their lives and how faith shapes the lives of our children today," says principal Joan Dollinger.

School officials say Thanksgiving education is derived from social studies curriculum intertwined with religious curriculum and the way they see it here, the two can't be separated.

"The history is faith based," says social studies teacher Donna DiPasquale, "The Pilgrims gave thanks to their God at Thanksgiving. So for us it's a natural transition to say that we are thanking God."

Teachers here say, by educating on Thanksgiving without separating church and state, the more students learn, the more grateful people they become.

Adams says, "(when I was young) I just gave thanks for the food on my table and now I'm beginning to see that I give thanks for everything, just to see how lucky I am."