

LEADERSHIP LIVES

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP / NAVIGATING LIFE

Discussion Guide created by Grok based on:

***The Story of the Mayflower Pilgrims* by Margot Morrell**

(For homeschool families – flexible for ages 6–12; adapt questions up or down as needed)

Overview for Parents/Teachers

This picture-book style story introduces the Mayflower Pilgrims' journey from religious persecution in England, through life in Holland, the dangerous Atlantic crossing, settlement at Plymouth, friendship with Native Americans (Samoset, Squanto, and Massasoit), the peace treaty, and the first Thanksgiving. It emphasizes courage, faith, perseverance, community, and gratitude. Read the book aloud together (or have older children read independently), then use the sections below for discussion, vocabulary, and activities. Total suggested time: 30–60 minutes plus optional extensions.

Pre-Reading Questions

- What do you already know about the Mayflower or the Pilgrims?
- Why might a group of people leave their home country forever?
- Have you ever felt "all alone" in a new place? How did that feel?

Key Vocabulary (Discuss or look up as you read)

- Pilgrims

- Atlantic Ocean / Cape Cod / Plymouth
- Hurricane season
- Treaty
- Native American / Samoset / Squanto / Massasoit
- Harvest / Thanksgiving
- Descended

Comprehension Questions

(Check understanding – answer from the text)

1. When the Pilgrims arrived in America, what three things did they *not* find? (No one to greet them, no place to buy things, no place to stay.)
2. Why did King Henry VIII make life hard for some people in England?
3. What did the people we call Pilgrims want to do that the king did not allow?
4. Where did the Pilgrims escape to on their second try? How long did they live there?
5. Why did they decide to leave Holland for America?
6. What danger did they face on the Mayflower that they didn't know about ahead of time?
7. How long did the ocean journey last? Describe the conditions on the ship.
8. What happened to the teenager during a storm? How was he saved?

9. What did the Pilgrims do when they first reached Cape Cod?
10. What problems did they face when they arrived (water, firewood, season)?
11. How did they finally find the perfect place to settle? What made it perfect?
12. What did they name their new settlement, and what did they start building?
13. Who walked into their community one morning and said, "Welcome Englishmen!"?
14. What two important skills did Samoset teach them?
15. Whom did Samoset introduce them to, and what important agreement did they make?
16. What happened to the Mayflower in April?
17. Who did the Pilgrims invite to celebrate the first Thanksgiving, and how many came?
18. What does the last page tell us about the Pilgrims today?

Deeper Discussion Questions

(Encourage thinking, values, and connections)

- **Faith & Courage:** The Pilgrims risked everything to worship and study the Bible the way they believed was right. What does it mean to stand up for your beliefs even when it is hard or dangerous? Have you ever had to do something brave because of what you believe?
- **Perseverance:** They tried to leave England more than once, lived 12 years in a foreign country, and survived a stormy ocean voyage. What kept them going? Can you think of a time you kept trying even when something was difficult?
- **Community & Loneliness:** At the beginning they were “all alone.” How did friendships with Samoset, Squanto, and Massasoit change that? Why is it important to help newcomers or people who feel alone?
- **Gratitude:** After a hard first year they celebrated Thanksgiving. What are you thankful for in your own life right now? How can we show gratitude the way the Pilgrims did?
- **Peace & Friendship:** Their treaty with Massasoit lasted more than 50 years. What helps people from different backgrounds become friends and keep peace?
- **Legacy:** Millions of Americans today are descended from this tiny group. How can the choices of a small number of people long ago still matter today?
- Compare then and now: How is starting a new home different (or similar) today versus 1620?

Hands-On Activities & Extensions

1. **Map Work:** Trace the Pilgrims' route (England → Holland → Atlantic → Cape Cod → Plymouth) on a simple world or Atlantic map. Mark the places mentioned.
2. **Timeline:** Create a simple illustrated timeline of the main events (escape to Holland, voyage, arrival, meeting Samoset, treaty, Thanksgiving).
3. **Role-Play or Reader's Theater:** Act out key scenes (leaving England, the storm and the teenager overboard, meeting Samoset, the first Thanksgiving).
4. **Gratitude Feast:** Plan a small "Thanksgiving" meal or snack. Each person shares one thing they are thankful for, just as the Pilgrims did after the harvest.
5. **Corn Planting Science:** Research (or experiment with) the Native American "Three Sisters" planting method (corn, beans, squash) that Squanto taught. Plant seeds if the season allows.
6. **Letter Writing:** Write a short letter as if you were a Pilgrim child writing home on the Mayflower's return voyage. What would you tell family in England or Holland?
7. **Art:** Draw or watercolor your favorite scene, or design a simple "Plymouth" fort and homes.
8. **Further Reading / Research** (for older students): Look up primary sources such as William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* (simplified

excerpts), or learn more about the Wampanoag people and Massasoit.

Closing Reflection Prompt

“The Pilgrims left everything familiar to build a community where they could live by their faith. What is one way you can show courage, kindness, or gratitude this week?”

This guide keeps the focus on the book’s text while opening natural opportunities for history, character, faith, and hands-on learning—perfect for flexible homeschool days. Enjoy exploring the story together!