

Meredith O'Brien's Dysfunctional Family Bingo Card, 2009

	B	I	N	G	O
1	You notice that your nephew is looking under the weather. When you inquire about his health, your sister says, "He was diagnosed with swine flu yesterday, but he's feeling much better today."	Your boys start having a light saber duel and duel their way right into your parents' new flat-screen TV, knocking it to the ground where it falls to the carpet and makes a sickening crunch sound.	Your brother announces that he and his wife are "doing things differently this year" for Thanksgiving dinner: All locally grown, organic veggies. No meat. Your grandfather mutters, "Commies!"	The parent of a newborn changes the baby's diaper on the kitchen table -- near the just-out-of-the-oven turkey -- because no other place else was considered "clean enough."	Your father-in-law will not stop playing "pull my finger" with the grandkids. In fact, he asks for some baked beans so he can "take my game to the next level."
2	As you're carving a gorgeous, organic turkey at your impeccably decorated table, your college-aged niece says, "If it's not free-range, I'm not eating it. That's just cruel."	You've screwed up the gravy. It's awful, lumpy and runny, a total mess. You overhear your mother-in-law saying, "I knew he should've married that other girl."	After everyone's left, you discover that someone must've used the toilet paper holder on the wall to get an extra boost to get up from the toilet, because the handle's dangling from the drywall.	You sneeze into your elbow and your aunt screams, "Oh my God! Swine flu!" and rushes out of the room to don the face mask she had in her purse and slather herself with Purell.	Your grandfather asks, "How long is it OK to keep fresh meatballs?" After you say "a few days," he yells, "Told you so" to your nana who brought meatballs as an appetizer.
3	Soon after you make your entrance, your mother eyes you up and down. "You're looking more and more like Joan Holloway." You can't figure out if it's a compliment.	Your 18-year-old niece has spent the entire time texting. You and your spouse start a pool to guess how many texts she's sent. You recruit others to play. Winner gets a bottle of scotch.	FREE SPOT	Your spouse says you need to "liven up" your marriage & wants to "get busy" in your parents' bedroom. Of course your niece and nephew were hiding under the bed the whole time.	When you start breastfeeding your infant, your father's face turns white and he flees the room. Your aunt's husband, however, remains next to you, staring intensely.
4	You ask your mom if she's excited that your sister's having a baby. "What baby?! She didn't tell ME!" Your mother gives you & your sister the silent treatment for the rest of evening.	Your aunt unloads on your married cousin who has no kids, just as she's passing the corn casserole, "Enough already! When are you two gonna have a baby?! I'm the only one here without a grandkid."	Your teacher sister-in-law gets into a nasty argument with your banker uncle which includes the phrases, "TARP welfare," "Goldman Sachs skimmers," "socialist slackers" & Satan.	You start raving about how great the <i>Mad Men</i> finale was and someone shouts, "No! Don't spoil it! I haven't seen it yet. It's still on my DVR!" Even though it aired weeks ago.	An older relative unwittingly runs over and crushes your mailbox while backing out of the driveway. Despite the loud "crack" sound, he keeps on driving.
5	A guest asks your grade school-aged kid to please fetch him a can of soda. Thinking himself clever, the child energetically shakes up the can before it handing it over.	While helping to clear the table, you accidentally drop the cranberry sauce onto the lace tablecloth. It was your mother-in-law's mother's. "My first Thanksgiving without Mom," your mother-in-law sobs into her hands.	You walk into the room to see your brother showing your grandmother your under-aged niece's Facebook page, the one with the drunken party photos and F-bomb-laden status updates.	Everyone gathers at the table. Just before folks dig in, your charming child says, "That's IT? That's all we're having? I want a PB&J!" You gulp down your ample glass of wine.	Your dad demands to know what's wrong with his computer because he can't see any of your status updates on Facebook and he's mysteriously no longer your friend. He insists you fix it right now on your laptop.

Image credit: Meredith O'Brien/Picket Fence Post, 11/24/09.