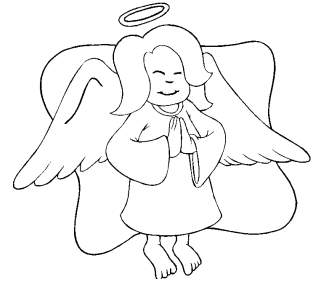


Christmas

Bulletin Boards for Christmas

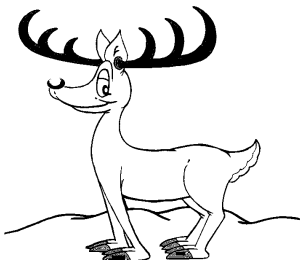
The title says: 'The Angels in Room ____ wish you a Merry Christmas!' You can put music notes in glitter above the angels. Trace each child's foot with shoes off so the toes make the bumps on the bottom (the skirt). The heel becomes the head of the angel. Then have the students trace the two hands with the fingers together - these will become the wings of the angel. Glue the hands behind the body of the angel. Use a gold pipe cleaner halo. The children then put glue on the 'skirt' and wings and put on glitter.



For December, decorate the classroom door. Paint a chimney to look like bricks with red bulletin board paper for the backing. The children then decorate small stockings and print their names large in the middle. Tack them to the chimney. 'Grade One stockings were hung by the chimney with care.'

Art for Christmas

Reindeer



Have had the children trace their hands on brown construction paper. Then they glue their paper hands onto a sentence strip or a strip of paper. Then make it into a headband - instant reindeer!

Make a simple Rudolph by tracing each child's foot (with shoe on) for the head, tracing the hands with the fingers spread for the antlers, a red pom-pom or button for the nose and add wiggle eyes.

Make Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer masks. You will need paper plates (one per child); brown, black, and red construction paper; scissors; glue; markers or crayons; single whole punch; rubber bands (two per child). Cut reindeer nose, and antlers out of construction paper. Glue onto plate. Draw a mouth. Cut holes out for eyes. Punch hole on both sides of plate and attach rubber bands. Let children wear reindeer masks while singing 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'.

Tree Ornaments

Re-cycle old Christmas cards! Trace a jar lid over the focal part of the card. Cut out the circle. Simply press the circle into the jar lid. Glue another circle to the other side of the jar lid. Glue a ribbon around the edge with a loop at the top, and you have a quick and fun craft. They could also pop their own photo into the jar lid.

"We made pine cone ornaments one year. I bought several colours of glitter. Blue and pink turned out the prettiest. We poured glue into a plastic disposable plate and rolled the pinecone in it to coat tips with glue. Do your best not to get glue on the flat bottom. We then sprinkled them with the glitter. It took quite a bit of glitter. It was messy but lots of fun. We set the pinecones on their flat bottoms on wax paper to dry. Once dry we shook off the extra glitter and I hot glued a piece of ribbon that was a complementary colour to the bottom in a loop."

Snowmen Ornaments

Blue Ball Snowmen

"I found very nice blue shiny non-breakable tree balls. I used white acrylic paint and painted the child's fingers up to the tips and entire palm. I placed the fingers and hand around the ball with the fingers apart, so the white fingers were up around the sides of the ball and the palm was the bottom. You can see this if you hold your hand out with the fingers and thumb curved upwards, ready to receive the ball. Each finger is a 'snowman'! I sprinkled the fine white glitter while paint was wet, let kids decorate the 'snowmen' with paint markers when done. They were beautiful, and about the easiest parent Christmas gift I ever made. I bought some sparkly pipe cleaners to use as hooks, and typed up the poem on paper and had the kids decorate it."

These aren't just five snowmen
As anyone can see.
I made them with my hand
Which is a part of me.
For many years to come
You'll look back and recall
The Christmas of 200_
When my hand was this small!

"I use acrylic white paint and the children washed right away and it came off fine. I used glass balls. I found that when I placed their fingers it was much better than when they 'squeezed' the ball. I attached the poem to the ribbon and had the children sign his/her name to the poem."

"The kids wrote their names and year with gold marker. I bought beautiful gold bows with ties and attached the poem to that. The bow really makes it perfect. I asked the kids to bring in a shoebox (or any box that would fit something ornament-sized). I'm putting the ornaments in Christmas lunch bags, putting them in the boxes, and surrounding them with shredded newspaper."



"I embellished mine a little more with a small black hat cut from foam board for each 'finger' snowman, black eyes and mouth with toothpick dipped in black finger paint."

"Use a lot of paint on their hand, make sure their fingers are really spread apart (especially kids with chubby hands!). I used acrylic paint and gave each hand a squirt of liquid-type soap to 'work in' on the way to the bathroom. It comes off easily if you wash it right away."

Clay Pot Bell

Make an ornament out of small clay flower pots. Turn them upside down and have the kids paint them green to resemble a bell or a Christmas tree. They were decorated with glitter pens. Add a ribbon hanger with a large bead under the pot and a small bow. Add a small bell inside the bell.



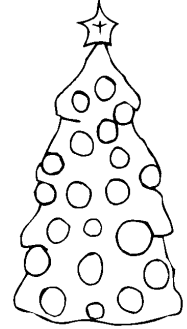
Gingerbread Ornaments

Gingerbread ornaments can be made by mixing applesauce and cinnamon (about half and half) until it is thick enough to pat out on wax paper or plastic wrap. (Some teachers add some liquid glue to the mixture to help it harden.) Use a small gingerbread cookie cutter and use a straw to make a hole at the top. Let dry for at least a week and it will harden. These will smell wonderful on your tree!

"Make great smelling gingerbread men for your tree! I had a gingerbread man pattern about 3 or 4 inches long and traced it to the back of coarse (really rough) sandpaper. The students cut them out (this also helps to sharpen their scissors). Then I gave each student a cinnamon stick to rub on the sandpaper side of the gingerbread man. It smells great. Then I gave them fabric paints to decorate the fronts. When they are dry I tape string loops to the back for them to hang up. They are adorable!"

Christmas Trees

Make a 'Froot Loops' (and/or other cereal) tree. Fold a standard size piece of green construction paper in half lengthways, draw a triangle with base (1/2 of a Xmas tree) then cut out with zigzag edged scissors (pinking shears). Cut a star shape from the yellow construction paper for the top of the tree. Have the children put the names on the back before adding the cereal. Give each child a puddle of glue on a separate paper. They gently dip each Froot Loop bit into the glue and place it on the tree. Glue the star on the top of the tree. Lay flat to dry.



"I love making a Christmas tree out of the student's footprints. They dip their feet into green paint (that's always interesting) and then they walk across a page. We cut out their feet and use them to make a tree. First tape a row of feet for the bottom of the tree with toes pointing down (just tape the heel and leave the toes loose) Then start building a pyramid by adding another shorter row on top just overlapping a bit. Keep going up until you have a tree. It's fun and it looks great!"

Snowflakes

"My favourite Christmas ornaments are the snowflakes made out of Popsicle sticks. Glue three in the middle to make the six-pointed snowflake shape. Glue suitable pasta symmetrically on the six points and paint with white paint and before the paint dries sprinkle on clear glitter. Students who don't celebrate Christmas can still make them to hang in a window at home."

Wreaths

"Provide paper plates with the centers cut out. Children can decorate them using macaroni dyed green and red, yarn, and small cut out berries."

Cut a circle out of the middle of the paper plate. Trace enough green hands to go around the plate and make a full wreath. Glue the hands on the plate, all fingers pointing away from the middle. Cut out red circles and add as 'berries'. Poke a hole in the top and run the ribbon through to hang.



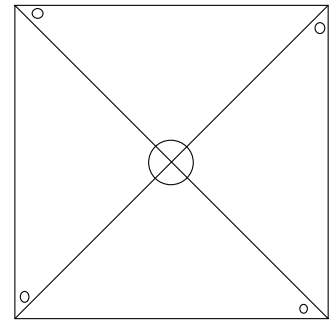
"Work together to make a hand-print wreath for your bulletin board. Cut a doughnut shape for the backing. The children trace their hands on green butcher paper and cut out the tracings. Glue the palms of the hands on the wreath shape, and curl the fingers to make the wreath three-dimensional. Cut out red circles for berries. You can use the green hands to make a lovely Christmas tree, too. Make a triangular tree shape. Put the first row of hands along the bottom of the triangle with the curled fingers pointing down. Add another row above until the tree is filled. Don't make it too large, though, as it takes a lot of hands to fill it!"

Other Christmas Art

Pinwheel Poinsettias

Begin with a square of red paper. Draw lines between opposite corners. Trace a penny-sized circle in the center where the lines cross. Cut down the lines to the center circle. Bring the circle side of the top point to the center and glue, turn so another corner is at the top, bring the left side to the center and glue, turn, and so on. Gently bend each corner, not fold!

A poinsettia has a yellow center, so glue a yellow paper circle in the middle of the pinwheel. Add green leaves around the flower. These make a wonderful bulletin board display - very showy if they are made quite large!



A Centerpiece

"In my class one activity will be to decorate an empty tuna can with tissue paper, fill it with playdough and then stick in 2 candy canes, some fake pine stems, maybe some fake poinsettia stems and some pipe cleaners. You could also use a candle and real pine or fir branches. This makes a spectacular centerpiece."

Candy Canes

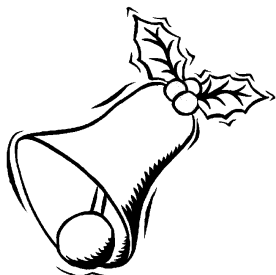
"I give the children a regular size (8 1/2 x 11) piece of black paper. They draw the shape of a candy cane on it to the full size of the paper. Then they take one inch squares of white and red construction paper and using patterns glue them down on the candy cane. It is simple and they love it. It is amazing how different each one turns out. Some overlap some don't...some can follow a line...some can't. They are cute and very easy. Cut the squares on a paper cutter and it won't take anytime at all for preparation. I usually give them a white label in the lower corner to print their name since it doesn't show up well on black paper."

Santa

"Make Santa - with fingers pointing downwards, paint top of palm and entire thumb red (Santa's cap), paint middle of palm pink (face - add features with a marker), and paint fingers white (Santa's beard). Make a white thumbprint at the end of Santa's cap, or glue on a cotton ball."



"I do this activity every year except I do not paint the middle pink, I leave it white and I have the children dip their two fingers (from the other dry hand) in blue paint for the eyes. I then add a small picture of them on the back of Santa and I have them write Merry Christmas, the year and their name. I have them laminated, then I punch a hole at the top, hang a string and I have the kids wrap it as a gift to the parents. They love doing it!"

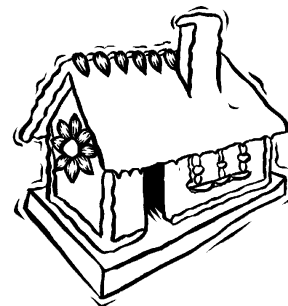


Bells

Cover styrofoam cups with tin foil. Attach pipe cleaner. Insert the pipe cleaner up through the center of the bell. Bend the pipe cleaner to make a hanger.

Gingerbread Houses

"Here is how I make gingerbread houses with my Grade Ones. The children each bring in a small, empty milk container (the little personal size one) and I wash them out and tape the end closed. Now 'glue' the bottom of this to a piece of cardboard that has been wrapped in tinfoil (royal icing is the glue). The milk container becomes the house and the children glue graham wafers on to the walls and roof with royal icing. Then the children decorate their houses with candies etc. and we make a village of gingerbread houses in our room with cotton batting between the bases. It's loads of fun!"



"The graham cracker houses are quite simple to make. You do need the good brand of graham crackers as the less expensive brands tend to crumble. You need a piece of cardboard covered with tinfoil for the base. Then you need five squares of graham crackers for the house. Four of them make the four walls and the fifth is cut diagonally in half to make the roof. We melt sugar in an electric frying pan (any type of frying pan will work, but we don't have a stove at school so we use the electric one). You dip the edges of the crackers into the melted sugar and put the houses together that way. The sugar actually hardens quickly and the houses are very strong which is great when the kids start to decorate them."

Gifts

Classroom Gift Giving

"My class has 10 boys and 10 girls and the boys are bringing 10 gifts, one for each boy, and the girls are bringing 10 girls' gifts, all the same. On party day we take turns passing our gifts out....great fun to all be the same and not worry about comparison."

Try these other gift exchange ideas:

-Have each child bring a wrapped book for the classroom! Each child can open one. Then everyone can enjoy 20 gifts instead of one, and your classroom library benefits. Have each child write their name and the date on a special label and glue in the book they bring.

- Bring other gifts for the classroom. You could send a letter home giving suggestions of things you need in your classroom. The children can pick one each from a basket and open it.

- "For the past 3 years we have also done away with our class gift exchange. We have 8 sections of Grade One. Each room pairs up with another and the children bring in non-perishable foods, small toys, toiletries, mittens, socks, gloves, etc. We make gift boxes for needy families in our community. Our school social worker distributes them. We send a list home with the kids. Last year we were able to help 15 families. It makes the kids feel great."

"I give one gift to the class. I wrap it in as many layers as there are children and put a candy in each layer. Each child unwraps one layer and finally there is a nice book, puzzle or other gift for the classroom."

'We play hot potato with a HUGE present. When the music stops, the person holding the present has to unwrap it. Then they discover another present so we do it all over again. This keeps going until they've unwrapped about eight presents. The final gift is a box of candy canes for everyone in the class. They love this!"

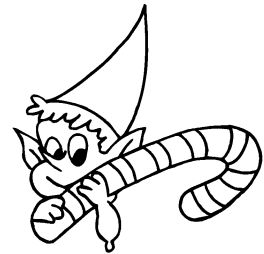
"Instead of having students exchange one present with each other, I ask them bring small things to put in stockings for all. I bought them all stockings from the Dollar Store. Each child brings enough small wrapped presents for each person in the class. I told parents they were welcome to furnish whatever SMALL thing they wanted to share. These might be cars from the dollar store, bookmarks, packages of candy, fun character straws, pencils, small toys, etc. The children have so much fun opening all the tiny presents! Everyone gets the same, too, so no one will be disappointed."



"Last year I wrote a letter to my class parents talking about the season of giving (we had Christmas and Ramadan almost together) and that rather than them giving me personal gifts or trading gifts between the students, I would prefer that the class receive the gifts. Most kids brought in things nicely wrapped to put under the tree. We then had an opening party. We got new puzzles, books, playing cards, a paper maker, white board markers, etc. It was very nice and the children were just as excited as they would be if there were personal gifts. I brought a few extra parcels, so every child had a gift to open. The children actually received all the gifts, doing it this way!"

Gifts to the Parents

"We usually do a snapshot picture gift because not many of our parents order school pictures. We take a picture of each child wearing an elf hat and collar. We have the kids make a Christmas card and the picture gets glued inside. It is signed 'From your little elf, _____.'"



The favourite gift you and the children can give to their parents is a photo keepsake. Take special pictures of the children - just head and shoulders, with a plain background. Give yourself time to do re-takes, if necessary, so every child has a pleasing picture. Use a modeling dough recipe and form a flat star, bell or plain rectangle and insert a paper clip for the hanger. When it is dry, glue on the child's picture. Glue glitter or ribbon around the edges. The parents will love these tree ornaments and admire them every Christmas after!

"I have made ceramic tile gifts for Mom and Dad. I take a picture of each member of the class in a Santa hat and glue the picture in the middle of the tile. The children decorate with glitter glue, write their name and the date on with indelible marker, and spray with varnish - spray lightly as the printing tends to run otherwise."

"We do a handprint ornament. We paint the child's hand green and put the print on white paper. Then we put a star sticker at the top, have the child decorate it with a pencil eraser with red and white paint, cut it out and laminate it. Then we add ribbon so it becomes an ornament to hang on the tree. Sometimes we add the child's picture at the base."

"We make shredded wheat wreaths and then put their picture in the middle. Break up a large biscuit of wheat until it is quite fine. Then pour glue and green food colouring into the container with the wheat. After it is all mixed up you can let the children put it on a piece of waxed paper and shape it into a wreath. When it is dry glue it onto a piece of round green (a little bigger than the wreath) construction paper that has their picture on it. You glue a little red ribbon bow on it and it is pretty cute. Their hands end up green but it will come off after a few washings."

"Last year I made a mitten shape ornament and put the children's pictures on it with a poem on the back of the mitten. This is how I made the mitten. I cut out mittens from brown mailing paper with pinking shears. The children cut a smaller mitten shape from red or green paper after tracing around their hand. The smaller shape was glued onto the larger one. The picture was added to the center of the red or green mitten. I punched a hole at the top of the mitten on either side and attached a pipe cleaner as a hanger. Then the children added cotton across the top of the mitten and a little ribbon bow and some silvery beads or tiny holly leaves. The poem went on the back of the mitten. They really came out cute."

Hang this on your
Christmas tree,
To remember how
I used to be.
To remind you of me
Now and then,
And bring fond memories
Back again.
Grade One - 200_

"Give each child a doughnut shape outline for a wreath. Then the child dips the flat hand into the paint, and presses it onto a scrap piece first to get rid of excess paint. Then the hand is pressed onto the wreath several times. This is repeated until the wreath is quite green. Then the child makes red thumbprints for berries. Make the berries in groups."

Green handprints with the red thumbprint berries also can be used to decorate wrapping paper.



With my hands I made this wreath
With my thumb each berry
I am sending you this special wish
For a Christmas that is Merry!

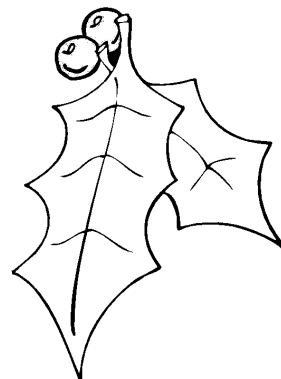
Bean Candle Holder

Mix together dried red, white and green beans. Add some watered down Elmer's glue and some glitter. Scoop it into a small styrofoam cup. Push a small red, white or green candle down into the center of it. Let it dry over night. The next day, peel off the paper cup and add a bow.

A Card With Love

"We made Christmas cards for our parents. The children made the front by tracing holly leaves and then gluing them onto a green or red card with red holly berries. On the inside I had them write or copy a cute little poem."

The Nicest Gift
The present you give another
Need not be a costly thing
If you have tucked some love inside
Before you tie the string.



Handprints

"Last year my kids made their handprints in a dough. It hardened as it dried and looked almost like plaster. We poked two holes in the top and when they were dry they painted them with gold tempera paint. I sprayed them with an acrylic spray after they were painted. The finishing touch was a ribbon pulled through the holes and tied in a bow to make a hanger. I also wrote their names and the year with a paper clip before the dough dried. I used a recipe from *Mudworks* by MaryAnn Kohl.

Play Clay - pure white - hardens quickly.

- 1 cup baking soda
- 1/2 cup cornstarch,
- 2/3 cup warm water

Mix baking soda and cornstarch in a saucepan, add water and stir until smooth. Over medium heat, boil and stir until the consistency of mashed potatoes, then pour onto board to cool. When cool, knead. Makes 1 1/2 cups. I made several batches."

A Special Book

"The cover of the book can be wrapping paper with a crisscross of ribbon or a stick-on bow to look like a gift. You can even add a gift tag the says to 'Mom and Dad from ____'.

Include the following text on the inside pages:

- Some gifts are large.
- Some gifts are small.
- Some gifts are round.
- Some gifts are tall.

But a gift from the heart is the best gift of all!

Kids can do each page using scraps of wrapping paper and yarn or ribbon. My students write the words themselves. We do one page per day until it's done. The last page should have a large heart with a picture of the child inside. These turn out really cute and are great keepsakes for moms and dads!"



"We have made picture frames from popsicle sticks - paint 8 sticks, one side at a time so it doesn't stick to the newspaper, any colour you want. Let the children choose if you are brave, or limit it to red and green. After the sticks are painted, have them glue them together log cabin style: lay 2 sticks down, put small dots of glue about 1/2 inch from the top and bottom of each stick, then lay 2 more sticks down perpendicular to the first two, and over the glue dots. Lay the last 4 sticks down the same way - dots of glue, sticks, dots of glue sticks. Glue a picture of the student to the back (I always take a 35mm 'portrait' photograph of my students on school picture day - most of the students don't order pictures.) Decorate the front of the frame. One year I used some small wood stars from Wal-Mart, painted gold, on one of the lower corners. Another year I used some small glue-on 'jewels' that my neighbor was getting rid of. Any small decorations would work. Glue a small ribbon loop to the top center for hanging."

"Last year a parent donated bunches of baby food jars....so we made pretty candle holders. Each child cut up tiny bits of different coloured tissue paper and glued them onto his/her baby food jar, collage style, with a glue stick. This was something they got to work on in their spare time in the week or so before Christmas, and they really enjoyed it. After the teeny bits of colored tissue were glued onto the jar, overlapping each other, etc.the kids got to 'paint' their jar with Modge Podge (decoupage finishing glue....available in a craft store.) Of course, I looked at these before the child was allowed to paint on the Modge Podge...had some put on more pieces if glass was showing, etc. The Modge Podge gave a pretty, shiny finish to the jars...and made even the 'messy' gluers' jars look attractive! I bought tiny candles. The candles fit inside the baby food jars. Then we glued a pretty ribbon around the top, threaded part of the jar and glued on a bow. This was really the nicest Christmas gifts I've ever had my kids make...when the candle is lit, the light shines through the colored tissue pieces, making the candle holder look like stained glass. The parents really loved them, and the kids were proud of their creations."

"This year I have saved tons of old CD's. You take a picture of each child, trim, and glue to the shiny side of the CD. On the other side you cut Christmas wrapping paper the size of the CD and glue it on...then attach a ribbon hanger and shimmery holiday stickers to the side with the picture...and you have a Christmas tree ornament."

"I use a blank calendar page and run 12 for each student. We then fill out the calendars month by month. We discuss holidays (capital letters, abbreviations, etc. - all good review), how many days in each month and how the months 'look'. We take white paper to make a cover with construction paper cut out decorations and laminate the covers (front and back). Then put the whole thing together. I actually go through with them month by month putting on the numbers. Then they decorate the back of the previous month so when you turn the page you have a new month calendar and decorations on the top to go with that month (suggestion - use coloured pencils so you do not have crayon smudge). You have a wonderful keepsake with the child's writing and drawing for that year."

"I tried making calendars last year and they came out really great. We started with a photo copy of a calendar for each month with a sentence starter on the top of each one. Ex. 'January is for' We did two or three pages (months) each day for about a week. Each day we brainstormed a list of things that went with each month and then each child completed their sentence starters. We also created an art project for each month which became the page facing the actual calendar page. Ex. - Jan. we made a snow scene, Feb. a Valentine with doilies, March a windy scene with cut-out kites and strings, April a collage type umbrella cut-out with raincoat and boots showing and a fingerpaint puddle, May flowers, June a checkerboard picnic cloth (patterning!) with tiny plastic ants glued on, etc.. Some months were very simple by using a corresponding Ellison cut-out like a turkey. When they were finished I laminated each child's cover and put them together by binding them at the top."

Cover page:

left and right hand-print with photo of child
Here are my handprints
For everyone to view.
One a month I made one
Especially for you.

January

on blue paper using white hand-print around in circle (palm in same spot), add glitter
Here's a snowflake
Dancing down,
Dancing, dancing
All around.

February

make heart by pointing fingers down and towards each other.
Here's a heart
To say 'I love you!'
I hope you'll say
You love me, too!

March

shamrocks (fingerprint stems and thumb print leaves)
I have a little shamrock.
It's green as green can be.
Watch me count the leaves,
One, two, three.

April

on blue paper, white handprint - no thumb. Separate 2nd and 3rd finger for ears rest of hand makes rabbit's face.
I'm an Easter Bunny, Watch me hop
Here are my ears, See how they flop!

May

caterpillar 4 handprints pointing down, fist for head and finger antennas
The fuzzy caterpillar
Crawled upon a leaf.
Spun her little chrysalis,
And then fell fast asleep.

June

butterfly (arm - body, wings - hands two on each side, one up and one down)

*Pretty little butterfly,
What do you do all day?
I fly around the flowerpots,
nothing to do but play.*

July

flag - red hand print for leaf, red stripes on sides.

*The Canadian flag
Is red and white
It is such a
Beautiful sight!*

August

octopus no thumbs 2 hands palms touching (on blue paper)

*In the pool so quiet and deep
Small fish swim and small crabs
creep
The octopus with arms so wide
Sways from side to side.*

September

fall tree (arm tree trunk & fingerprints fall leaves)

*Autumn leaves are falling
Red and yellow and brown.
Autumn leaves are falling.
See them tumbling down.*

October

spider 2 hands no thumbs palms overlapping fingers to side (4 on each to make 8 legs)

*The very silly spider
Crawled up on _____ 's head!
It crawled all around
Then made a nice soft bed.*

November

bare tree - arm and hand with outstretched fingers

*No shade, no shine,
No butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers,
No leaves, no birds,
November.*

December

Rudolph - foot - face, hands - antlers

*Here is Rudolph
A funny reindeer!
He takes us up to
The end of the year.*



Christmas Activities

"My current favourite Christmas book is Jan Brett's *Gingerbread Baby*. She has some neat stuff on her website about the book, and I want to make cookies to go with it, of course!" www.janbrett.com

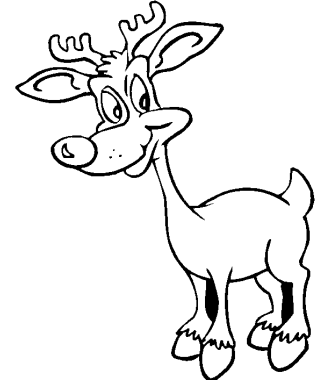
"We make a big yellow star and loops of red, white and green in a pattern to countdown. We glue this poem to the star: Each evening when goodnight is said, Tear off one ring and jump into bed. When only the star is left to shine, Then you will know it's Santa time!"

"A Rudolph snack: cut a piece of bread in triangles (I give the children plastic knives to do their own work) spread each half with peanut butter use pretzels for the antlers, a maraschino cherry for nose, and raisins for the eyes. Some assembly is required!"

"Read *The Night Before Christmas*. Write the reindeer names on cards. Give a name to each of 8 children. Have the rest of the class help to put them the order they came in the story. Write the ordinal words first, second, etc. vertically on chart paper and tack the reindeer name next to each ordinal place word. Then the children make a small booklet of 'Santa's Reindeer' with a reindeer on each page with the ordinals: First came _____. Second came _____, etc., Last came _____."

"Have your students make Magic Reindeer Food. Place the following in a baggie: 1/2 cup oatmeal, 1/4 cup sugar, 1/4 cup red or green sugar crystals (for cake decorating). NOTE: do not use glitter - it's not biodegradable and it would make birds ill. Tell your class: This will help Santa find his way to your house! On Christmas Eve, make sure you leave out some magical reindeer food for the reindeer. That way you can be sure they will stop at your house. Attach the following note to the baggie:

Just before you go to bed on Christmas Eve,
 Sprinkle this Magic Reindeer Food outside.
 Santa's reindeer will smell the oats,
 Santa will see the sparkle and be guided to your door!"



Make class books for the holiday.....try these!

1. Do a pattern book following the 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear' pattern. "Rudolph, Rudolph, what do you see?" "I see a _____ looking at me."
2. Make a book with Christmas vocabulary. Put one or two of the children's names on each page with one special vocabulary word - for example, "Marie and Darren like to sit by the Christmas tree." "Gordon has a big Christmas stocking."
3. Make a "12 days of Christmas" book. The children can put in their own words for the gifts.
4. Make a 'I like Christmas!' book. Put 'I like _____.' on each page. This is a good way to teach the new vocabulary.

Santa, Santa Books

Make little student books with the following text:

Santa, Santa, what do you see? I see the lights on my Christmas Tree!

(Add foil stars or glitter to a picture of a Christmas Tree)

Santa, Santa, what do you hear? I hear the bells on my reindeer!

(Glue tiny bells to a picture of a reindeer.)

Santa, Santa, what do you feel? I feel my beard, so soft and real!

(Glue cotton to a picture of Santa)

Santa, Santa, what do you eat? I eat a candy cane, so nice and sweet!

(Tape a real candy cane to this page.)

Santa, Santa, what do you smell? Something's in the oven, but I won't tell!

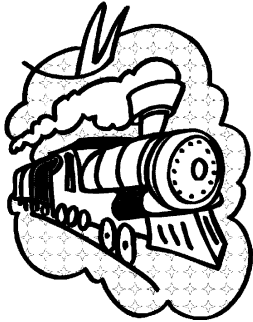
(Add cinnamon to a picture of a gingerbread man.)



The Polar Express

"I love doing this the day before we get out for the holidays. I send a note home telling the kids to bring a robe or PJ's and slippers to school. It must be something that can be slipped on over clothes - maybe mom's big nightgown. I don't tell them why, though. When they get to school, their chairs are arranged like train seats in front of the TV. I tell them to put on their PJ's and 'meet me at the reading

corner.' There, I read the Polar Express to them after doing a web on it beforehand to see what they know about trains."



"I read the story (they always love it). Then I serve them hot chocolate with a peppermint stick in it for the spoon and marshmallows while they are in their train seat. I also serve them cookies. We have the very short video of someone reading *The Polar Express* and I show it to them. Afterwards, I give them a big jingle bell on a red ribbon to remind them of the most special gift.

For a writing activity later that day, we write what would be our most special gift and it can't be something store-bought. I love doing this every year with my class."

Quiet Games

"I usually play winter bingo with my class. I give them a blank bingo card with a marked free space and then they fill in the blank spaces with winter/holiday words we have brainstormed and written on the board. We even trade cards around the teams so they get a new card each game. I use M&Ms as bingo chips. They always have fun with it, and ask to play over and over."

"We play Santa's Bell. Santa sits in a chair with his back to the class and eyes closed, or blindfolded. One student tip-toes up and picks up Santa's Bells from under the chair and rings them all the way back to his seat (a listening clue) where he hides them out of sight. Then the whole class chants 'Santa Santa where's your bell? One of the elves (or reindeer) took it home.' Santa then tries to guess which student took his bells. You may allow as many or as few guesses as you like. I always let the student become the new Santa regardless of how correct Santa's guess was."

"Near the beginning of December we have the children make paper chains with enough links to make one for each day leading up to Christmas. We attach the chains to a paper bell to which we attach the following:

How many days till Christmas?
It's mighty hard to tell!
Take off a link every night
When the Sandman casts his spell
And Christmas Eve will be here
By the time you reach the bell.

The children take the chains home and are told to take off one link every night to count down the days until Christmas."



"This year at school I'm doing a mini theme on reindeer. I've collected some red Christmas light bulbs and will glue on eyes and a red pompom nose, as well as twisting a brown pipe cleaner around the top for antlers. One of the children's parents will come in to glue (with a glue gun) a ribbon on top to hang it on the tree. We have a small artificial tree in our class that has other reindeer decorations on it. We also learn about elk, caribou, moose and deer. This week we will be having a reindeer lunch. I'll cover the tables with paper for them to draw on and decorate (with deer) for our lunch, and we'll make reindeer sandwiches and eat cut up vegetables."

Rudolph Rhyme Book

Make a page for each pair of lines with a picture of Rudolph without his famous nose. Laminate the pages and place Velcro where the nose should be. Cut out coloured circles (blue, yellow, green, black, pink and red.) and laminate them for the noses. Put Velcro on these, as well. Read the text and choose the correct nose to apply.

Rudolph! Rudolph! What will you do?
You can't guide Santa if your nose is blue!
Rudolph! Rudolph! You're such a funny fellow.
Who will know it's you if your nose is yellow?
Rudolph! Rudolph! Your way cannot be seen
Through the wintry winter weather if your nose is green!
Rudolph! Rudolph! Santa has his sack.
But you're not ready if your nose is black!
Rudolph! Rudolph! Santa gave a wink.
But what will Santa think if your nose is pink?
Rudolph! Rudolph! The children are in bed.
And now we know you're ready, 'cause your nose is red!



Reindeer Booklets

Fold a 9" square of brown construction paper in half diagonally. Trace children's hands and cut out. Glue at the fold to make antlers. Draw eyes with a black crayon and use red glitter for the nose. Staple triangle-shaped paper inside to form a booklet. Have children draw pictures of reindeer facts.

Decorate Your Classroom

"Make huge candy canes using bulletin board paper and place them equally down the hall. Then make paper chains out of red, green and loop them across the hall (up towards the ceiling). You could turn each classroom into a candy cane house. Use red paper plates for the roof and red and white striped plates (children make them) for the sides of the 'house'. Cover the door with paper."

"You could take red butcher paper and white butcher paper and twist long strips of it and then wrap the strips together to make candy canes. You could staple these on each side of every door."

"Sticking with a red and white theme, you could also make lots of red and white chains to drape around doors, along walls, etc. You could cut cane shapes from white paper and have kids paint the stripes on. A bulletin board idea might be to use red and white pipe cleaners twisted together and bent over to form candy canes. Then put two together with the hooks at the top and touching at the bottom to form a heart shape. Glue these to a backing and put each child's picture inside (Hey, this would make a great family Christmas present! I think I'll do this - we just got strips of pictures for the kids last week!) You could also put Christmas stickers in the middle, or have kids draw pictures.

"For a bulletin board I covered 8 inch squares of poster board with gift wrap of various types. Then I added a Christmas bow and in the middle placed a picture of the child. In each of the four corners we placed an ornament cut from the Ellison machine with a talent that each child has - example - 'I can read really well' or 'I can draw really great rockets' written on each one. In the middle of the board, I attached an empty wrapped box to make it have a 3D component - Caption - 'We All Have Wonderful Gifts To Share'"

Christmas Fund Raising

"During our BIG Christmas fund raiser....we have baskets from each class that are bid on during a silent auction. They bring in a lot of dollars! Each class has a theme.....then parents send in items for the baskets, (classrooms with 100% participation get an ice cream party). Everyone donates because you can send a little item or large ones). The baskets are donated also (other containers work too...big plastic storage bins, etc.) They are then displayed beautifully, covered with cellophane, etc. We just had our auction with a carnival, the baskets and other silent auction items were displayed in the auditorium. Some ideas for themes.....Candle Basket, Gardening (these were in plastic wheelbarrows), gifts for Mom (gift certificate, lotion etc.), stationary (lots of stickers, stamps), kitchen, baking, arts and crafts, (these are big sellers), chocolate lovers, bath and beauty, Italian (pasta, oils, etc.), automotive...(this one went for over \$200!). I think the least went for around \$65. And it was all from donations for the school."



Carols and Cookies

"We have changed the Poetry and Pies celebration that many of you do at Thanksgiving to a 'Carols and Cookies' celebration for the Christmas season. The parents are invited, and the children sing carols and Christmas songs, recite poetry, etc. Then the children serve cookies and juice to the visitors. This year we will be doing this program on the day before vacation in our room. Then we'll be able to take down the decorations and have them ready for the kids to take home on our last day."

Count-Down to Christmas

"We will make our countdown chains. The top of the chain has the following printed on a red bell:

This is the longest
Time of the year
Seems as though old Santa
Will never appear.
How many days till Christmas?
It's mighty hard to count.
So this little chain will tell you
The exact amount.

How many days 'til Christmas?
Here's a way to tell.
Take off one link each night
Before the sandman works his spell.
And Christmas Eve will be here
By the time you reach the bell!
Ho! Ho! Ho!



"The children will make chains out of green and white construction paper strips (6 in. long by 1 inch wide). They put their chain together as a pattern (AB or ABB or AABB). Each chain must have 24 links. I staple the chain to the bell and the children take it home that day. We also have one that we keep in the classroom."

A Christmas Reading Incentive

Make a bulletin board with the North Pole at the top. Have train tracks winding back and forth across the board and ending up at Santa's workshop. Move an engine up the track with each book (or 10 books) read. See if the children can get to the top before the holiday. (Of course, you will see that they do!) Have a special treat when the train engine reaches the top of the hill.



Read About Christmas

Your school library will have dozens of stories about the Christmas season. Make a chart of the titles as you read them to the class, and see how many you read in the month. Discuss favourites and graph favourite stories. Have each child draw a poster to advertise his/her favourite story, and write a sentence or two about it (if they are capable - otherwise dictate sentences to an adult to write.)

Little Elf, Little Elf

A Christmas book about the 5 senses.

Illustrated by _____

Little Elf, Little Elf,
What do you see?
I see shimmering lights
on the Christmas tree.

Little Elf, Little Elf,
What do you hear?
I hear sleigh bells ringing
on Santa's reindeer.



Little Elf, Little Elf,
What do you feel?
I feel Santa's soft beard, it feels so real.

Little Elf, Little Elf,
What do you smell?
I smell something in the oven, but I won't
tell!

Little Elf, Little Elf,
What do you eat?
I eat candy canes so crunchy and sweet!

Merry Christmas from Little Elf

"I Can Sense Christmas Is Coming"

Teach the 5 senses and make individual books:

I can smell Christmas.

Cut a gingerbread boy from fine sandpaper. Rub it with a cinnamon stick and glue it to the page. Or - cut a gingerbread boy from brown paper and spray with cinnamon room freshener.

I can touch Christmas.

Have a picture of Santa's face and cover the beard with cottonballs or cotton batting.

I can hear Christmas.

Have a picture of a bell. Tie thin ribbon through a tiny bell and glue the ribbon behind the bell so the little one is the clangor for the pictured bell.

I can see Christmas.

Make a tree light and edge it with glitter. Or - make a candle and have glitter on the flame.

I can taste Christmas.

Glue in a small candycane.

Staple garland around your bulletin boards for a beautiful Christmas effect!

Make a Reindeer Snack

Cut a slice of whole wheat bread diagonally and use half. Spread it with peanut butter. Add 2 raisin eyes, a red candy nose (M&M) and pretzel antlers. Enjoy!

