



# Primary Success

Issue #12

November - December 2006

## It's Almost Christmas!

I know it is a cliché, but time flies... For myself, it seems to be flying faster every year as I get older. Now it will soon be Christmas with all the work and fun that goes with this time of year. And then it will be 2007!

The Christmas season is wonderful in the primary classroom. The children love to decorate the classroom, sing songs, read, write and listen to books about the holidays. There are many lessons that will be made more effective by tying them to the holiday. The children can learn about maps and other countries as they travel on the Polar Express, write letters to Santa and do Christmas math problems.

Take time to do some great art projects. Do lots of Christmas stories in Readers' Theatre. Sing at every opportunity. Christmas is a happy time, so share lots of smiles!

Jean and Kelly



If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be 'meetings'. *Dave Barry*

Look for:



Tips -  
the best ideas!

### In this issue:

Articles	
Balancing Our Lives .....	3
My Advice .....	2
Teaching LD Children ....	4
Behaviour Management ....	21
Christmas	
Activities .....	28-29
Art .....	27
Poetry .....	26
Class Management .....	15
Classroom Assistants .....	25
Colours .....	10
Getting Their Attention ....	13
Language Arts	
Good Words .....	11
High Frequency Words ...	8
Phonics .....	6
Printing .....	11
Reading Fluency .....	7
Reading Ideas .....	9
Writing .....	12
Little Books .....	33
Math .....	17-19
Odds and Ends .....	30-32
Parent Communication ....	22-23
Remembrance Day .....	20
Sharing Time .....	14
Social Studies .....	24
Teacher Tips .....	16

# My Advice

*The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.*

If I could only give one piece of advice to teachers, it would be this: continue to be a life-long learner. The moment you feel you know the best way to teach children to read you will have closed your mind to other methods and improvement.

The following is my experience.....

I began teaching primary in 1960. From that time until 1988 we used sight word basals - the Ginn 720 series was the last of a long line. Contrary to modern opinion the lessons were interesting, well planned and many skills were taught. These sight word basals worked very well, and most students learned to read fluently by the end of grade two. I thought I was doing the very best for my students.

Then the principal had the primary teachers in my school take a course in the use of 'Project Read', a sequential phonics program that was quite scripted. It was for use as remediation with a low group, to be taught by the classroom teacher in the classroom. The following year I had a grade two class with five low kiddies who came to me with very limited reading skills. The principal had a few talks with me, and I guess I would have to say 'pressured' me into teaching Project Read to this group. I protested, saying the children would hate it, the program had no interest or imagination..... but I tried it. We loved it! All five students were reading fluently above grade level by Easter of the year, and I found myself enjoying it thoroughly. After teaching for all those years I learned how to correctly teach phonics, something I hadn't known before.

The next year I taught grade one, and modified the sequential phonics program for whole class lessons, plus using the sight word basals. The children became excellent readers. That class had a number of learning disabled kiddies, and I discovered that one girl could not learn phonics at all but could read by learning the sight words, and several boys could not remember sight words at all but learned to read through phonics. Now, I patted myself on the back..... I knew the best way to teach reading.

Two years later a new principal arrived with a new philosophy - whole language. He destroyed all the basals as he could find and insisted that we all teach through literature. As you can imagine, I protested louder than anyone - but there was no way out. I tried it - and had test scores to prove that my kids were not reading nearly as well, but that didn't matter - after all, testing was considered terrible for kids' self esteem! But even when protesting, I did see some interesting things in whole language and I learned that the students did get enjoyment and benefit from reading more trade books. I discovered that a sequential sight word and phonics programs could be enhanced with many of the literature ideas. Now I knew the best way to teach reading!

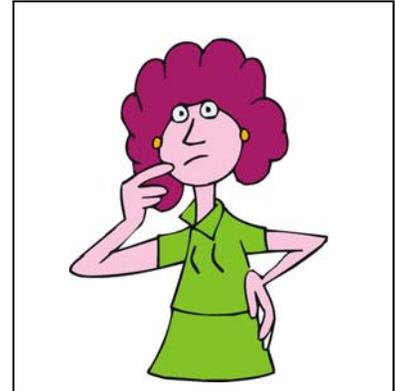
That principal left and I began to teach Learning Assistance. There were lots of students being referred - the teachers using whole language were not reaching the slower learners, many of whom should have been taught in the classroom. Once in L.A., I worked to find the students' strengths. Several students did not respond to phonics or sight word programs. It took me longer than it should to discover that these children were kinesthetic learners. Their auditory and visual senses were disabled, but they learned when printing, or acting out with hand motions or body motions as they learned the reading vocabulary. I began to put a lot more movement and kinesthetic strategies into my lessons.

After 'retirement', I began writing programs for primary teachers. I also did a lot of research on-line, and learned many more things from the newer programs that are used. I know that I do not have all the answers. I have lots of good answers, but there is always more out there!

So I understand teachers being resistant to change. I have been there. But improvement only comes through change and the ability to be open to try new things. It helps to want to learn more and be willing to try different programs, but if a teacher is not willing he/she may have to be pushed.

Be a life-long learner!

## Things to Ponder .....



# Balancing Our Lives

Stress is a normal part of our lives as teachers. Many teachers have problems sleeping, heart palpitations, depression, headaches, and many more symptoms. Positive stress helps us to perform at a higher level, but often teachers feel out of control or under intense pressure. They may experience the physical, emotional, or relational symptoms brought on by negative stress.

Stress can be caused by the 'class from h\*\*\*'! Every so often we get a class that is very difficult. There may be children with ADHD, ODD or sometimes simply a group of children that do not function well together. We go in every morning resolving to make this day better - but by 9:05 things are falling apart.

Balancing our school and home life can also cause stress. Many teachers spend 60 or more hours each week on the job, bringing it home with them, too. The family suffers because of the focus on the teaching and the stress level rises.

Here are some tips for balancing our lives from experienced teachers.

"Some teachers in my school come early, early in the morning and leave between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. each day. A classroom neighbour of mine says she can't teach without this, but she is showing the effects of the long hours. I think it is a matter of priorities, and then organization.

My family comes first. TEACHING IS JUST A JOB! Yes, it is an important job, but I refuse to give my life to it. My husband and children come first. I try to never bring work or problems home so I can freely spend time and my attention on these most important people. It comes down to organizing my time carefully."

"For several years I tried to plan my own lessons in every subject. This was hugely time consuming and stressful! Now I try to use programs that are already organized. I found that following a program with sequential lessons worked better, too - and saved me lots of time and effort. I follow programs in phonics, reading, writing math and science. There is little preparation in these, as tomorrow's lesson follows today's lesson - all set out for me."

"I try to treat teaching like a 'normal' job! I arrive at school at 7:45 every morning and leave at 4:15. I take half an hour for lunch when I don't think about work - I like to visit with the other teachers in the staff lounge and talk about other things. I put in eight hours of hard work, and that is all school is going to get..... I have children of my own and they deserve a mother who can concentrate on them!"

"I feel that marking should be done with the students. They get immediate feedback and the correcting of errors is meaningful. I can see who needs help with the work and give mini-lessons to children who have problems. Whenever I mark things after school I wonder why I am bothering! The students won't go back tomorrow and correct the mistakes and I am marking for the parents or other adults rather than the children. I mark tests after school, of course, but daily work I try to mark with the kids. It takes time in the day, but it is time well spent. And then .... I am not marking things in my own time for little purpose. Sometimes I file kids' papers in the trash and I refuse to feel guilty!"

"I have organized my home by following the Fly Lady! <http://www.flylady.net/> I followed her directions and decluttered my house and did her daily routines. I found that once I had my home organized I had a lot more time with my husband and kids - and everything went much smoother!"

"I got rid of all the clutter in my classroom. I threw out a lot of things - it was hard to do, but it was amazing how good it felt once I had made up my mind! I took everything off the tabletops, put things that were not being used that week away out of sight, put all the math stuff in a cupboard and even put away a lot of the library books. I rotate them and the kids think the hidden ones are new when I bring them out. Now there is nothing on top of the bookcases except one or two books that are being shown, nothing on the tables or filing cabinets or my desk top. The students are finding it much easier to clean up and I even dust regularly - something impossible to do previously. Cleanup is now much simplified and we are all finding the room a nicer place to work and learn."

## Things to Ponder



# Teaching LD Children

Some experts believe that up to 15% of children have some learning disability. That means that an average of one in seven children in our classrooms have some form of this. Because it is so prevalent, we must have some tools to help these children succeed.

A learning disability is a neurological disorder. In simple terms, there is a 'disconnect' between sight, hearing, or muscles and the brain. Children with learning disabilities may have difficulty reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, visualizing or organizing information if taught in conventional ways. Learning disabilities often run in families.

A learning disability can't be cured. The person will have it all his/her life. With the right support and intervention, however, children with learning disabilities can succeed in school and go on to successful, often distinguished careers later in life. Difficulty with basic reading, language and math skills are the most common learning disabilities.

Learning disabilities should not be confused with other disabilities such as mental retardation, autism, and behavioural disorders. None of these conditions are learning disabilities.

The Grade One and Two classroom teachers often discover the disabilities first. We are not able to make a diagnosis, but we are able to collect information for this purpose. We are also the first line in assisting these children to succeed. The child will not understand why he cannot do what the other children are doing easily, and it is up to us to find the child's strengths so he is able to make reasonable progress.

The children with learning disabilities in your classroom will usually fall into the following categories. The problems and instruction ideas below are simplified, but hopefully will give you some ideas to take further to help the students in your class.

1. Visual reading disability: The child does not recognize or recall sight vocabulary as the brain is not processing the information correctly. You may tell him a word and he will not recognize it seconds later. Some students will never remember the basic sight reading vocabulary or be able to accurately spell words that cannot be decoded as they are not able to recall or visualize a word. Watch students that are very slow to gain a basic reading vocabulary.

Instruction: These children must be taught sequential, specific phonics skills with practice in blending and spelling phonetically and rules that they are able to apply. The severely LD students may have to decode every word, but they will have the tools to be able to read slowly.

2. Dyslexia: Dyslexia is somewhat different from the visual disability. Children who are dyslexic apparently have the letters move around. The letters reverse and flip vertically as they look at a word. This is often most pronounced with b and d, and sometimes p, q, g. A child may just guess the word dog as pod, bop, god or other words with these problem letters. Oddly enough, the 'o' or other vowels often stay in place. Children with severe dyslexia may have the letters in a word reverse, move up to the line above or below or move around as the child looks at the word. It is hard to imagine! Every word is like a puzzle and a word does not look the same when it is seen again. You may not be able to differentiate these students from the visually disabled children in the early years. Young children do not realize that what they see is not what others see or experience.

Instruction: There isn't a good solution for these students, but concentrated phonics helps as in the visual disabilities. Some children find a clear coloured overlay will help, or cardstock with a slit out of it so only one line shows. They need to be taught coping skills in order to read.

3. Auditory disability: These students are not hearing the sounds correctly. Young children with this problem will often have articulation difficulties - when they do not hear sounds accurately they are unable to reproduce them accurately. Many of these students will find phonics very difficult if not impossible, for obvious reasons. They find it very difficult to learn the letter sounds and use them for decoding.

Instruction: These students need a strong sequential sight word program in order to learn to read, using



visual techniques. They often have problems in the higher grades when words are no longer taught, and as the students are unable to decode unfamiliar words their reading vocabulary forms slowly.

4. Both visual and auditory disabilities: This is more rare. You may find a child with normal intelligence who has problems with visual recognition and recall and also difficulties with phonics - decoding and encoding. This makes learning to read by the usual methods very difficult.

Instruction: These children often have a strength in kinesthetic learning, and can be helped by associating the physical act of printing or writing with the words, and learning words with physical motions can assist.

5. Learning disabilities in math: Children with a math disability cannot visual numbers or number patterns. They will not be able to see a number of objects in their minds and will count objects rather than use obvious patterns. They do not truly understand the relationship of numbers. Place value may be meaningless to them. In the more severe cases children have difficulties with the concepts of time - even simple ones such as 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow', minutes and hours, weeks and even seasons. They can use manipulatives over and over without understanding the underlying concept. They may give you math answers that do not make sense. They are unable to manipulate numbers - for example, the idea of this....  $7 + 6 = 7 + 3 + 3 = 10 + 3 = 13$  .... is like a foreign language.

Instruction: Give the students strategies to use. Practice counting on and counting down for simple addition and subtraction, and allow the children to use a number line. Give the students 'tricks' to remember or find answers. Give them answers to memorize and practice these often. Try for understanding, but if this is too difficult for the child give other coping mechanisms to find answers.

6. Dyspraxia or DCD: Developmental Coordination Disorder is a common disability. The child does not do physical skills automatically as other children do. The student will have problems with gross motor skills - jumping on two feet, running well, climbing, ball skills, etc., and also fine motor skills. He may have problems with printing and will be slow at completing written exercises - and these will often be very untidy. The child may not want to try and may not complete assignments.

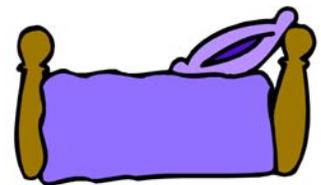
Instruction: Give specific lessons on gross and fine motor skills, breaking the skill down into small pieces. In Kindergarten and Grade One do many specific lessons showing letter formation with lots of directed practice. Written work may have to be modified or done in smaller pieces so the child is not faced with a full page of work. P.E. (and even recess play) may be difficult for the child and there may be peer pressure that will make the child unhappy - this needs intervention if it happens.

Early understanding and the correct teaching can make a big difference to an LD child. If a child is allowed to simply fall behind in reading and math in the first two years of school, it will be much more difficult to help the child later. Self-esteem suffers if a child feels helpless and confused when others can do things he can't.

If you would like more information on any of the above disabilities, contact Primary Success and we will send you a variety of websites with helpful information.

## **b-d reversals**

"I use the word 'bed' to help children with this common reversal. I write the word 'bed' on the board and we discuss how the word bed is like a real bed. I draw a stick figure lying on the bed with his head on the b 'pillow' and his feet on the round part of the d. How comfortable would the bed be if the b and d were mixed up? His head and/or his feet would fall down in between the letters! It is often the silly things that they remember...."



"If you make the lower case b correctly, it is very easy to make it into the capital B. Or - if you make the capital B, it is easy to make the lower case b."

"b comes before d in the alphabet. We remember by making fists and 'thumbs up'. b is on the left and d to the right."

"We say 'b is a bat and a ball' and 'd goes around the driveway and down the road'.

"I say, 'bat, ball' and doughnut, door'.

# Phonics



“To really drill the concept of beginning sounds..... try putting the focus sound on everything! Say things like, “I am giving you a sheet of fffffpaper and I want you to write your ffffffame with your fffffencil!”

Then we talk about the real sound in the word that I should be saying, write the two words on the board and compare the spelling. The kids love it! I also put the sound at the beginning or their names all day.

I give them a funny look, hold up an object such as a bar of soap, and say, “Now, I wouldn’t want to wash my hands with \_\_\_\_\_.” Of course, the children say ‘foap!. Again we compare spellings, etc. It is so silly that even the kids who don’t always tune in of get the lessons easily make an extra effort.”

“We make flip books. Narrower pieces of paper are stapled to the left side of a longer piece. One beginning consonant, blend or digraph is printed on each of the narrow strips and the word ending is printed on the wider piece. So as the book is flipped new words are formed. For example, if the word family is \_\_\_\_an, the words can, man, pan, tan, than, plan, etc., can be read. The kids like to read through the sets. Sometimes they make sets at school and take them home to practice.”

“I had problems getting my slowest kids to blend sounds. I went over and over the letter sounds and the way to blend, but they just couldn’t seem to do it themselves. Then I tried to do it with physical movements, and it worked well! I had the kids slide down a slide making the sounds run into each other. Then I had three of these kiddies stand each with a letter of a CVC word, and say their sounds in turn, getting closer and closer to each other. Finally I had them blend large words and slide their hands under the letters. They began to ‘get it!’”

“I teach reading to a class of students with learning difficulties. I have found that well-memorized rules for them to refer to when they are reading and spelling are a big help. I teach the meaning of syllables and the concept of short and long vowels, and then use the following generalizations:

- ‘ck’ goes at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel.
- Never end a word with ‘v’. always add a silent ‘e’.
- Double s, double f, double l, double z go at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel.
- ‘j’ never goes at the end of a word.
- Hard ‘c’ rule: Fat c goes with fat a, fat o and fat u. (cat, cot, cut)
- ‘k’ rule: Skinny k goes with skinny i and skinny e. (kit, kept)
- th, sh, th and ch are digraphs. A digraph has two consonants that go together to make a new sound.
- ‘tch’ goes at the end of a one syllable word after a short vowel - except much, such, rich and which.”

## Syllabication Rules

1. Divide a compound word between the two parts: snow-flake base-ball scare-crow
2. Divide between the root word and the suffix: hope-ful want-ing love-ly
3. Divide a word between a prefix and the root word: dis-able un-happy
4. When two or more consonants come between two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided between the first two consonants: but-ter pic-ture hun-gry
5. When a single consonant comes between the two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided before the consonant if the first vowel is long - (open syllable): ba-con pi-lot pa-per
6. When a single consonant comes between the two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided after the consonant if the first vowel is short - (closed syllable): rob-in clever trav-el
7. When a vowel is sounded alone in a word it forms a syllable in itself: a-live dis-o-bey u-ni-form
8. When two vowels come together in a word and are sounded separately, the word is divided between the two vowels: di-et i-de-a ra-di-o
9. When a word ends in ‘le’ preceded by a consonant, divide the word before that consonant. When a word ends in ‘ckle’, divide between the ‘k’ and the ‘le’: tur-tle pur-ple bab-ble tick-le pick-le tack-le



# Reading Fluency

Fluency is usually defined as the rate (words per minute) and accuracy (number of words correctly identified) of a student's reading of material at his/her independent reading level.

We want our students to read using the correct phrasing. A lot of the comprehension of the material comes through the proper phrasing and expression used with changes in pitch and emphasis. This is called prosody, or the rhythms and tones of spoken language. Whether text is being read silently or aloud, much of its meaning comes from the way it sounds.

As students recognize sight words and learn to decode quickly, they begin to read text in a way that sounds like natural speech. Daily oral reading helps to develop this skill as the student is able to listen to his/her voice and hear the phrasing and the sound of the words read smoothly.

"I tried making fluency sentence strips with my computer as was suggested in the Sept./Oct. issue, printing them the length of the paper (11 in.). I am really pleased with this idea! It makes much more sense than the long ones with bigger print - the kids can take a number of the words in with one eye scan and this is needed for fluency. Why didn't I think of this years ago?"

"I make strips with sentences or phrases containing the new vocabulary for that story. Sometimes we cut the strip into word parts, mix the words and then practice putting the sentence back together. For a centre, I put the cut words of a sentence into an envelope, the child picks an envelope, re-forms the sentence and then prints it out in an exercise book."

"We practice re-reading a story several times using good inflection and expression in my Guided Reading lessons. I stress the correct phrasing, reading several words as one unit: 'in the house', 'at school', 'I am going', etc. I find this really helps to promote fluent reading."

"Some of the children come to me at the beginning of Grade Two already reading fluently, but I often have at least two-thirds that are not there yet. My goal in Grade Two is to have as many of my students as possible reading automatically by the end of the year at their independent reading level - that is, not thinking about the individual words and reading without conscious thought of the mechanics. Some years I have all the students able to do this, and other years there are some children with difficulties that do not make that leap.

I try to have every child who hasn't reached this read aloud to me every day, and also read to an aide or other adult. Often these children do not read well to themselves in SSR time, so I need to be sure that they are getting all the practice they need to begin to read fluently."

"It is my opinion that many children will have problems with comprehension until they begin to read fluently. They are putting all the effort into word recognition and decoding - as it should be. Once they are reading fluently I then stress comprehension techniques."



## Ideas to Promote Fluency:

- Do extensive daily oral reading.
- Re-read phrases, sentences and short paragraphs until fluent.
- Read a paragraph silently and underline groups of words that go together.
- Practice reading with expression.
- Do timed readings, trying to improve speed.
- Model fluent reading often.
- Echo reading - the teacher reads a passage and the student tries to imitate the fluency.
- Tape record and listen to the reading. Discuss how it can be improved.
- Do choral reading with less capable readers working with the fluent readers.
- Re-read books, songs and poems.
- Do Readers Theater.
- Neurological impress: the teacher reads slightly ahead of, and louder than, the student.

# Teaching High Frequency Words

*“Amazing, isn’t it? We have over a half-million words to communicate with, but half of everything we write and read depends on only 0.02 percent - on only those 100 most frequent words.”*

*Frank B. May in Reading as Communication*

We want sight words to be recognized instantaneously in reading material. They are not considered ‘mastered’ until the word is read without conscious thought.

*“When students are able to recognize words automatically they are much more likely to understand what they are reading. Drills focusing on common words can help students build a repertoire of words that they recognize as soon as they see them.”*

1. First, teach the word. Show the phonetic elements, use the word orally, read it in simple phrases and then in sentences with other well-known words. Use kinesthetic experiences if possible. Print the word and illustrate the word or a sentence containing the word.
2. Next is practice. Some children need at least 50 showings of a word before it becomes automatic. This will decrease as the word-bank increases. Learning words helps to learn words! Make sure students read text containing high-frequency words every day.
3. Find the word in text. Underline it or highlight it if possible.
4. Create a word wall of high-frequency words. Add new words to the wall as they are introduced. Each day, chant or cheer the high-frequency words on the word wall.
5. Change the font on printed words and read words in a variety of situations and materials.
6. Have the students write the words as often as possible.
7. Test the student’s knowledge of sight words and keep track of each child’s progress.
8. Read for at least one hour each day in a variety of situations. Do independent reading of easy material, do group reading, buddy reading. Read orally and silently. Discuss what has been read.

## Practicing high frequency words:

As students learn differently, try to practice the vocabulary using the different modalities. The best drill is when the child is seeing the word, hearing it and either printing or doing some other body movement at the same time. You can have the group see, say and spell new vocabulary.

- Have the group stand, show a word card, say the word and then spell it.
- With the word in sight, pretend that they are writing on a large chalkboard. As they say each letter, they write it in the air as large as they can. After each word is spelled, students say the word as they ‘erase’ it.
- Children start spelling the word while squatting. With each successive letter they stand higher and higher. With the last letter the students jump and reach into the air.
- Clap out the letters - or clap the consonants and snap the vowels.
- Use plastic or magnetic letters to make and break words.

Keep a word wall and practice it every day - or give each student a weekly-updated word list that is always in front of them at the desks. Do a variety of activities -

**<http://www.teachnet.com/lesson/langarts/wordwall062599.html>**

Or games: **<http://www.teachingfirst.net/wordwallact.htm>**

Do flashcard activities.



# Reading Ideas



“I found several old SRA kits in my school that fit with the different reading levels of my Grade Two and Three students. In the first four lessons when I began using them, I photocopied the sheet so every student had a copy. We did a Guided Reading lesson to read the story, and then did the exercise orally. Then we did the written exercises together in exercise books. The students had to print a heading with the number of the exercise and print out the answers neatly in an organized manner. After four of these lessons when I felt the kids understood what to do I gave the groups a starting set. Then they did the headings and question numbering for that whole set in the exercise books.

I had a lesson where I went over the difficult or special vocabulary in the set of cards so there wouldn't be any reading difficulties.

When they were doing the reading and questions, they went to the box and found any card from that set that was free, read it and did the questions on the correct exercise book page and then took the card back and replaced it in its proper spot. This way they completed the set in any order and the group shared the one set of cards.

We did this with the class every Friday, and the kids also went and got a card whenever they had spare time. When they started I wondered if it would be boring for them, but they loved it!”

“I used the SRA kits in Grade One. I have the children come and sit near me as they silently read the story, and they ask me if they come to words that are difficult. I have some kids that read the story aloud to me and we discuss the questions.”

“I use the Dolch lists for sight vocabulary. I began by assessing the students, beginning with list #1. They could go on to the next list when they had instant recall of all the words. They then take the next list for homework. I have an aide that spends Friday morning going over the lists with the students. If they know all the words on the list in random order, they get a new list to study. She also keeps a list of the completed levels so I know where they are working. I find it works very well!”

“After teaching a new Guided Reading lesson and the new vocabulary, I create flashcards for the words. Then we do some of the following activities with the cards:

I put the words in a pocket chart and the students begin reading the words in a whisper. As they go along they gradually increase the volume until they are shouting. Then we do the opposite.

I lay the cards on the floor and the children hop from one to the other saying the words as they hop.

We play ‘Memory’ with two sets of cards. The cards are mixed and placed face down on the floor or a table, and the students have to match pairs. Every word turned must be read, or the card goes back.

We read the words in funny voices.

One student reads a word from the cards or from the word wall, and his partner must smack that word with a flyswatter. This is a very popular game!”

“I have a garden glove. On the five fingers I have printed ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘what’ and ‘how’. The glove is decorated with a smiling face and hair. After we read a story we discuss the plot and use the questions to re-tell the story.”

“I get my Grade One kids to spell the words that we learn to read each week and are put on the word wall. Some have problems with this, but as the word is up there for all to see there isn't any pressure. The spelling makes the students more aware of the letters in each word, and many children do learn to spell them correctly as they learn to read them. I have found that this really has helped the writing skills.”



# Colours

“Do some colour mixing. After teaching the primary colours, try mixing two of them with drops of food colouring in a glass of water - or if you do this by dropping the food colouring into a clear jar the colours will swirl around before mixing together. Predict what will happen, and then test it. Another idea is to make ice cubes of different primary colours and melt two together to see what happens - or - add a few drops of food colouring to shaving cream and have the students blend the colours. I also like to put two primary-coloured blobs of finger paint on a paper and letting the students experiment.”

I am going to dab yellow  
Paint on my red  
Oooops! It turned to  
Orange instead!

This is the silliest thing  
I have seen -  
Yellow and blue  
Turn into green!

I put some red  
And a bit of blue -  
Now I have some  
Purple, too!



Orange is a carrot,  
Yellow is a pear.  
Purple is a plum and  
Brown is a bear.

Red is a fire truck,  
Green is a tree  
Blue is the big sky  
What colours do you see?

## Watercolour Rainbows

Using water-colour paints, paint a rainbow in the correct order of colour - (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) with very thin paint.

While the paint is still wet, sprinkle some salt on the rainbow and the colours will run together.

For great ideas to teach the separate colours, go to:

<http://www.kiddyhouse.com/Themes/colors/>  
'Childfun Themes'.

and scroll more than halfway down the page to the

Wouldn't it be terrible? Wouldn't it be sad?  
If just one single colour was the colour that we had?  
If everything was purple? Or red? Or blue? Or green?  
If yellow, pink, or orange was all that could be seen?  
Can you just imagine how dull the world would be  
If just one single colour was all we got to see?



“We did large paintings using only one colour. One day we painted with red, another day blue, etc. Some of the students tried to paint things that were that colour - the sea for blue, a fire for red, etc. They turned out very interesting!”

## Roy G. Biv

Roy G. Biv is an odd name for a fellow.  
But what his name means is  
Red - Orange - Yellow  
The G is for Green which as you may know,  
Comes right in the middle of every rainbow.  
Next comes Blue just like the sea  
Then V for Violet - a rainbow for me!

“I teach interesting colour words other than the basic ones. The students enjoy learning these: scarlet, indigo, cerise, ivory, crimson, etc. Here is a list:  
<http://www.teachersdesk.org/vocabcolor.html>  
The children like to go home and see if their parents know these interesting colourful words!”

# Printing and Handwriting

From a Grade One teacher:

“Please, please, please teach your Kindergarteners to form the letters correctly! I get kids coming to Grade One making letters from the bottom up and circles clockwise. By the time they get to me it is very difficult to change them!”

Here are some ideas for pencil grip:

- The thumb and the first finger do all the work. The other three fingers don't have any work to do!  
The pointer and my thumb do lots of work for me.  
The others all go underneath the pencil - see?
- We make paper airplanes and practice sailing them - holding them with the first finger and thumb, and the other fingers below. We then see that the same grip is used for the pencil.
- **Handwriting Without Tears** has a technique for the pencil grip. They say, ‘Pinch it, flip it, hold it.’ Put the pencil on the table with the sharp end toward you. Pick up the pencil near the sharp end, then use the other hand to ‘flip’ the pencil over to the writing position. Now you are ready!
- Try holding a coin in the middle of the palm. Use the last three fingers to hold it, and then pick up the pencil.

*And then..... I have always held my pencil on my third finger and when young I could write beautifully. (Now I write so little my writing is not as good as it used to be!) Teachers tried to change me all through school and couldn't. Perhaps we should only worry about the gross distortions of pencil holding..... JR*

“Many parents are upset that their children are not being taught to do cursive handwriting any more. Many High School students are just printing, and not very neatly. I hope it isn't going to be a lost art!”

## Use Good Words Well

You will find many of your children with poor grammatical habits. It is already difficult to change speaking habits, but with practice and daily follow-up we can try to make a difference.

Perhaps the worst grammatical error is ‘me and my friend’! You will hear this in sharing time and see it written in Journals.

Print ‘Me and my friend went to school.’ on the chalkboard. There are two children. What would you say if your friend didn't come? Erase ‘and my friend’. What does the sentence say now? ‘Me went to school!’ That sounds like baby-talk! Act this out with two children and then one and see how silly it sounds. We would say ‘I went to school’ and if a friend came with you it would only be polite not to push yourself ahead of your friend - you should let the friend go first - ‘My friend and I went to school.’ Give all your students a chance to roll play and practice saying it correctly. After this, have the children self correct every time you hear the ‘me and.....’

Another frequent error is ‘gots’. We don't see this written so often, but many children use this word in speech. You could make a sign with ‘gots’ and ‘have’ and a big red X through the one that shouldn't be used.

Practice having your students answer oral and/or written questions in complete sentences. We usually begin complete sentences with a person or a thing (or a pronoun standing for a person or thing).

Teach the words for good manners. Many of our kids say, ‘What??’ if they don't hear or understand. Stop and have them say, ‘Excuse me, I didn't hear you’ or ‘Pardon me??’

“Give me.....” should always be prefaced by ‘Please’. Teach “Please may I .....?” and ‘thank you’, of course.

Correct the usage of ‘good’ and ‘well’ if you have students who misuse them. ‘Good’ is an adjective and ‘well’ describes a verb, of course. I do good printing. I can print well. There is an exception - when well means feeling healthy.



# Writing

“We do a keepsake for every child’s birthday. I have each member of the class write at least three positive sentences about that person. The kids edit, and I edit and then I print the sentences in large font on a set-up page on my computer. Then they draw a picture of the birthday child above the print. This is the day’s writing exercise. When the work is finished the pages are bound together on the school’s binding machine with a cover. I have a generic cover on my computer with a birthday cake and print that I change for each student - ‘It’s \_\_\_\_\_’s Birthday!’ with the date and grade.



For children with birthdays in the summer, we do ‘half’ birthdays and celebrate them in the winter.

This is a very popular keepsake for the parents. I also photocopy the book and keep a copy of it in the classroom library for the students to read.”

“When I begin to teach story writing, I give each child a sheet of 8 1/2” x 14” paper. The children fold the paper twice to make four rectangles. We turn the paper to the landscape. The first rectangle is labeled ‘characters’, the second ‘setting’, the third ‘problem’ and the last ‘end’. I model writing one to three sentences in each box to form a simple story.

I find that this focuses the author on story organization. Most young authors don’t know when to stop writing in the ‘problem’ area and how to come to the ‘end’.”

The following website gives another interesting way to write simple stories.

<http://www.mrsmcgowan.com/projects/stories2003/howto.htm>

This website has a great list of story starters.

<http://www.kinderkorner.com/starters.html>

## 6 + 1 Traits of Writing

1. Ideas - the student must be able to select a good idea, narrow it to salient points and elaborate those points.
2. Organization - organization and ideas work together. The work needs a good beginning that will interest the reader, a logical sequence of events or key points and a satisfying conclusion. There needs to be a beginning, middle and an end.
3. Voice - the voice is the special stamp that an individual writer puts on his/her work. Every writer has his/her own style and tone.
4. Word Choice - words can give us a colourful and precise picture through writing. Words create pictures in the reader’s mind and clarifies the meaning.
5. Sentence Fluency - this is what we should hear when we read aloud or to ourselves. Good sentences are easy to read and flow from one to another. Sentences that are choppy or awkward slow the reading.
6. Conventions - good writing has perfect spelling, punctuation and grammar. The punctuation and sentence/ paragraph structure follows the conventional rules.
7. Presentation - when the writing has been edited and is ready to present to the reader, the work should be in neat printing, well spaced and legible. Illustrations should be neatly done. Pages should be pleasing to the eye.

# Getting Their Attention

Children have perfected listening to a fine art! They shut out what they don't want to hear and can hear a whisper of something they want to hear. For example, they shut out a parent or teacher who nags, saying things over and over - and they can hear a whisper of 'ice cream' or a treat from across the room. This being true, we want our attention getters to be interesting, varied and fun - to make it worth while stopping and listening.

"I hung wind chimes from the ceiling over my desk. Then I have a 'magic' wand and when I want attention I use the wand to tap the chimes. There is a lovely sound, and the students all become quiet to listen."



Here is a list with a variety of attention getters:

- Say: 1, 2, 3 - Eyes on me!
- Ask the children to smile at you - or wink, or wiggle their eyebrows or put a finger on their noses, etc. The motion must be silent and not too silly.....
- Say: 'Repeat after me.....' and then a sentence that describes the behaviour or action that you want. This gives a repetition of the direction as the students say it back.
- Turn off and on the lights to signal clean-up time.
- Buy a doorbell with a remote button. Put the remote in your pocket and ring the doorbell when you want to get the students' attention.
- Tap a cow-bell with a small metal rod or ring it.
- "We made rainsticks from cut pieces of gift-wrap rolls, filling them with beans and rice and decorating them. I shake the one I made for an attention getter."
- Do clapping patterns - e.g. - clap, clap clap clap, clap (1-3-1), etc. The students repeat the pattern that you clap.
- Say softly, "Put your hand up if you hear me." As some of the nearer students do this and become silent, repeat it softly so the rest of the class hear. Vary the order - put your hands on your head, clap once, sit on the floor, put your hand on your mouth (or eyes), etc.
- Use seasonal toys that talk - a black cat that meows for Halloween, a laughing Santa for Christmas, etc.
- Get a tap-on battery-powered wall light at Home Depot or similar store. Attach it at the front of the classroom. When you want attention, tap it and turn on the light. This is a nice quiet way to get attention.
- Say, 'Give me five'! One is to be silent, two is to sit down, three is to fold the hands, four is to have feet on the floor, and five is to look at the teacher.
- 'Give me five' can mean the five words 'stop and look at me!'
- If you want instant quiet, say 'Freeze!' - with eyes on you.
- Softly begin to sing a song that the class knows, and they begin to sing with you.
- Use a variety of musical instruments to get attention.
- Begin to whisper so the students have to be very quiet in order to hear.
- Give verbal recognition to students who are listening well, sitting quietly or other desired behaviour.

"Thank you, John, for sitting so quietly!" "I see that Emily is ready for sharing time!"

# Sharing Time

“I have my Kinders share once each week. It is always the same day, so the children and parents can plan for that time. I let them share toys that are meaningful, or other interesting objects - or the child can simply tell something that is happening in his/her life. The other children can ask questions or I ask the sharer a few questions about their sharing object.

In the beginning of the year I focus on the person who is sharing and try to get them to say a few interesting things about their object. Later in the year we talk about good questions and the audience behaviours.”

“I call it ‘Share and Care’. One child shares each day, and the rest of the class ‘cares’ by asking questions or giving a compliment. We practice manners, and saying nice things to each other - and then saying ‘thank you’ for compliments.”

“I teach a split class of grade twos and threes. I have one Sharing Journal. This is taken home each day by a student. They write about what they want to share or write questions so the class can guess their sharing object. When we do sharing time, it is more like an ‘author’s chair’ as the person reads from the Sharing Journal what he/she wrote the evening before. Then the other students have a brief chance to ask good questions and the sharing student gets a chance to discuss the object further.”

“I was not a fan of ‘Show and Tell’. It took valuable time out of the day and often I was not sure of the benefit. I decided to try to make it as valuable as possible and now I have a twenty minute block on Friday afternoon when the students get a chance to share what is happening in their lives. They may bring something to share, but toys are forbidden! This is part of the Language block, a speaking and listening component.

I teach them what good speakers do - stand straight, look at the audience, speak clearly - and never run on and on. We also learn what good audience members do - listen carefully, look at the speaker, and ask thoughtful questions. The speaker gets complimented for the things he/she did well - first by me and later in the year by the class. I now find that my class will ask sensible thoughtful questions to the visitors to the school who put on performances instead of the silly questions that some children ask!”

“I have Science sharing every two weeks. The students bring in interesting items that are conducive to discussion. Some we have had are: a feather, fossils, a bone, rocks with crystals, a bird’s nest, a snake skin, etc. The kids love these sessions and look forward to them. They like to think of something interesting to bring. This opens the discussion of the object and gives a good ‘teaching moment’.”

“We have sharing time while the students are eating their lunches. This keeps the time quiet and they get more of a chance to share what is going on in their lives. Each person only gets one minute to share, so things go quite quickly. I stop any ‘run-on’ children.”

“My student of the week is the only one that gets to share, and he/she is able to bring in two things that are meaningful to him/her.”

“The ‘king/queen of the week’ brings in or tells about something that they know how to do. It could be a craft they have made, or they could discuss a sport that they play. Some students share a favourite book that they have read, or show us a computer game that they play at home. If possible they demonstrate - they might sing or dance, draw something well or do something that they can teach the class.”

“I do sharing every Friday afternoon. I have a calendar that gives a specific topic for each Friday. Occasionally there will be a ‘free sharing’ time, where the kids can share any topic.”

“We have ‘Surprise Sharing’. The object has to fit into a small bag. The student must write three questions or clues to see if the others can guess the item. One student does this each day and we go down the class list alphabetically.”



# Class Management

“My overhead projector is on a moveable cart. I can wheel it to different places in the classroom. Luckily, I have lots of electrical outlets! The lower shelves of the cart are used for a tray of erasable pens, felt pieces for erasing and my transparencies.”

“I laminate blank tags for cubbies and desktops. Then I use felt pen to write on top of the lamination. These can be wiped clean and used again and again.”

“If you write over top of permanent marker with a dry erase marker and then erase, both the dry erase and the permanent marks come off. You sometimes need to do it twice, but it works.”

“To do name tags on desks, I put a piece of packing tape on the desk, write on it and put another piece of tape on top. To change name tags I just lift the tape and do it again.”

“For our December open house I put up a bulletin board tree. On it are ornaments with suggestions of things the parents can donate to the classroom. Most parents want to help but don’t know what we need. There are things to buy, such as books, games, skipping ropes, etc., and things that do not cost money - such as wrapping paper rolls, margarine containers, bits of ribbon and fabric. There are also ornaments with jobs that the parents can do - volunteer to listen to children read, bake for class parties, etc.”

“I always send home thank you notes to parents who donate to my classroom - I bought a cute ‘thank-you’ pad and I try to add something personal. Classroom volunteers are given a thank-you note that all the children sign. It is good for the class to see the thank you notes.”

“I bought a class set of baskets that fit into the desk spaces. All the supplies go into the basket. It is easily slid out, it is easy to find what the person is looking for, and easy to slide back in. We tidy them quickly every day before the students go home. Moreover, the baskets are quiet when they are moved!”

“I bought a lot of clear plastic containers and put math manipulatives in them. They stack easily and neatly, and they don’t have to be labeled as you can see what is in them.”

## Passing Out Papers

“I have a specific lesson in the art of passing out papers! My Grade Twos sit in rows, but I would do a similar lesson for tables. I hand enough papers for the students in the row to the front person. He/She takes one and hands the pile back, and the next person does the same. Handing in papers is the opposite. The back person hands his paper to the person in front of him, that person adds his paper and hands the two forward, etc., until all the papers reach the front. The front person puts the pile where it should go.

This sounds easy and obvious - but for some reason it never goes as smoothly as it should until I teach the specific lesson!”

“I designate two students to hand out papers for the week as part of the ‘helpers’ board. At the beginning of the year I model getting the papers, handing them out and collecting them and putting in the proper place.”

“I train my helpers to hand out papers in a specific order and direction. They walk through the same path each time - this way no-one is missed or gets two papers by accident.”

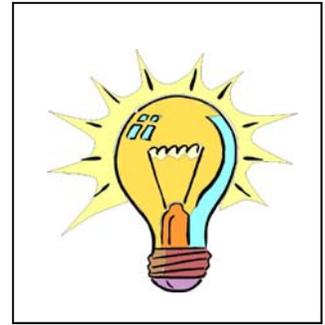
“I have a plastic tray that the students use to hand out the papers. The papers are put in the tray and as the ‘passer’ comes to each person, he/she takes one paper from the tray. I find this words very well. We do the opposite with collecting papers - the children put the papers into the tray as the passer goes by.”



# Teacher Tips

## Martha's Tips:

I get a class set of empty pop flats from the grocery store and have students decorate and use them as drawers to put inside their desks. If they need to find something, instead of pulling a mess out of their desk, they slide out their “drawer”. It makes it so much easier to clean their desks, as well, because then they organize their drawer on top of their desk where they can see, instead of shoving things inside any which way.



Shake everyone’s hands on the way in the door every morning and out the door every afternoon, make eye contact, and speak positively to each child.

Be available to chit chat for five minutes before or after school with parents (but stay firm about asking parents to set up a meeting if they want to discuss “heavy” issues that deserve more time/preparation/privacy)... you get to see the dynamics between parent and child, and they find you to be more approachable. I should add that my classroom had an outside door where students lined up and parents waited with their children until the bell went. Where I’ve been teaching/subbing for the past four years the students arrive mostly by bus at different times, and many of the schools allow the students to wait in their classrooms with general supervision.

I hold individual conferences during the 2nd week of school to meet with each of the parents—before/after school or by phone (always make sure you have a positive meeting with a parent before a negative one—if I suspect I’ll need to talk to a parent about behaviour within the first few days, I make sure I make some type of positive contact right away)...I tell them about our class rules and discipline procedures; communication book/planner/agenda expectations; washroom rules; homework (gotta use the homework calendars from Primary Success!); update birthdays/addresses/allergies/phone numbers etc. (I also make sure to find out Mom’s last name... in case it’s different from child’s).

I try to do all my photocopying for the next week or more, if possible, during my prep (when other teachers aren’t around and needing the machine as well), and then I keep the worksheets for each subject area (paper clipped and in order), in separate, labeled, cardboard magazine holders - homework calendars (photocopied for the year), printing, phonics, math, spelling, etc. That way, I just have to pull the next set of sheets out to leave on my desk—really helpful if I’m too tired to think at the end of the day or in a rush, running late, etc. TOCs have somewhere to get “extra” work if they’re at a loss for a filler activity.

I use pinking shears to snip the bottom right corner of every worksheet that is completed and correct. I even snip the bottom right cover of their duotangs. That way it is easy to see if someone has corrections to do, and by grasping the pages at the bottom right corner with their thumb, they can automatically turn to the right page without having to flip through each page one at a time.

I use a highlighter dot on my originals—which makes it easy for new teachers or student teachers to help themselves to “extra” worksheets in my filing cabinet, without me having to worry about losing originals. It’s a great way to cull the extra sheets that build up over time, and it helps others out, too.

I make sure the students know what all the funny marks I make on their work means: a dot means something is incorrect (it can be turned into a check mark when corrected); if something is underlined, that means it is backwards; if something is double underlined, they used the wrong case (upper/lower); etc.

I save enough lids from frozen fruit cans (concentrate) so everyone has one with their name on it. I put magnetic tape on the back, and use these on the board for graphing activities, voting activities, and question of the day activities.

# Math Ideas

Work with tangrams:

<http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/games/area/tangram.html>

“I had the district crew paint several large number lines to 20 on our concrete playground area. In our math times, we often go out and jump out problems and questions. I have found it really helpful! We also use the ladder on the playground slide to show ‘going up’ and ‘going down’ the numbers.”

“We make many different kinds of number lines. We use clothes pins on a string across the chalkboard, stepping stones on the carpet, paper clips on a chart holding the numbers, and game boards like ‘Chutes and Ladders’. I find that extensive work in hopping forward and back through the numbers give the kids a much better understanding. Each student has a number line on the desktop, too.

We have daily lessons saying, “We are standing on the largest number. Which way will we hop?””

“I think the most powerful part of my math lessons is the feedback time at the end. We take a few minutes for the students to tell what they have done and learned in the period. This seems to crystallize the procedures, when a child has to put the concept into words.”

“In my Grade One class we spend about a week talking about each number. They use manipulatives to play a game for this ‘special’ number. One of the games we play is a bear cave game. You give each child the magic/special number of unifix cubes (or other manipulatives) and they make a cave with one of their hands to hide the unifix cubes. You use a cup or bowl and a set manipulates on an over head projector at the same time. You can start out doing this first and then the children do it, too. If the number you are studying is 8 and 3 bears are outside the cave how many bears are in the cave sleeping? I can only see one bear. How many bears are in the cave? Etc.

As your theme changes you can call the game something different. For Halloween have witches or ghosts instead of bears. For Christmas, use elves or gifts. The students can help you make up new games.

We do this with our math journals. At first just have them show the special number in a set. What can you find in the classroom that is the special number? Try and see how many different things the whole class could come up with. You could have 8: bears, cats, books, DVDs, pumpkins, leaves, students, etc. Have the students draw and colour a set to match your magic number. Later you could get into equations and even later you could use the number of the day or week.

We did the following things on the whiteboard and then the first 4 things in the math journals for the special number:

- digit 8
- word eight (5 tallies and then 3 tallies)
- drew it in base ten units/ten sticks
- drew a set of 8 (I always had one student pick a basic shape to draw this set: circles, squares, triangles or rectangles. You could do any shapes or pictures you want but I found they took too long if I let them pick!)
  - used coins to make that many cents two different ways
  - Used a string of 100 beads that were 10 red, 10 black to show that number and how many were "left over" from 100. (8 red beads with 92 left over). I also had them draw and colour the beads to show 8 or what ever the number was that day.
  - We also did the number partners for the special number and addition and subtraction equations. They liked to make their own equations to equal the special number.



## Word Problems

“I model this procedure almost every day until the kids know it by heart. Then we do #3, #4 and #6 in our math journals.

1. Read the word problem. What facts does the problem give?
2. Re-read the **question**. What does it ask?
3. Draw a simple picture to show the problem and the answer.
4. Write the equation and solve it.
5. Re-read your question. Does the equation answer it?
6. Print a word sentence to answer your question.”



“We answer our daily problem in our math journals. I always use blank white paper, going horizontal with holes punched at the top. This gave them more room and they aren't distracted with lines. I stress neatness and clarity of the picture, the printing and accuracy, of course.”

## Teaching Money

“I found that many of my kids did not recognize the coins. I showed and taught the name and value of one at a time in the morning opening, and within two weeks all the students could name them and tell how much they were worth. This practice really helped when we began to learn to add money.”

“We review coins and their values daily with the calendar. For each day of school we add a penny. I put tiny strips of magnetic tape on the back of the real coins and we put them on a cookie sheet. We trade every 5 pennies in to a nickel, and then to dimes and then quarters. The children are very excited when, on 100 Day, all the coins are traded for a Loonie! I like the magnetic tape, because the coins can be manipulated and moved around to show relationships.”

“We practice counting by ones with pennies, by fives with nickels, by tens with dimes and by twenty-fives with quarters.”

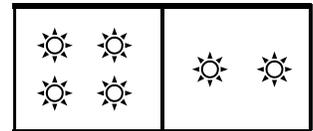
“We count money by putting the alike coins together. Count the coins that are worth most first, then the next, until lastly the pennies. If we have two dimes, three nickels, one quarter and three pennies, we practice putting them quarters first, then dimes, nickels and pennies. Then we would say, “25, 35, 45, 50, 55, 60, 61, 62, 63.”

I found that my kids needed extra practice counting by 10s on the 5 numbers - 5, 15, 25, 35, etc., and in counting on, but they enjoy adding up groups of coins.”

## More Ideas....

“I made large domino cards. I found them helpful for students to learn how to form the two addition and the two subtraction stories for a pair of numbers. I use the cards with a small group or with the whole class and also in a centre. If the cards are flipped over it is easy to see that  $4 + 2$  is the same as  $2 + 4$ . The cards fold in the middle, so one side can be put out of sight to do the subtraction.  $6 - 2$  (fold the 2 side back) = 4 and  $6 - 4$  (fold the 4 side back) = 2.

The students must write the four equations that go with their domino card.”



“I drew and cut out a large snake on butcher paper for my Kindergarteners. Then I wrote the numbers 1 to 10 on the body and cut the snake into ten parts. After I had the pieces laminated, now the children love to put the snake together with the numbers in the right order.”

“I buy the large collections of foam shapes at Michaels. These are great for sorting and sequencing and for making patterns with my Kinders.”

## Adding to 10 is Easy!

Once understanding of addition and numbers has been attained, some students work slowly to answer the questions. You may find students in Grade Two and even Grade Three who still have to ponder over these simple questions. We will assume that questions to 5 can be easily answered - so we need to work on the answers 6 to 10.

<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
5 + 1	6 + 1	7 + 1	8 + 1	9 + 1
4 + 2	5 + 2	6 + 2	7 + 2	8 + 2
3 + 3	4 + 3	5 + 3	6 + 3	7 + 3
		4 + 4	5 + 4	6 + 4
				5 + 5

**Rule 1** - Always begin to add with the largest number. If the question is  $3 + 6 =$ , add it as  $6 + 3 =$ .

**Rule 2** - Questions adding one are easy. Count on one number.

**Rule 3** - Questions adding two are easy, too. Count on two numbers.

**Rule 4** - Doubles are easy, too. These are to be memorized. ( $3 + 3$ ,  $4 + 4$ ,  $5 + 5$ )

**Rule 5** - If the numbers are just one apart, double the smaller number and add one.  $4 + 3 = 3 + 3 + 1$

How many questions are left?  $5 + 3$ ,  $6 + 3$ ,  $7 + 3$  and  $6 + 4$ . If the student can count on the 3 steps, that leaves just one question!

## Adding to 18 is Easy!

We usually have students struggling to memorize these in Grade Two and sometimes Grade Three when we want them to work quickly with larger numbers. Teach the tricks!

<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>
9 + 2	9 + 3	9 + 4	9 + 5	9 + 6	9 + 7	9 + 8
8 + 3	8 + 4	8 + 5	8 + 6	8 + 7	8 + 8	
7 + 4	7 + 5	7 + 6	7 + 7			<u>18</u>
6 + 5	6 + 6					9 + 9

**Rule 1** - Always begin adding with the largest number. That cuts the number of problems in half!

**Rule 2** - Pretend 9 is 10, add the 10 and subtract 1 - the ones number in the answer will be one less than the number you are adding to the 9.

**Rule 3** - Pretend 8 is 10, add the 10 and subtract 2 - the ones number in the answer will be two less than the number you are adding to the 8.

**Rule 4** - Memorize the doubles.

**Rule 5** - If the numbers you are adding are just one apart, double the smaller number and add one.

How many questions are left? Just  $7 + 4$  and  $7 + 5$ !

## Subtraction Tricks to 10

There are two ways to consider subtraction - take away and finding the difference. In most questions, one of these is easier to use than the other. Illustrate this on a number line.

**Rule** - If the numbers in the subtraction question are far apart and one number is small, subtract by taking away that number. If the numbers are close together, subtract by finding the difference between the numbers. For example, it is much easier to find the difference in  $10 - 8$  than to say '10 take away 8'.

## Subtraction Tricks to 18

**Rule 1** - See the rule above.

**Rule 2** - When subtracting 9, subtract 10 and add 1.

**Rule 3** - When subtracting 8, subtract 10 and add 2.

**Rule 4** - Use the doubles to subtract...  $16 - 8 = 8$

**Rule 5** - Count back 2 or 3.

That still leaves many questions. Practice subtracting from the 10 and adding what is left....

$$15 - 7 = (10 + 5) - 7 = (10 - 7) + 5 = 3 + 5 = 8$$

# Remembrance Day

“For Remembrance Day I did a very old idea with torn paper poppies--

You need:

- pre-cut red paper- to 3" x 3" size - 3 per student
- pre-cut green paper- 2" x 4" size - for stems
- pre-cut green paper 4" x 9" - for the grass
- 9" x 12" black paper for the background

The children must tear the paper, no scissors allowed. They basically created 3 rounded red shapes, tore the stem piece into thirds, and created a wavy edge on one side of the grass piece. They can also make ‘hill’ shapes with their grass piece. Then go for a 3 poppy arrangement using the green scraps to make tiny centres for the flowers. They are very simple, especially if done with older buddies! (my secret helpers) and they look very very effective when displayed.”



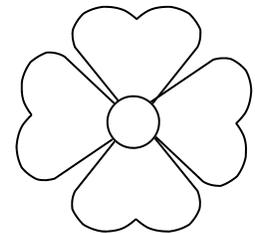
“I did a large bulletin board, with large poppies that were done on manilla tag, and then cut out. Then the kids, working in pairs, cut out red bits of colour from magazines for the poppies and black bits for the centres and collaged them onto the shape. Then we did the background of pale blue, and used those trusty bingo markers to make groupings of poppies all over.”

## Little Poppy

Little poppy  
Given to me,  
Help me keep our country  
Safe and free.



I'll wear a little poppy,  
As red as red can be,  
To show that I remember  
Those who fought for me.



# Testing

“In our district, the classroom teachers do not give standardized tests. Our Resource / Learning Assistance teachers go to a training for the tests that are given throughout the district, and they give the tests to all the classes. This way we know that every class has the same timing and test directions. They also do the marking, and they get time to do this.

Then the classroom teacher meets with the L.A. and the Principal to discuss the results. We are not told how our class did compared to the other classes at our grade level, but it is rather obvious - compliments if the class scored well, discussion of where the class had difficulties or scored lower if they did not do so well. I think it is a good way to do it - but then I always get compliments! Certainly teacher philosophies and teaching methods come into the conversations and teachers are held responsible for the results.

Later the school and district results are sent to the schools. It is very interesting to see how my class rates with the district averages. As I teach in a low-average socio-economic area, I feel good to know that my kids are working and learning above the district average.”

“I like to do check lists with my kids. I try to do it individually, so I keep them as short as possible. For example, I may have the children come up one at a time and look at a sheet with the lower case letters in random order and say the sounds. I have a sheet with the child's name on it, and I circle the sounds that he/she does not yet know. This tells me what I have to work on with that student. I also give the kids oral word list tests from the Dolch lists to see how their sight vocabulary is progressing.”

# Behaviour Management

1. Be firm, fair, friendly, respectful, with a sense of humor.
2. A cheerful, organized classroom encourages good student behaviour.
3. Learn to anticipate problems before they begin.
4. Make learning interesting, fun and relevant. Even the most scripted lesson can be fun if the teacher makes it so.
5. Discuss, but never argue!
6. Have only a few classroom rules and state them simply, clearly, and often. Have the students help to establish the rules.
7. Act, don't threaten. Follow through on what you say.
8. Let your students know that you care about them.
9. Have your rules and expectations the same as the school's rules and expectations.
10. Parents can be important allies and resources.

"I have rewards for my children, but I don't believe in giving them prizes or treats. That is bribery! The rewards on my list are ones that make the child feel special for his/her good deeds. For example, when they get ten smiley faces on a behaviour sheet they can select one of the rewards from my list. I often add to the list so they have lots of choices.

1. For a day, use a fancy pencil from my box or very special pencils.
2. Choose the book that I will read to the group that day.
3. Sit at my desk with me to eat lunch.
4. Be the teacher's helper for the day.
5. Read with the stuffie of your choice.
6. Get extra computer time.
7. Move your desk to where you would like it for the day.
8. Go on a special visit to the library.
9. Be the line leader.
10. Read to yourself for an hour.

My kids are just as happy with privileges that do not cost anything!"



"Our school has a 'caught being good' board. All the teachers and school personnel who do not have a class participate. If they see a class or an individual being extra good or doing a good deed, they fill out a simple slip in duplicate with the name, date and behaviour. One copy goes to the classroom and the other gets put up on the board for all to see. The kids are very delighted to get a 'caught being good' notice and love to look at the bulletin board."

"We are not allowed to take away recess time. Because of our shortage of gym time, we use this as P.E. time. The kids really need this time as a break and a time to get some much needed exercise."

"When my whole class is due for a privilege, we have a 'Cuddle Up and Read' afternoon. The children bring blankets or light sleeping bags, a favourite stuffed toy. We have done it with pajamas and slippers, but that isn't necessary. I collect a selection of great books from the school library. The desks are moved to one side and we cuddle up and read and read and read. It is great to promote the idea of reading as a wonderful treat and the kids love it."

"I like to make 'good' phone calls to the parents. The children are very pleased and so are the parents, especially when they hear my voice on the phone they are expecting news that is not so positive! I also send happy notes home with the students."

"Make sure you document EVERYTHING that a troublesome or difficult student does every day - good things and bad things. Put it into a sequential file or a book. Discuss the notes with the parents and the Principal. You may need these for a diagnoses or to get help for the student at a later time. You may also see patterns - time of day, food, school work, home problems, peer problems, etc."

# Parent Communication

1. Make sure that all written communication with parents is accurate and looks professional. Spelling or grammatical errors make you look 'uneducated'! Have a colleague edit it if you are unsure.
2. Keep a copy of all phone calls, notes and newsletters to parents. It may be important!
3. Write clearly and concisely so there cannot be any misunderstanding of the message.
4. Avoid educational jargon. Not only can it be misunderstood by the reader, it sounds pretentious.
5. Give copies of newsletters and other important communications to the Principal.
6. File copies of your communications and parents' communication where you can find them.
7. Record all face-to-face meetings and phone calls - the date, who you talked to and the subject. You may want to have a phone log.

## Ideas for Parent Conferences:

1. Care-givers come in many different combinations, from two and one-parent households, to same-sex parents, foster parents, guardians, etc. Try to discover the care-givers for each household. Having the children draw their families can help to tell you what the home is like. Invite both parents to conferences, or the people who are directly involved with the child.
2. Try to introduce yourself to the parents in the first two weeks of school if possible, even if it is simply at an open house or talking at the classroom door.
3. Allow plenty of time for each parent-teacher conference.
4. Have a file prepared that gives you direct information of the child's ability, skill levels, work habits, etc. Sometimes it is difficult to remember all the information unless you have it written and at your fingertips.
5. Get organized before the conference. Have all the test scores, student work samples, and exercise books. Know the reading level and the knowledge or gaps in the knowledge that you will be working on in the next months.
6. Try to greet the parents by name.
7. Have comfortable equal seating. Don't sit behind your desk or ask parents to perch on tiny chairs.
8. Begin the conference with a positive statement about the child's ability, work, or interests.
9. Be honest. If a child is having difficulty, say so! It may be hard to tell the parents that a child is having difficulty, but it will be much harder at a later date.
10. Tell the parents what you have done to help the child, what you are presently doing, and what you will try in the future.
11. Be specific in your comments. This is much easier if you have written extensive anecdotal notes.
12. Use simple vocabulary and forget the jargon. Most parents won't understand a word of the educational double-talk....
13. Ask for the parents' opinions. What they have to say is important for you to know.
14. Every child has strengths. Talk about these and how these strengths can be used to promote learning.
15. At the end of the conference, summarize the discussion and the actions you and the parents have decided to take.
16. Keep a written record of the conference. Put it into the child's file so you can refer to it.

“As a parent, I find that the school is always asking for money! Two dollars for this, five dollars for that, ten dollars for this and more for that. This is over and above the supplies and the hotdog Fridays. As a teacher I know that the school needs things and that I buy necessities out of my own pocket for my own classroom, but there seems to be never-ending requests for money. As a middle-income family, we find these requests too much - so what do lower-income families do and how do they feel about it? I think schools need to be more frugal and decide priorities to help both struggling teachers and families. In my opinion, books are more important than the newest technology. pencils and paper more important than the best sports equipment.”



## For the Parents....

How you can help your child to succeed:

- Talk often with your child. Explain the world around him/her. Encourage questions and answer them as well as you can. If you don't know an answer, look it up together.
- Read to and with your child every day. Talk about the words and ideas in books. Read books that are fun and books that teach. Read not only easy picture books but chapter books that have few pictures. This will encourage imagination.
- Ask your child's teacher how you can help your child practice at home what he is learning at school.
- Talk about words and letters and sounds. Read words in the environment - street signs, store names, toy words, words on the computer.
- Listen to your child read every day. Be patient! Praise the efforts. If the book is too difficult and the child does not read it easily, read it together - then find an easier book to read.
- Say the sounds of letters and ask your child to tell you the letter names.
- Encourage your child to print simple words using the sounds that have been taught. Spell and write easy words, and later make sentences.
- Write a word on paper and cut the letters apart (or use plastic or foam letters). Mix the letters and have your child spell a word by putting the letters in order.
- Encourage your child to write for a reason - letters and thank-you notes, simple stories, and grocery lists.
- When you read together, stop now and then to talk about the meaning of the words and the story. Ask questions about the story.
- Before you come to the end of a story, ask your child to predict what might happen next or how the story will end.

## The Giving Tree

What can the parents donate to your classroom? Some teachers put up a tree at Christmas, and decorate it with ornaments, each with a donation item. The parent can take the ornament, sign a list and then donate the item.

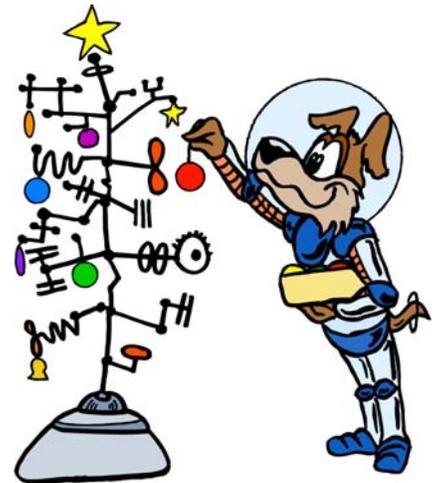
Here are some ideas:

Post-it notes, notepads, stickers, old (suitable) magazines and catalogues, wikki sticks, books, awards, coloured copy paper, collections of items suitable for math manipulatives, lego, plasticene, board games, puzzles, baby wipes, cotton balls, pipe cleaners, clear contact plastic, feathers-beads-lace, etc., stamps and stamp pads, skipping ropes, balls, hula hoops, and school supplies. Art and craft supplies are always welcome, and extra pencils and erasers for children who are unable to bring more. The parents can also bring empty aluminum foil tubes or gift wrap tubes (not toilet paper), empty milk jugs for an igloo project, empty margarine containers with lids, and much more!

This is a good site for parent/teacher conferences.

<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=7319>

"I had my parents write me a letter telling me all about the child. These were very good and I learned a lot about the families and things about the children that I would not otherwise know. It was very valuable!"



# Social Studies

“I find my children have a problem with understanding the terms city, province, country, continent. Every day in our morning meeting we played the ‘Where is it?’ game. We began with ourselves.... Where am I? In my classroom, in the school, on \_\_\_ street, in \_\_\_\_\_ (town), in \_\_\_ (province), in Canada, in North America, in the world. Some wanted to continue.... in the solar system, in space, infinity....

We found each of the places on Google Earth, beginning with the school and gradually going further and further out until the whole hemisphere could be seen. Then we did the same on a flat map and a globe.

When we read a book about another part of the world, we put the character through the same sequence. If a student was going to visit another city, province or country - we placed the student in the sequence.

My class really loved doing this, and they soon became quite good at the different parts of the world.”

“We play a very simple map game. I think I first saw it in one of the early magazines from Primary Success! I put up a big outline map of Canada and taught the province names and where they are. Then I asked a student up to choose a province and whisper it to me. Then he said, “I am in a province. Where am I?” The children raised their hands and he chose a player who walked up to the map and guessed a province by asking, “Are you in \_\_\_\_\_?” and touching the map correctly. When a student finally guessed correctly, he became ‘it’ and the game continued. The children soon learned all the provinces and had fun, too. We then did the continents, and then larger countries of the world.”

“I teach maps, maps, and more maps! To begin, I bring in a doll house with furniture. The students look at it, play with it and rearrange it for a few days. Then we work with a map of our classroom. I have an outline on felt and desks and tables as cutouts that stick on it. We work together to see the position of things.

Then I bring in a compass and we learn the cardinal directions. We say:

When I face the north pole,  
South is out of sight.  
West is to my left  
And east to my right.

The kids point in the directions as they say the poem - over their heads to the south. We learn what direction each wall of our classroom is, and play a game where they turn in a circle and stop when I call a direction and face that wall.

Then we connect the directions with a flat map. North is at the top, south at the bottom, etc. I show them a land feature, and say, “This is China. What is to the east of China?” (or another direction) - and they find it on the map.”



“When teaching children about physical maps, I begin with drawing a simple plan of the classroom on the blackboard and then on a worksheet, including cupboards, blackboard, desks, chairs etc. The children have to colour the plan using the colours from a physical map: green for floor level, yellow for mid level (desks, chairs etc.), orange to brown for the highest objects in the room.

Then we used paper mache on a piece of plywood to form mountains, a lake and river. We painted the scene as physical maps are coloured.

When you begin to study physical maps, the children have an excellent understanding of the colours used.”

“We read ‘The Gingerbread baby’ by Jan Brett and then made a 3-D model of the journey. I found this was a good introduction to map reading.”

“I send home a request for family or friend addresses in other parts of the country or the world. My class writes and sends letters to the addresses, requesting a postcard showing the place where the addressee lives. We get lots of replies. I put up a map of Canada and also a map of the world, and we put pins to show where the cards come from. It is a great entry to studying other places!”

# Having an aide/para/parent helpers

If you are lucky enough to have a classroom helper, make sure you know the rules governing this. In some places, aides are not allowed to actually teach children, and in other districts trained aides and para-professionals can take a group of children for teaching purposes. Parent helpers usually should not be made aware of privacy matters of the other students and their families - home problems, disabilities, etc. Whatever the rules are, remember that you are the 'boss' and that you have the responsibility for whatever the helper does.

Your helpers, from paras to parents, will need firm direction in order to be useful. Do not assume that they know what you want done - that way lies disaster! Be very specific with your directions and demonstrate if possible. Remember when you were a student teacher and the classroom was a new experience? And, you had training.....

Below are lists of possible 'jobs' that you can give classroom assistants. The work given will depend on the training and experience of the helper - and the rules, of course.

## High Responsibility:

- Recess/lunch supervision
- Marking more complicated work
- Teaching a reading or math group
- Assisting children at centres
- Running a centre
- Working with disabled students
- Working one-on-one with students with learning problems
- Helping with simple assessments
- Supervising if the teacher has to leave

## Medium Responsibility:

- Listen to children read one-on-one
- Listen to a group of children read
- Photocopying
- Putting up bulletin boards
- Marking simple work
- Keeping children on task
- Sitting beside a student who becomes distracted
- Supports the rest of the class while you teach a group
- Help with computers
- Walk with the children when they go to gym, library, etc.
- Read stories
- Helping children in writing lessons

## Low Responsibility:

- Filing papers to mailboxes, etc.
- Cutting out supplies
- Tidying and organizing math manipulatives
- Sorting library books
- Running errands
- Helping with art projects, field trips, special days
- Take attendance
- Help with coats, zippers, boots at recess
- Make games, flashcards, etc.



# Christmas Poetry

## Santa's Reindeer

A B C D E F G

Santa's reindeer laughed at me.

H I J K L M N

Santa's reindeer laughed again.

O P Q R S T U

Haven't they something else to do?

V W X and Y and Z

Santa's reindeer - go home to bed!

## Alphabet Chant

A-B C-D-E

See our lovely Christmas tree.

F-G H-I-J

Christmas is our favourite day!

K-L M-N-O

The lights are sparkling in the snow!

P-Q R-S-T

This is fun for you and me.

U-V W-X-Y

The stars are shining in the sky.

Z-Z Z-Z-Z

We're too excited to go to bed!



## A Christmas Tree

One little star

On the top of the tree

Two little presents

Underneath for me

Three silver ropes

Twisted round the tree

Four little coloured lights

Shining prettily

Five shining balls

Glowing silvery

Oh what a sight

For us to see.

Laughter jolly,

Lanterns, holly,

Bells ringing,

Children singing,

Nothing sad

All things glad....

## Santa

Two merry blue eyes

An odd little nose

A long snowy beard

And cheeks like a rose

A round chubby man

A big bulging pack

Hurrah for Old Santa

We're glad he's come back!

## Reindeer Pokey

*The Hokey Pokey*

You put your antlers in.

You put your antlers out.

You put you antlers in and then

You shake them all about.

You do the Reindeer Pokey

And you turn yourself around.

That's what it's all about!

You put your four hooves in....

You put your red nose in....

You put your fluffy tail in...

You put your body in...

## S-A-N-T-A

I know a man with a long white beard

And Santa is his name-o

S-A-N-T-A, S-A-N-T-A, S-A-N-T-A

And Santa is his name-o

He slides down the chimney

with a pack on his back

And Santa is his name-o

S-A-N-T-A, S-A-N-T-A, S-A-N-T-A

And Santa is his name-o

Eight little reindeer pull his sleigh

And Santa is his name-o

S-A-N-T-A, S-A-N-T-A, S-A-N-T-A

And Santa is his name-o

## Santa Claus

*Are You Sleeping?*

Santa Claus, Santa Claus,

Ho, ho, ho.

Ho, ho, ho.

Where is Santa?

Where is Santa?

I don't know.

Do you know?



## Call Rudolph

Eight little reindeer

Pulling Santa's sled

One fell down

And bumped his head.

The elves called Santa

And Santa said,

"Can seven little reindeer

Pull my sled?"

Seven little reindeer...

Six little reindeer...

Five little reindeer...

Four little reindeer...

Three little reindeer...

Two little reindeer...

One little reindeer

Pulling Santa's sled;

He fell down

And bumped his head.

The elves called Santa

And Santa said,

"Call Rudolph!"



# Christmas Ideas

“I cut out a very large green tree from butcher paper. The top is at the top of the bulletin board and the bottom is near the floor. I had to cut two halves so it is almost twice the width of the paper. I added a brown trunk at the floor. Then I strung the little white Christmas tree lights back and forth on the tree. We do a lot of Christmas art projects, and the class makes several different tree ornaments that are tacked to the tree.

Different years we decorate the tree differently. One year I put large pinwheel poinsettias on it. Another we made ball ornaments with the children’s pictures on them. There are lots of ideas. I always get lots of compliments on the tree!”

“Our art teacher cut out large green trees, one for each class from K to 7, and put them up in the central hall. Now every class has to decorate their tree. They look wonderful when they are all done!

We did this last year, too, and moved them to the gym walls for the Christmas concert and they were a big hit.”

“On the last day of November I send home a large Christmas Tree pattern with each child. I call this their ‘Holiday Homework’. Together with their family they are to decorate the tree using any items found in their home. The trees come back beautifully decorated and make a wonderful holiday hall display.”

“I found some bare tree branches about five feet tall. I painted them white and stuck them in some ready-mix concrete in a middle-sized flower pot. I have these up all year with little white lights on them and decorated with seasonal things. At Halloween I have orange lights and black bats on the tree. At Christmas I have lights with mixed colours, and the children make decorations for the tree - hanging ornaments and real candy canes. It is a focal point in the classroom and the kids love it.”

## Sparkly Peppermint Playdough

2 cups water  
2 cups flour  
1 cup salt  
4 teaspoons cream of tartar  
4 tablespoons oil  
4 tablespoons peppermint extract  
glitter

Mix all ingredients in a heavy saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until mixture thickens and pulls away from the sides of the pan. Form dough into a ball, sprinkle with glitter, place on waxed paper, and cool completely. Store in Ziplock bags.



## Sparkle Shapes

Put a simple black outline of a Christmas shape under wax paper. Trace around the shape with liquid glue, making a thick line and closing the shape. Sprinkle fine glitter into the glue. When it is dry, peel it off the paper and hang with a ribbon.

## Fridge Magnet / Ornament

“You can make very cute fridge magnets by using can tops and bottoms - taken off with the can opener that leaves the top ridge and does not leave a sharp edge. Trace the lid on red or green paper, cut out the circle and glue it to the lid. Put a photo of the child with the date and grade on top. A magnetic strip goes on the back of the lid.

If you want to make tree ornaments, glue ribbon ends to the back of the lid to make the loop, and then cut another circle of coloured paper and glue it over the back.

# Christmas, Christmas

I am always excited when I see something new - new to me, at least..... in my grandson's grade two class-room they made sugar cookies with 'stained glass' centers. They had cut out large round cookies and then used a small cookie cutter to cut a shape out of the center of each - a tree or bell, etc. Then the teacher used a hammer to smash yellow lifesavers into a powder. When the cookie was on the baking sheet, she sprinkled the powdered candy into the cookie centers. As they baked, the centers melted into a gold sheet that was translucent. The teacher said that she had been doing this for years, and did the same thing to make windows for gingerbread houses. She said that she had tried it with other candy, but lifesavers was the only one that worked. She was only using yellow today, but there are lots of colours..... Neat!

“I really like bingo markers! The kids like to use them, they last a long time and they are very effective.

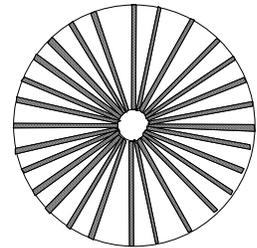
We made Christmas trees. I drew the tree on the paper first and then photocopied it for the children. I found three different shades of green bingo markers and the students used these to colour the tree. They had great fun! The three shades made the trees look very interesting.

When they are dry, we decorated them with star stickers, simple round stickers for balls, and other small stickers that you can get at the dollar store. You could use cereals glued on, or sequins and rickrack tape, or lots of things.

Then we cut out small parcels from shiny Christmas gift wrap and glued them under the tree.”

## A Star Ornament

1. Put two CDs back to back so that the shiny sides face out. Glue them together with a glue gun.
2. Wind silver cord or sparkly ribbon through the center hole as in the diagram, around the edge and back through the center until there are rays out from the center circle all around the disc.
3. Glue the ends of the ribbon.
4. Add a bow if you wish. Tie a loop through one of the rays to hang the ornament.



## The Polar Express

There are wonderful units and ideas for this popular book and movie on-line. Have a look at these!

<http://www.marcias-lesson-links.com/polarexpress.html>

<http://www.teachingheart.net/polar.html>

<http://www.kinderthemes.com/thepolarexpress.html>

<http://www.cape.k12.mo.us/Blanchard/hicks/Reading%20Pages/Polar%20Express%20Teaching%20Resources.htm>

This is a dreadful URL, but a good site if you can get to it!

[http://ali.apple.com/ali\\_sites/deli/exhibits/1000432/The\\_Lesson.html](http://ali.apple.com/ali_sites/deli/exhibits/1000432/The_Lesson.html)

<http://www.kinderkorner.com/polarexpress.html>

<http://www.littlegiraffes.com/polarexpress.html>



# Christmas Activities

“Here is a game that I’m playing with my kids for Christmas.

I call it ‘Broken Toys’ – a tag game. Choose 2-3 students to be ‘it’. Choose 2-3 people to be elves. Put them in different coloured pinnies so the kids can tell them apart. The rest of the class are the toys. Set aside one corner of the gym (mark it with pylons or...) to be the North Pole. If a ‘toy’ gets tagged – it is broken and has to freeze in whatever position you decide. The elves can take them by the hand back to the North Pole to be repaired. Once there, the broken toy has to do 5 jumping jacks to repair himself. Then he can go free again. The elves can be tagged too.”

The original game I saw written down was “Auto Wreckers”. Kids are either “Awful drivers”, “tow trucks” or automobiles. When tagged, the tow trucks take them to the garage for repairs, they do their jumping jacks (or whatever) and then carry on back on the roads.

Another game we like to play is called ‘North Pole’. Lay out hula hoops on the floor of the gym – 1 less than the number of students you have. The goal is to be in a hoop – but the person who isn’t in a hoop is always looking to be in one too, and there can only be one child in a hoop. Give each child, including the extra, the name of a reindeer. When you call out their reindeer name, they have to leave their hoop and get into another one. The ‘extra’ person tries to get into one as well. Students can not go back into the hoop they just vacated. To make it more fun, call out two names at a time. If you call ‘North Pole’ everyone must change hoops..”

*Heather*

Count down the days until Christmas with a paper chain. Take off a loop each day. This can be done in the classroom at calendar time, and also sent home for the family to do.

December the first 'til Christmas  
Is the longest time of the year,  
It seems as though old Santa  
Never will appear.  
How many days 'til Christmas?  
It's mighty hard to count,  
So this little chain of paper  
Will show you the exact amount.



## Snowman Votive Candle Holder

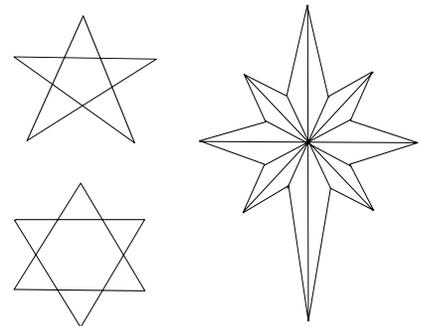
Find inexpensive blue votive candle holders. Have each child dip one finger in white paint, the complete length of the finger. Have each child make 3 full length finger prints on their votive cup.

When dry, let the children add eyes, nose, mouth and buttons using fine point sharpie permanent markers. Place a tea light in each votive holder.

## Stars

Teach your students to draw stars. There are three kinds:

1. the 5 point star, drawn in one continuous line.
2. the 6 point star, two triangles
3. the 8 point star, made with straight lines and then the end points are joined.



# Odds and Ends

## Record Keeping



“I have three different files for each child.

1. The first is a folder on my computer. I have a data-base for each testable subject in one file where all the marks are put, a word processing file where I write down parent contacts, the date and information about the contact, and another word processing file where I jot down anecdotal notes. I try to do this on twice-weekly basis.

2. The second is a file in my desk drawer for personal paper. Here I put the entry fill-in sheet that I have the parents do, notes from parents, etc. I keep emergency information here, too.

3. The third is a file with a collection of work that the child has completed. This is handy when there are parent/teacher conferences. I use a date-stamp to date the work.”

“I keep a class list in a file by the door in a holder. When there is a fire drill I can just grab it as we go out.”

“I have a large 2” binder with dividers. After each name I have blank paper for anecdotal records and graph sheets to put down test and quiz scores. I keep running records here, too, and a grid to keep track of reading levels.”

“I have files in my desk drawer for school forms, information sheets, meeting notes, etc. I keep them in order of date. It is amazing how often I want to refer to something that came up at a meeting, or to check dates on school affairs.”

“I jot anecdotal notes on post-it notes with the date, and at the end of the day I pop them into the child’s file. When this becomes messy, I go through and re-write them into the file in order.”

“I put a sheet of Avery labels on a clipboard and write notes on the kids as I see things happening. Then these are lifted and stuck into the files.”

“I make a huge effort to write a lot of anecdotal notes on each child. I try to do at least 10 each day. Then the first thing I do after school is type these into the individual student files on my computer under different subject headings. I find that this cuts down report card writing in half! I have such a lot of information in the files by report card time, I can just write it out without any fuss.”

## Concerts

Here are a few basic suggestions for Christmas concerts:

- Keep it simple, especially with Kindergarteners and Grade Ones.
- Do what you and the class do best. If you do a lot of singing with your class, sing in the concert. If you do Readers’ Theatre, do one of those. If you do choral speech in class, that is a good option. If you dance in PE, a dance is a good idea. Problems arise if the students are doing something that is not usually done in class.
- Practice until the kids can do their bit in their sleep, and also practice getting on and off the stage in an orderly fashion.
- Plays are not usually a good idea - the little voices can rarely be heard over the audience noise.
- Singing with a tape is a help - it keeps the students singing together and on tune.
- If you are singing, put your three or four strongest most tuneful singers together in the middle of the group and encourage them to sing quite loudly (without shouting). This will keep the rest more in tune.

# Websites

Here is a pattern for chair pockets.

<http://www.ollwashingtonmo.com/School/deskbacksack.htm>

These are just great! Go in and explore!

[http://www.internet4classrooms.com/science\\_elem.htm](http://www.internet4classrooms.com/science_elem.htm)

[http://www.internet4classrooms.com/grade\\_level\\_help.htm](http://www.internet4classrooms.com/grade_level_help.htm)

Here is the most wonderful comprehensive set of birthday ideas!

<http://www.thevirtualvine.com/birthdays.html>

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/PALMASOLA/sightreading.htm>

If you use the Dolch words for teaching the sight vocabulary, this site gives you a good record keeping sheet and lists of words.

<http://intranet.cps.k12.il.us/Assessments/Kg-PrimaryTools/kg-primarytools.html>

Assessment check lists - this could be valuable! Check out the record-keeping link.

If you want an excellent site to help you with teaching computer skills in the classroom or computer lab, try this site! Scroll down to see all the headings on the left hand side. Don't miss the '10 Commandments'! There are lots of things for kids to do and lessons to teach. Fun!

<http://www.computerlab.kids.new.net/>

And this part of the site is super! It gives you lesson plans for each week in each grade.

<http://www.computerlab.kids.new.net/curriculum.htm>

Here is a good list of research links.

<http://bes.lumpkin.k12.ga.us/~bfulgham/resourceslinks.htm>

I want to repeat this good site - go exploring!

<http://teachers.santee.k12.ca.us/carl/>

If you are interested in Professional Learning Communities, here is a link:

<http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>

## Something New!

I have started a new internet group for Canadian primary teachers. Go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/primarysuccess/> I am hoping it will be an active place to share information, ask questions and chat.

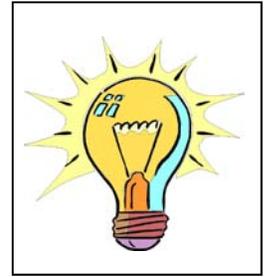
If you have not belonged to a group before, this is how it works. You first must have a Yahoo ID, but this is easy. Once you join our group, all the messages that are sent to the list of people will come to you. You can answer any of the messages by using the 'post message' address, or hitting 'reply' to another message and your message goes to everyone.

I have take precautions to avoid SPAM and your e-mail address will not be available on the site.

I want to put a 'Poem of the Day' on the list - this is a good way to increase your poetry collection.



# More Odds and Ends



The foods which commonly produce allergic problems are milk, soy, egg, wheat, fish, shellfish, peanut and tree nuts. Reactions to peanut, nut and shellfish tend to continue to be a life long problem and are usually more severe than are allergic responses to the other foods.

It is not practical to achieve complete avoidance of all allergenic foods as there can be hidden or accidentally introduced sources, but it is definitely possible to reduce children's exposure to allergenic foods in the school. These rules may help:

- There should be no trading and sharing of foods, food utensils and food containers.
- Children with allergies should only eat lunches and snacks that have been prepared at home.
- Hand washing is encouraged before and after eating.
- Surfaces such as tables, toys, etc. should be washed clean of contaminating foods.
- The use of food in crafts and cooking classes may need to be restricted.

It should be stressed that tiny amounts of certain foods like peanut butter when ingested can be life threatening. Some children may have skin rashes and stomach upsets just from simply contacting residual peanut butter on tables wiped clean of visible material.

- The potential risk of life-threatening allergic reactions to airborne food particles such as peanut or shellfish is negligible.

## Using the overhead

Copy a poem onto a transparency. You can use paper on top of the transparency to cover all except the line of words that you are discussing.

Do a math sheet together, or use the overhead to show the manipulatives as the students use them on their desks. when introducing concepts.

Show a piece of writing and discuss errors and the good parts of the sentences.

Let the students use the overhead to practice spelling words.

"I am lucky - I have a phone in my classroom. I put all the parents numbers on a list on the wall by the phone, with alternate numbers for emergencies. I also like to make happy calls to homes occasionally in school time and the student can talk to the parent after I have given the compliments. It is good to make calls home that are not so happy - the child can explain why I am getting him/her to talk to Mom."

## The November Miracle

Well do I remember the terrible feeling in October! Here two months have gone by and the children have learned NOTHING! In the words of a Grade One teacher.....

"Our Grade One teachers were just talking yesterday about how 'needy' our children are and remembering what we call the 'November Miracle'. It seems every year, even though we know better, about the end of October we start saying things like, "These kids haven't learned a thing!" or "I have worked so hard and they haven't understood anything!" "They haven't heard a thing I've said. They'll never be readers!" "They can't read, they can't print, they can't even use scissors! What have I been doing?" Then along comes the end of November and you see those huge smiles as suddenly they are reading words, phrases and then sentences on their own! It's like a miracle every year!"

So the time for the miracle is approaching. And it's just in time for Christmas! What a nice gift.....



# Teaching the Little Books

## The ABCs of Christmas (K - 1)

- Photocopy each page as large as you can – 11 x 18 would be a x200 enlargement. Staple the pages into a book.
- Show the title page. Read the title to the children, touching the words. Have the children repeat the words.
- Read the book to the children, touching each word as you read.
- Discuss the items mentioned in the book.
- Have the children read the pages by using the pictures as cues.
- Teach the high frequency words: is, for
- Give each child a small book, stapled in the centre.
- When the children open the little book, ask, 'Where will we begin to read?' and discuss beginning at the top left, and then continuing to the right hand page. See if the children can use a pointer to touch each word as you read together.
- Highlight the high frequency words.
- The class can make their own ABC book for Christmas, using their names for some of the letters.
- Discuss the letter sounds. Yes, I know a few aren't right! 'I' should not be for 'iced cookies', 'A' for angel, 'O' for ornaments, 'W' for wreath, 'X' for Xmas - not very good!
- Finally, have each child read the book aloud to you. Note the strategies the child uses and errors, if any. Then the child can take the book home to read.

## My Stocking (K - 1 - 2)

- Make a large copy of the book pages. Photocopy the needed copies of the little book and staple them.
- Show the title page and read the title.
- Discuss the title. What might the book be about? What might be in the stocking?
- Give a little book to each child.
- Read the book to the children and discuss each page.
- Teach the high frequency words appropriate for your class or group.
- Go through each page, and isolate vocabulary words.
- Put these words in phrases and sentences and practice reading them.
- Each page has rhyming words. Make a list of these. Are the rhyming words spelled alike?
- Find these words in the book. Have the students highlight them if you wish.
- The students can write their own books with the items they would like to have in their own stockings.
- Use the words in the story to discuss the phonics you are teaching.
- Finally, have each child read the book aloud to you. Note the strategies the child uses and errors, if any. Then the child can take the book home to read.

## Winter Celebrations (2 - 3)

- Photocopy the needed copies of the little book and staple them.
- Show the title page and read the title.
- Do any of the students have different winter celebrations? Talk about the ones that are familiar to your students.
- Give a book to each student.
- Read the book to the students or with the students and discuss each page.
- Research the different celebrations. What can the students discover about the different celebrations?
- Teach the high frequency words appropriate for your class or group. Go through each page, and list words that may cause difficulties. Put these words in phrases and sentences and practice reading them Find these words in the book. Have the students highlight them if you wish.
- Read the book in groups, partners and individually. Have the students read the book to you.



## I'm So Busy!

I have so many  
Things to do  
With my family and home  
And teaching, too.  
Christmas is coming,  
There's art and song  
Next week is the concert  
And everything's wrong.  
The kids are so noisy  
They don't hear what I say,  
I try to teach reading  
And math every day.  
My classroom looks nice  
With Christmas trees  
And paper chains that  
Swing in the breeze.

Then I go home  
To scrub and bake  
And think about gifts  
And make Christmas cake.  
I bark at the hubby  
And snap at the son  
My daughter asks, "When  
Are we going to have fun?"  
So I sit down and grin  
Pour a small glass of wine.  
I look at these special  
People of mine.  
I do love Christmas!  
I must remember -  
That my favourite month  
Is the month of December.



Dear Colleagues,

Have a great holiday and a rest after the hectic month of December! You deserve a holiday so have a good one..... Pamper yourself!

Jean and Kelly



*If you feel absolutely sure of the best way to teach, be careful! This may be called 'hardening of the ideologies'.*

To order or renew your subscription  
To contribute a great idea, a funny story,  
a project or an insight  
To comment on the magazine  
To complain  
To request ideas on a specific topic

Write to:

**Primary Success Publications**

4971 Fillinger Cres.

Nanaimo, B.C., V9V 1J1

E-mail:

primarysuccess@shaw.ca

Website: <http://www.primarysuccess.ca>

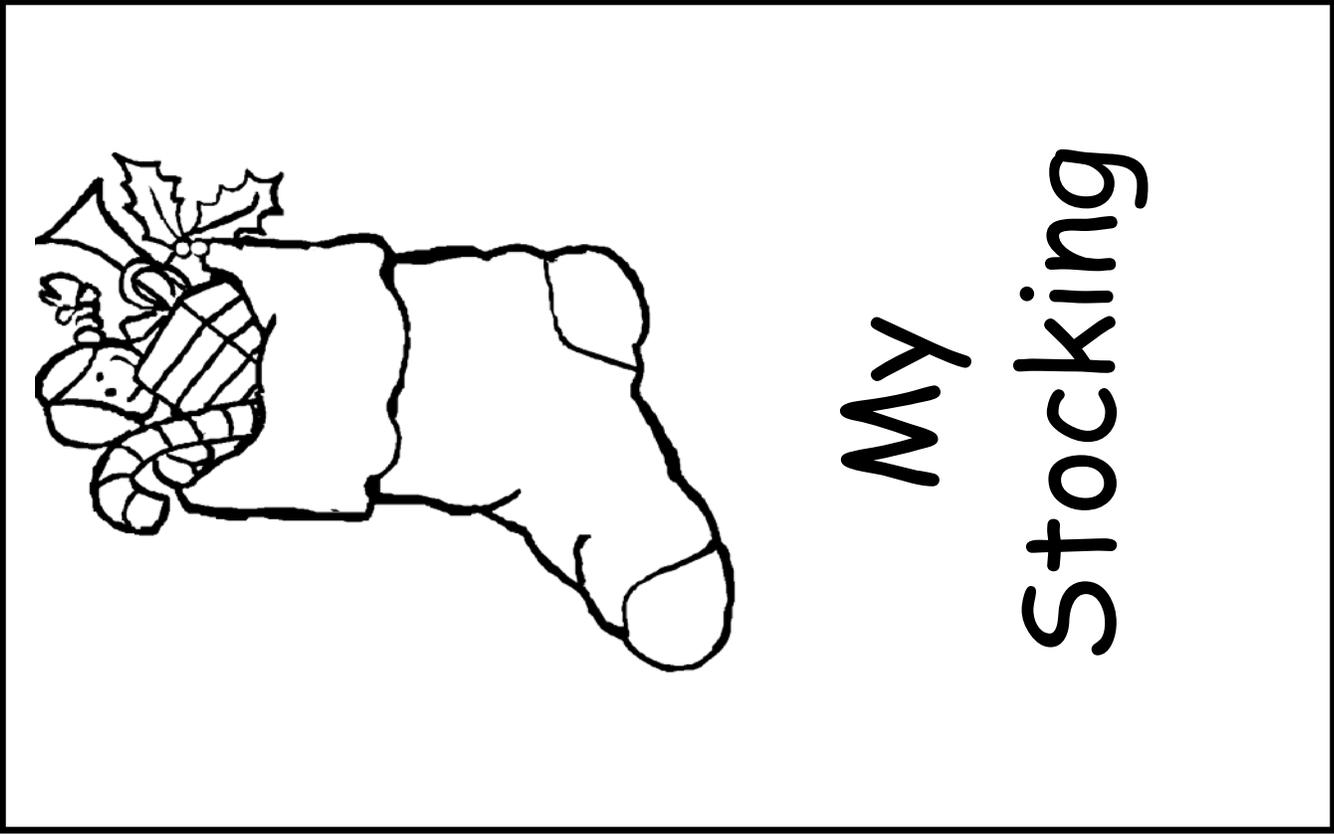
Phone:

Toll Free

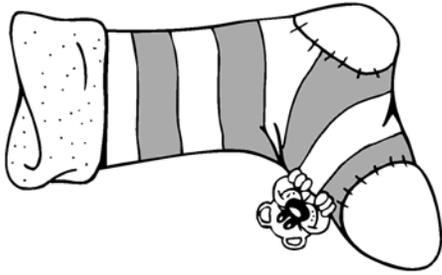
250-758-2608 1-800-758-0889

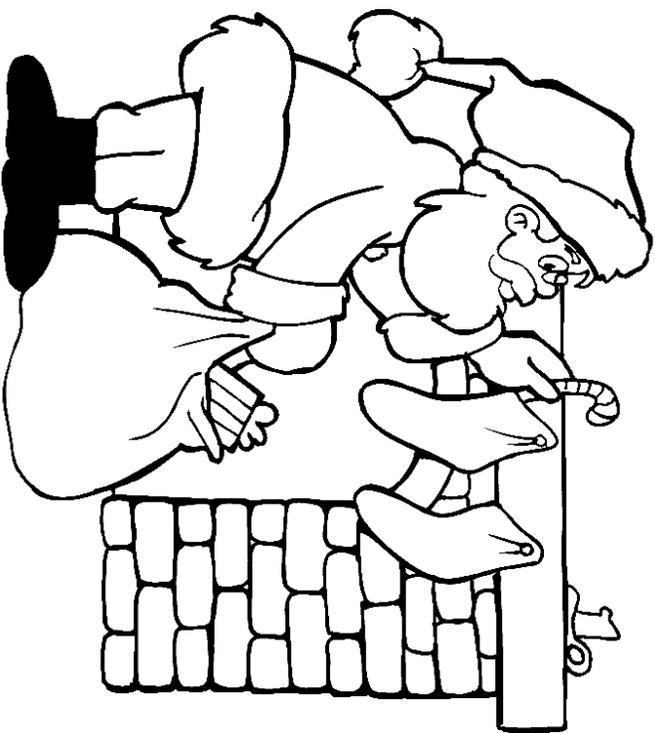
Fax:

250-758-2661

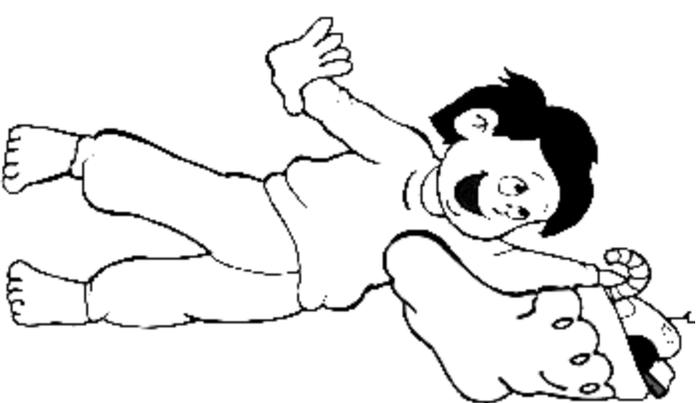


# My Stocking

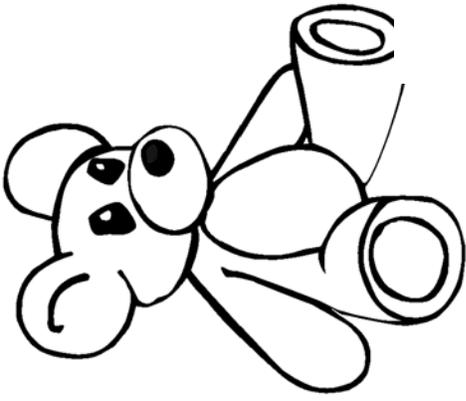




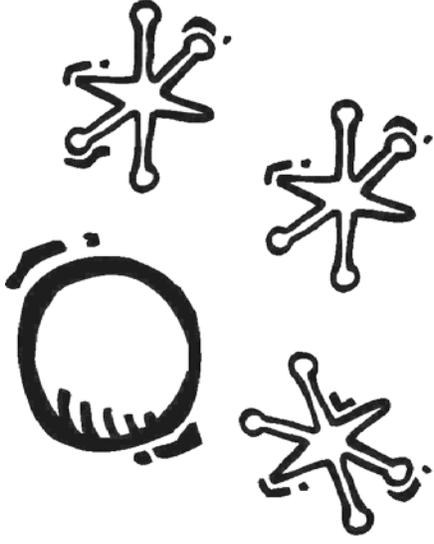
What will Santa leave for me,  
In my stocking by the tree?



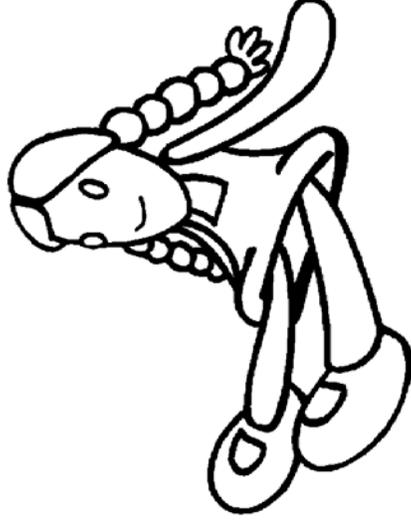
Toys and books and games  
and sweets,  
A stocking is full of  
Christmas treats.

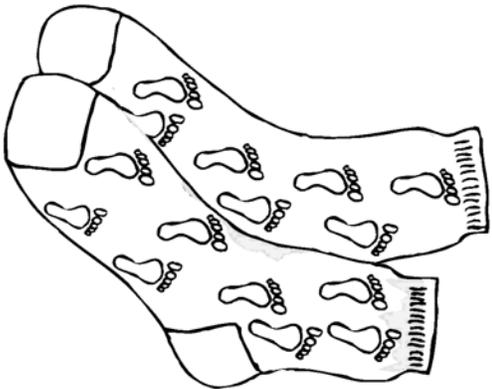
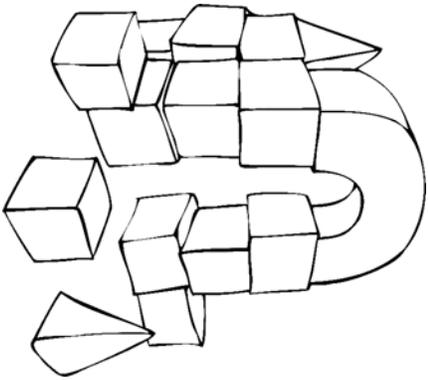


A soft stuffed bear,  
New underwear!

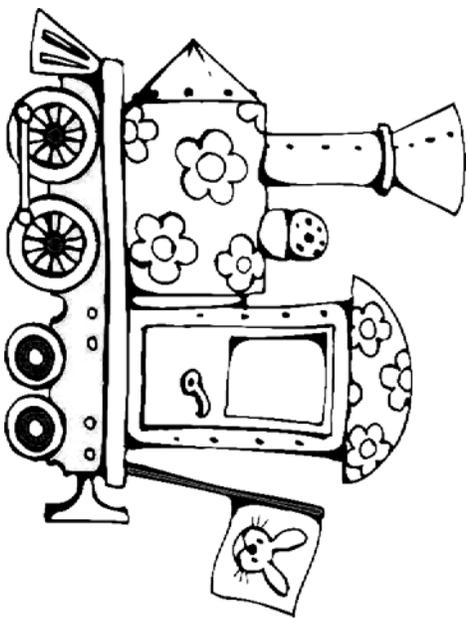


Jacks and a ball,  
A pretty doll.

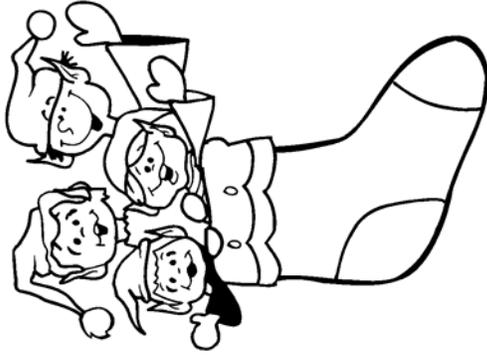




A bunch of blocks,  
Some silly socks!

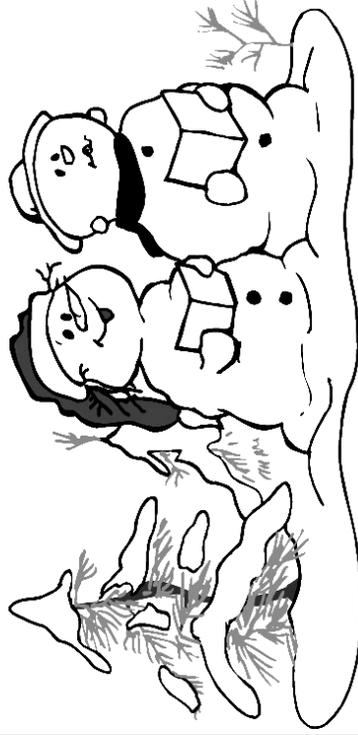


A little train,  
A candy cane.



The ABC's of Christmas

Copyright 2006  
All Rights Reserved



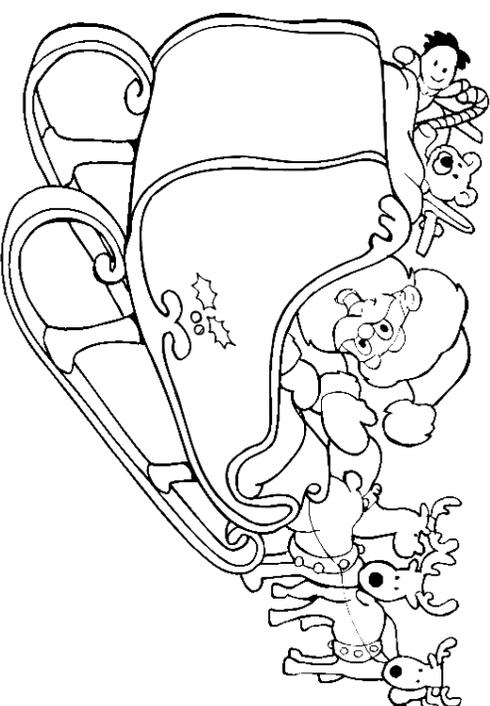
# The ABCs of Christmas



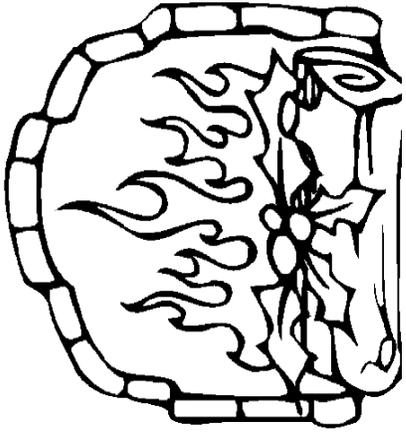
**A is for angel**



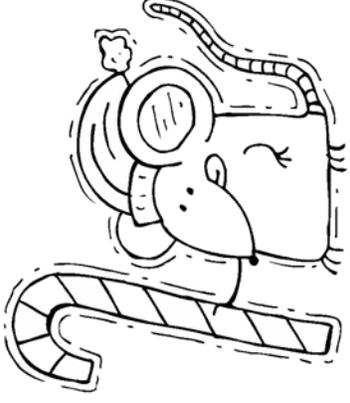
**B is for bells**



**Merry Christmas!**



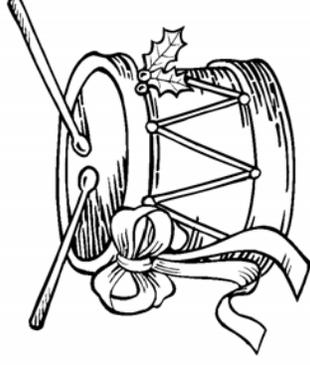
Y is for yule log



C is for candy cane



Z is for zipping and  
zooming



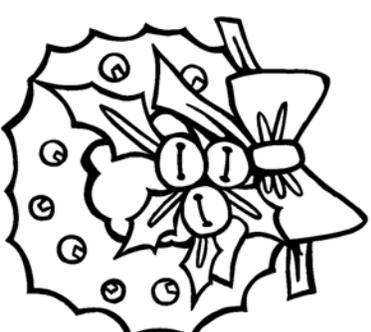
D is for drum



E is for elf



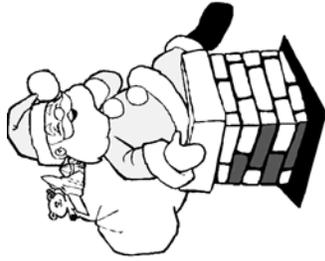
F is for fireplace



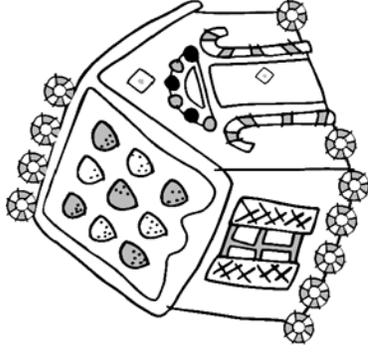
W is for wreath



X is for Xmas



U is for up on the  
rooftop



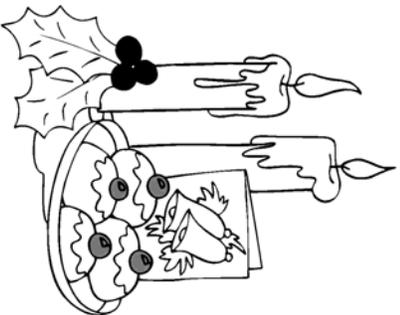
G is for gingerbread



V is for vacation



H is for holly



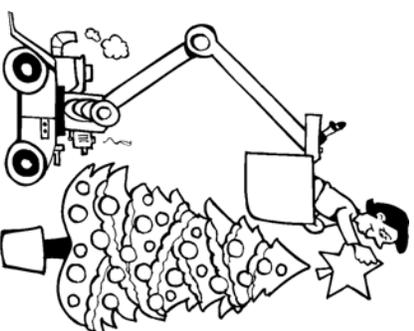
I is for iced cookies



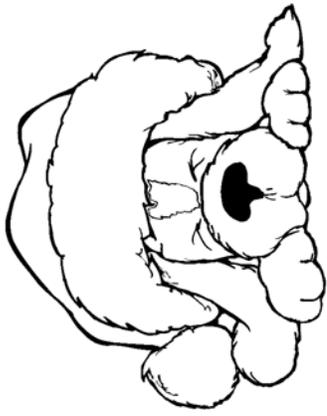
J is for jingle bells



S is for snowman



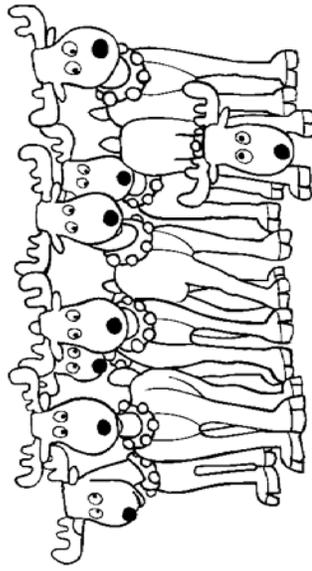
T is for tree



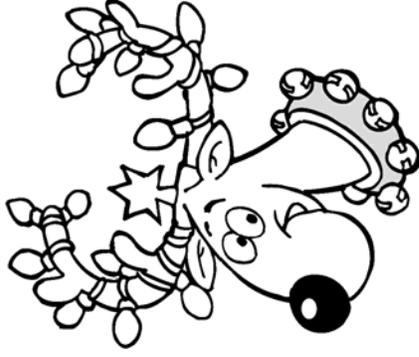
Q is for quiet time



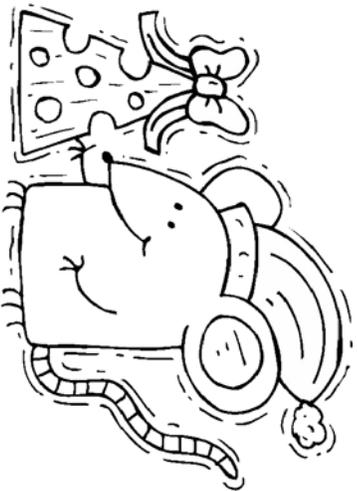
K is for Kris Kringle



R is for reindeer



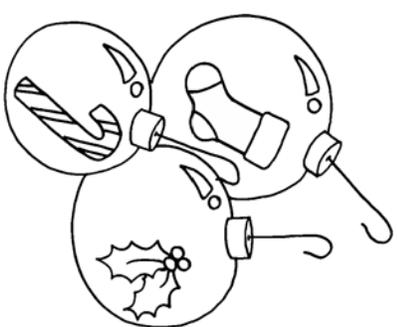
L is for lights



**M** is for mouse



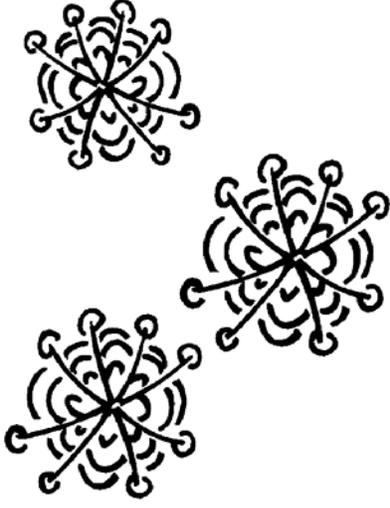
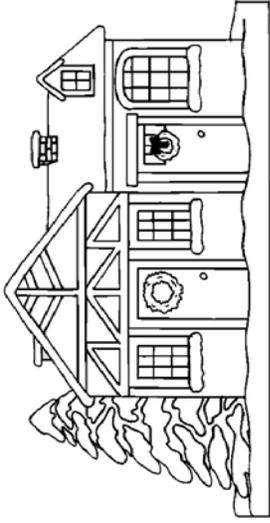
**N** is for naughty or  
nice



**O** is for ornaments

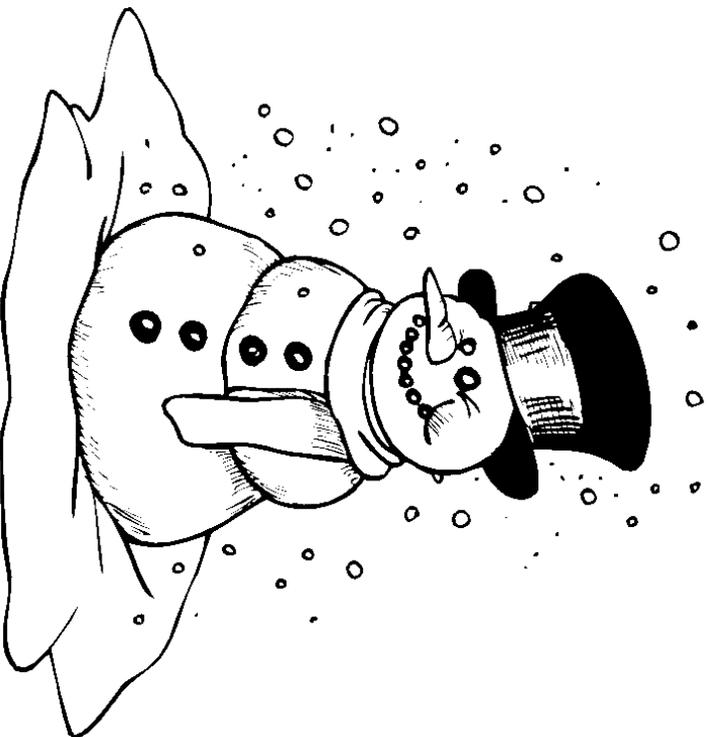


**P** is for poinsettia

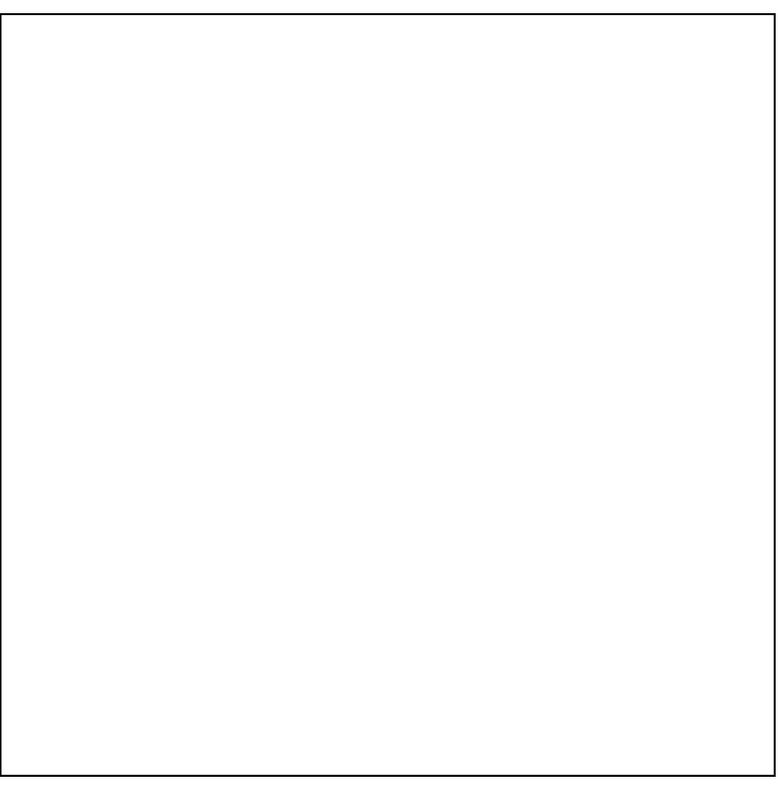


# Winter Celebrations

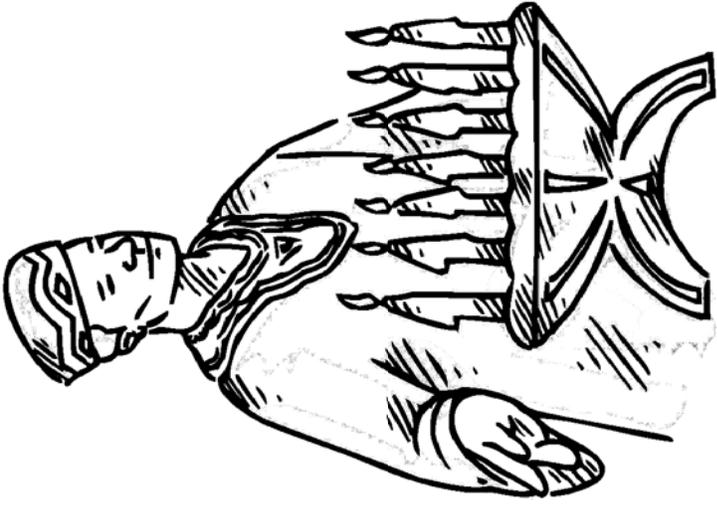
Winter Celebrations  
Copyright 2006  
All Rights Reserved



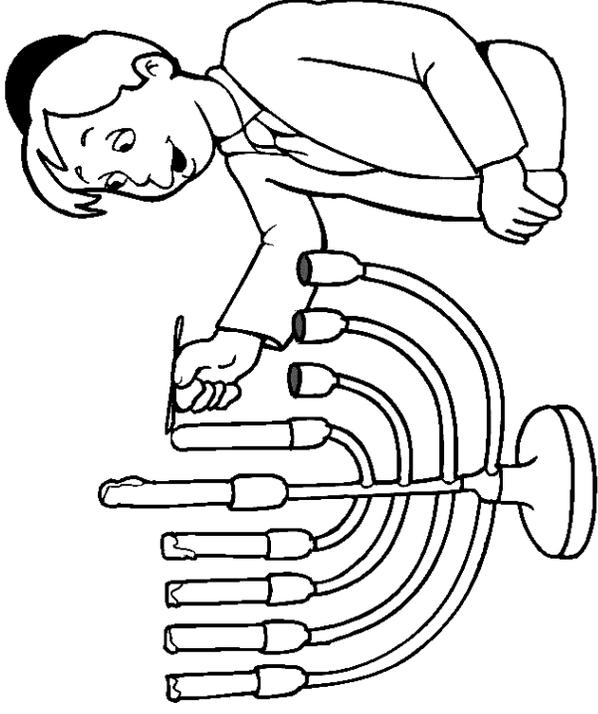
Children celebrate different holidays in the winter.



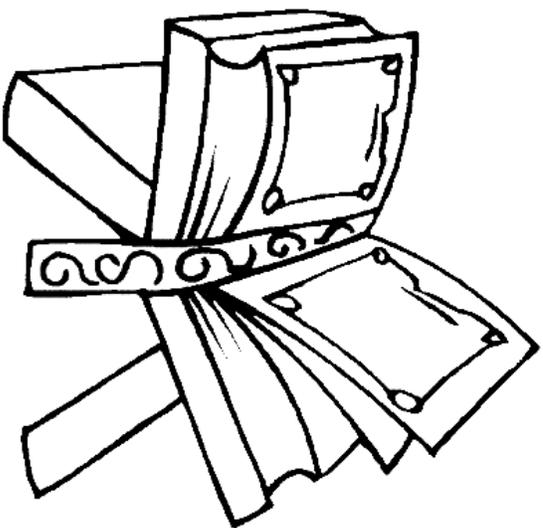
Winter is a wonderful time with lots of wonderful celebrations! The best part is that we all spend time with our families and friends.  
Draw your family at your winter celebration.



In the winter, some children celebrate Kwanzaa. At Kwanzaa, seven candles are lit. People give gifts and have a big dinner with their friends and family.



Some children celebrate Hanukkah. A candle is lit each day for 8 days. The candle holder is called a Menorah. Children like to play a game with a spinning top called a dreidel. People give gifts, and they like to eat potato pancakes at Hanukkah.



Ramadan is celebrated in the winter. People don't eat all day and then they have dinner when the sun goes down. Ramadan is a special time when people spend time with their families.

4



Christmas is a winter holiday. People celebrate Christmas with their friends and family. They give presents and put up a Christmas tree. Everyone shares a big Christmas dinner.

5