

CIRCLE TIME IDEAS

~DECEMBER~



HO, HO, HO! It's the jolliest time of the year! December is a time of joyful celebrations. Whether you celebrate **Christmas, Hanukkah, and/or Kwanzaa**, it's a time of gift giving and a time for reflection. It's a time to be with family and friends. To spread holiday cheer, try out some of our festive songs & rhymes, holiday crafts, and exciting games.

Note: It's important to realize many families celebrate Christmas in different ways. This gives us an opportunity to learn how other cultures celebrate the season! Keep this in mind when choosing your songs, rhymes, books & crafts throughout the season.

SONGS & RHYMES

<p>Where Oh Where?</p> <p>Oh where, oh where did the little elves go? Oh where, oh where can they be? They were making the gifts and then packing the sleigh. I hope there's a gift for me.</p> <p>Oh where, oh where did Santa Claus go? Oh where, oh where can he be? He was reading his list and then checking it twice. Oh, I hope my name he will see!</p>	<p>Five Little Elves</p> <p>Five Little Elves hitching up the sleigh One got up and ran away, Rudolph called Santa and heard him say, "All my reindeer need some hay!"</p> <p>Four Little Elves Three Little Elves... Two Little Elves....</p> <p>One Little Elf hitching up the sleigh, He got up and ran away, Rudolph called Santa and heard him say, "Hurry! Get ready! It's Christmas Day!"</p>
<p>Old St. Nick (Tune: Frere Jacques)</p> <p>Old St. Nick, Old St. Nick He got stuck! He got stuck! Coming down the chimney! Coming down the chimney! Oh what bad luck! What bad luck!</p>	<p>Twinkle, Twinkle, Christmas Lights (Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)</p> <p>Twinkle, Twinkle Christmas lights Old St. Nick, he came last night, Down the chimney with lots of toys, Woke me up with all that NOISE! Twinkle, Twinkle Christmas lights, Old St. Nick was here last night!</p>



Reindeer Pokey

(Tune: Hokey Pokey)

You put your antlers in, you take your antlers out,
You put your antlers in, then you shake 'em all
about.

You do the reindeer pokey & you turn yourself
around, that's what it's all about.

You put your hooves in, you take your hooves out.
You put your hooves in, then you shake 'em all
about.

You do the reindeer pokey & you turn yourself
around, that's what it's all about.

You put your red nose in, you take your red nose
out.

You put your red nose in, then you shake it all
about.

You do the reindeer pokey & you turn yourself
around, that's what it's all about.

You put your fluffy tail in, you take your fluffy
out,
You put your fluffy tail in, then you shake it all
about.

You do the reindeer pokey & you turn yourself
around, that's what it's all about.

You put your reindeer body in, you take your
reindeer body out,
You put your reindeer body in, then you shake it
all about.

You do the reindeer pokey & you turn yourself
around, that's what it's all about.

Spin The Dreidel

(Tune: Row Your Boat)

Spin, spin, spin the dreidel
Spin it round with me.
When the dreidel stops and falls,
Don't forget to scream!

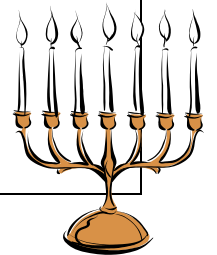


The Menorah

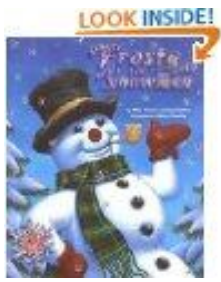
(Tune: Alice the Camel)

The Hanukkah menorah has one light,
The Hanukkah menorah has one light,
The Hanukkah menorah has one light,
Watch those candles burn so bright!

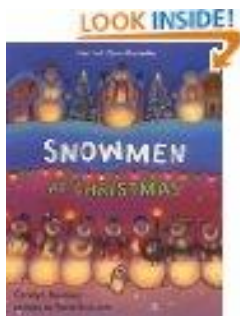
The Hanukkah menorah has two lights....
The Hanukkah menorah has three lights....
The Hanukkah menorah has four lights....
The Hanukkah menorah has five lights....
The Hanukkah menorah has six lights....
The Hanukkah menorah has seven lights....
The Hanukkah menorah has eight lights....



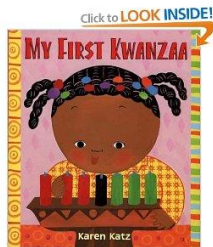
BOOK SUGGESTIONS



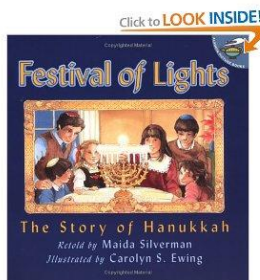
Frosty the Snowman
By Steve Nelson



Snowmen at Christmas
By Caralyn Buehner



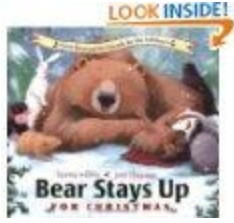
My First Kwanzaa
By Karen Katz



Festival of Lights -
The Story of Hanukkah
By Maida Silverman



Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
By Robert Lewis May



Bear Stays Up for Christmas By Karma Wilson

SNACK IDEAS

Edible Christmas Trees

For a fun treat, have each child make an edible Christmas Tree!

Turn a sugar ice cream cone upside down on a paper plate. Have the children decorate the cones with green-tinted cream cheese and sprinkle a variety of toppings on the cone (small pieces of broccoli, red/yellow/orange peppers, matchstick carrots, shredded cheese, or small pieces of fruit etc).

For an extra special treat, use green icing instead of cream cheese and use dried fruit or candy items for decoration instead of fruits or vegetables (dried apple slices, small m&m's, smarties, candy sprinkles, mini chocolate chips, etc.)



Always be cautious of choking hazards!

Christmas Sandwiches

Turn an ordinary sandwich into a fun surprise!

Use any Christmas cookie cutter shape and form Christmas trees, candy canes or even Santa out of two slices of bread. Then cut two pieces of lunchmeat or cheese and cut into the same shapes. What a fun surprise for lunch during the holidays!

Variation: Reindeer sandwiches

Cut the crusts off of two slices of bread and cut bread in half to make two triangles. Whole wheat (brown) bread is best to achieve the similar coloring of a reindeer. Spread cream cheese on one half of bread, then add top bread to make a sandwich. Add a cherry half for the nose, pretzels for antlers, and chocolate chips for eyes.

Edible Christmas Candle

Place a pineapple ring on each child's plate. Cut bananas in half and then let each child peel his banana. Place the banana in an upward position in the center of the pineapple ring. Give each child a maraschino cherry and a toothpick to put on top of banana. Now everyone has a edible Christmas candle!

ART & CRAFT IDEAS



There are more great ideas available on our Facebook page!

Note: Best practice is to allow children to express their own creativity without using patterns.

Five Finger Snowman Ornaments

A cute homemade gift for Grandma or Grandpa!

Supplies needed:

- Christmas Ornament balls (solid color)
- White Non-Toxic Craft Paint
- White Glue
- Sharpie Markers (various colors)
- Empty Egg Carton
- Ribbon

Pour white paint in a paper plate. Have the children press their handprint into the paint (or you can paint each child's hand), then carefully place the ornament in palm of the child's hand, leaving their fingers flat. Have each child slowly close their fingers around the ornament. Remove from the child's hand and place the ornament in an empty egg carton to dry. Once dry, use markers to draw on eyes, hats, arms, etc. Don't forget to write the child's name and/or date on the bottom of the ornament. Tie a ribbon on the top and it's ready for gift giving! This cute poem could be a nice addition for that extra-special gift:

These aren't just five snowmen
As anyone can see.
I made them with my own hand
Which is a part of me.
Now each year when you trim the tree
You'll look back and recall
Christmas of 2012
When my hand was just this small!

Candy Cane & Wreath Pom Pom Ornaments

An easy craft for wee ones. Simply using ooey-gooey glue!

Supplies needed:

- Green, White & Red Pom Poms
- Recycled Cardboard (cereal boxes, shoe boxes, etc)
- Glue
- Scissors
- Hole Punch
- Ribbon

Pre-cut candy cane & wreath shapes out of cardboard. Make a hole punch at the top of each and attached a piece of ribbon before having the children glue on the pom poms. Have each child dip the pom poms in lots of glue. Place each pom pom onto the cardboard. When finished, set a heavier object on top (a hard cover book) to help the glue set.

Kwanzaa Craft Ideas

Zawadi

Tell children that in Africa many things are made by hand. To celebrate this African custom, gifts, or zawadi, are often exchanged on Kwanzaa. Let children make a friendship necklace and give it to a friend or family member.

Supplies needed:

- String or Ribbon
- Colored Beads or macaroni or construction paper pieces (consider safety based on children's ages)

Hannukkah Craft Ideas

Cardboard Tube Menorah

Cover eight toilet paper tubes and one paper towel tube with holiday wrapping paper. Decorate with glitter if desired. Glue tubes together, side by side, with the taller one in the middle. Cut nine six-inch squares of yellow tissue paper. To "light" the menorah, bunch up each piece of tissue paper and place one in the top of each cardboard tube.

Supplies needed:

- 8 toilet paper tubes
- 1 Paper towel tube
- Holiday wrapping
- Glitter
- Glue
- Yellow Tissue Paper

DISCUSSION

Discussion #1: Christmas Around the World

Ask children to tell you some other things that they know about Christmas or how they celebrate Christmas.

Explain that people from different countries and different families celebrate the winter holiday season in different ways. Some families celebrate Christmas. However, they may do Christmas activities differently.

Talk about the different Christmas symbols we can see during Christmastime.

Poinsettia

Show children a real poinsettia or a picture of one. Discuss what the poinsettia looks like. Explain that the red petals are not really petals; they're actually leaves. Then, tell the following story about how the poinsettia became a symbol of Christmas. "A long time ago there was a poor Mexican girl who had no gift to give Jesus. As she walked to church, she felt so sad. She wanted to give something, so she gathered some weeds from the roadside. When she got to church, she placed them in front of baby Jesus in the nativity scene. Suddenly, bright red blossoms sprouted from the weeds. From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the Flores de Noche Buena, or Flowers of the Holy Night. Today we call them poinsettias."

Mistletoe

If available, show children some real mistletoe or a picture of some. "A long time ago, mistletoe was thought to have healing powers. So people would place a sprig of mistletoe over their doorways to help keep away bad things and to bring health, happiness, and good luck."

Candles

"People used to often place candles in windows during the Christmas season as a sign to those passing by that shelter and warmth could be found within."

The Star atop the Christmas Tree

"The Star of Bethlehem guided the three wise men who brought gifts to Jesus. Eventually, stars were placed on the tops of Christmas trees to celebrate his birth."

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS
wishes you and your loved ones
A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!