

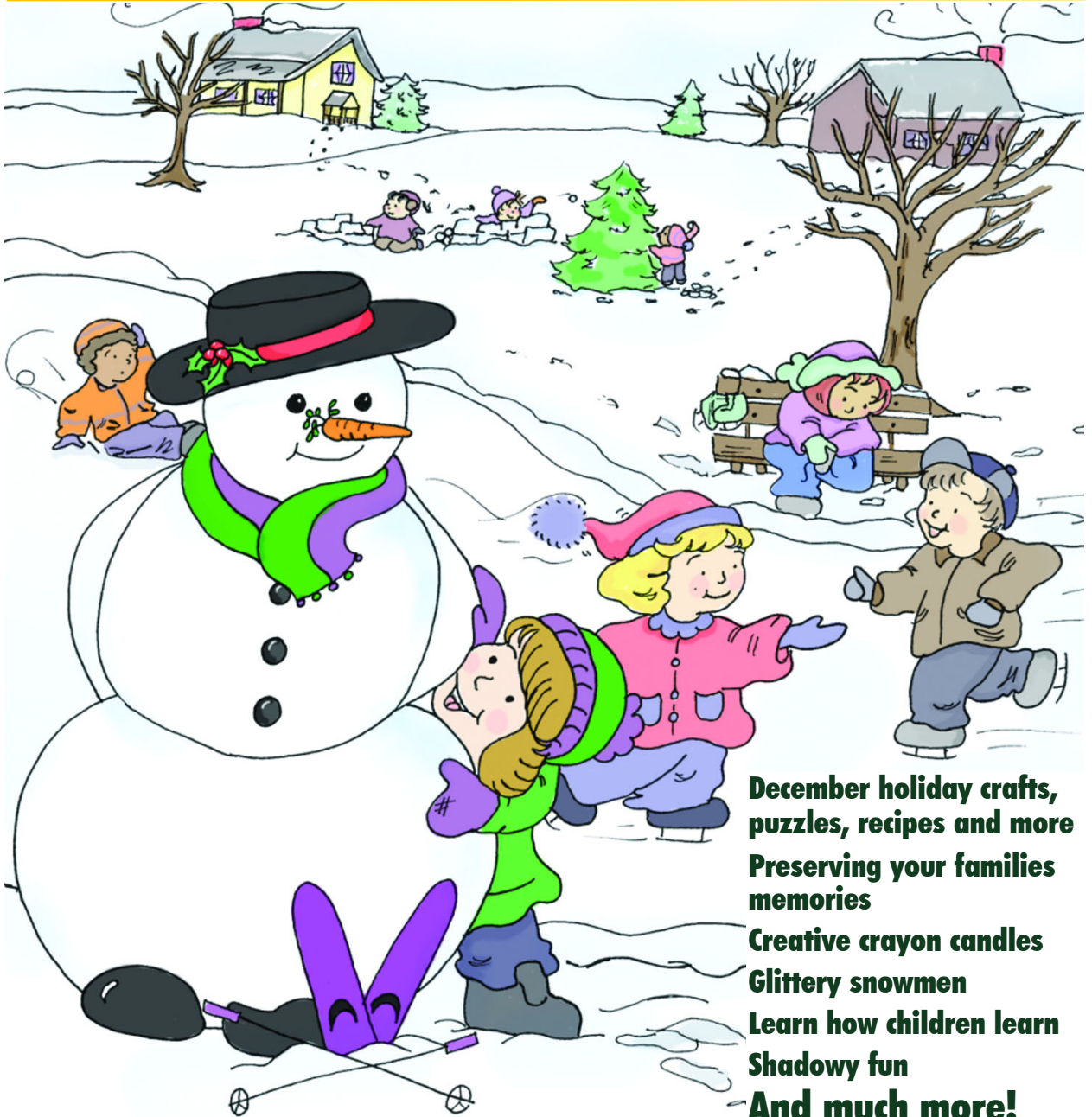
Kids Holiday Crafts

magazine

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December 2003



**December holiday crafts,
puzzles, recipes and more
Preserving your families
memories**

**Creative crayon candles
Glittery snowmen
Learn how children learn
Shadowy fun
And much more!**

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Season's Greetings!

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From the Editor

I can't believe it's December already! It seems like it summer just ended. We haven't started our holiday decorating, breaking a 10 year old tradition.

For us, the Christmas holiday season usually begins the day after Thanksgiving. In previous years, that included setting up the Christmas tree, getting it lighted and decorated with our 200 plus ornaments. The star always goes on last. We haven't had that luxury the last few years for various reasons, and this year is looking the same.

Many of the ornaments we have tell a tale of our families and their past. Several of the ornaments I brought with me date back to my mother's childhood. There are several that my sister and I made when we were in school and a couple that were made by my best friend's grandmother.

One of my most cherished ornaments is the Father Christmas my mother gave me when I was in my late teens. We had gone to an arcade on the boardwalk in Weirs Beach (located on Lake Winnepesaukee in NH) and she had won hundreds of tickets from playing skeeball. She chose it so I could add it to my newly started collection of Father Christmas figurines. It was an unusual gesture for her, which makes it all the more special to me.

Some of the ornaments in our collection are from my late husband's youth. A few of them originally belonged to his grandparents. They're old and slightly tarnished but just as special. I am sure my daughter will treasure them as much as her father did.

Another part of our Christmas tradition is for each member of the family to get a tree trimming present. It is usually an ornament and it has to be something that will help us remember something special from the past year.

This year my daughter and I chose our new ornaments while we were in England. I got a black taxi with the name Harrod's painted in gold letters, and a cute brown bear in a white sweater with Harrod's on one of the paws. My daughter chose a fanciful cat, also from Harrod's. We haven't picked out Owen's yet, but

hopefully we'll find the perfect thing.

As we look towards the new year I have many things to be thankful for.

First there is my wonderful daughter, who is so supportive and loving. We have gone through a lot of stuff in the last two years and have survived so far.

I am also very thankful for this magazine. Each month we have more visitors and it is becoming a huge success, at least I think so!

None of this success would be possible without all the wonderful people who write and illustrate for the magazine, help me with the website, and do the copy editing. Their help and support has been the real driving force behind the success of this magazine.

I have a new job I started just before Thanksgiving, which will hopefully be good for many reasons. I was hired as a writer apprentice and am doing a variety of things. The biggest part of the job, though, is helping the author write his books and magazine articles – typing his notes, editing stuff, doing research. It has a lot of potential to be a really great job and I'm looking forward to getting more involved.

Life is moving on and things are starting to look good for the new year.

We hope you have a safe and happy holiday season and a joyous New Year.

Nancy Cavanaugh

Holiday Tongue Twisters

By Dara A. Lehner

Ten tiny tin toy trains toot ten times.
Santa's sack sagged suddenly.
Seven swans swim silently.
Betty brings big bright bells.
Six Santas sing silly songs.
Kris Kringle crunches candy canes.
Perky Penny picked pretty papered packages.
Carl and Carol cut Christmas cake.
Carrie and Carlos crooned Christmas carols.

If you have something to say about what you've seen here, good or bad, please send us a letter. Send your letters to editor@kidsholidaycrafts.com.

How to Make Candles Using Old Crayons

By LeAnn R. Ralph

As featured in the story "A Candle For Christmas" from the book: "Christmas In Dairyland (True Stories From a Wisconsin Farm)"

Materials:

- 1 wax quart carton (milk, fabric softener, or orange juice)
- 1 pound of paraffin wax
- 4 or 5 old crayons
- 2 trays of ice cubes
- A double boiler (or an empty coffee can and a saucepan)
- 1 piece of ordinary white package string about six inches long.

Caution: Do not heat paraffin directly over the burner. Paraffin is easily combustible. Use a double boiler or a two-pound coffee can set in a pan of water. I put the coffee can on top of home canning jar rings (the rings, not the flat lids). If the can is not set on top of something, the concave bottom creates a vacuum when the water begins to heat up, plus if it's on the bottom of the pan, it's just that much closer to the burner.

Instructions:

1. Trim the top part of the carton off so that what remains is about six inches high.
2. Cut the string so that it is six inches long. (To make a wick that lasts longer, try braiding three pieces of string together.)
3. Melt the paraffin wax over medium heat in a double boiler or a coffee can in a pan of water. Use three-quarters of a pound for a somewhat smaller candle or use all four squares for a larger candle. Once the water begins to boil, it will take 10 or 15 minutes for the paraffin to melt.
4. Break the crayons into small pieces and add to the paraffin. If the crayons are added first before the wax is melted, the color makes it difficult to see if all of the paraffin is liquefied.
5. Use a pair of tongs (a scissors works, too), and dip the string into the paraffin. Dipping the string will ensure that it is coated with paraffin since the ice cubes may prevent some sections from coming in contact with the liquid wax. Hold

the string so that it is in the middle of the carton and fill the carton with ice cubes. Pour the hot paraffin over the ice cubes.

6. The candle will be set in about 30 minutes. Let the candle stand for another hour or two until most of the ice cubes are melted. Pour off the water. Peel off the carton. Place the candle in a tray or on a plate to catch the rest of the water from the ice cubes as they finish melting. Let the candle dry for a day or two.

7. The candles I have made with a single piece of string only burn for an hour or so and burn quickly enough so that most of the paraffin remains intact. To use the paraffin again, melt the candle and pour the wax into other containers to make solid candles.

Solid Candles:

To make solid candles, select several glass containers. Pint or half-pint canning or jelly jars work well. For the wick, measure out a few more inches of string than is needed to reach the bottom of the container. Tie the string around a pencil. Put the pencil across the top of the container to hold the wick in place. When the paraffin and crayons are melted, pour the liquid wax into the container(s). When the candle is set, snip off the wick about a half inch above the wax.

Spinning Dreidel

To make these dreidels you will need pencils, glue, paint and paintbrushes, and small clean milk cartons.

First create boxes from the milk cartons by folding down the tops. Next mix a little glue with paint and paint the boxes, these will become dreidels.

Take a pencil and poke it through the box from top downward so point is on bottom. Decorate your dreidel and add the four letters, one on each side. The four letters are SHIN, HEY, GIMEL, NUN. When your dreidel is finished, play using pennies, nuts, raisins, or chocolate coins (gelt) as tokens or chips. (See song lyrics on page 9.)

Bridge to Tomorrow

By Melissa O. Markham

Have you ever looked at your daughter and had a vision of her winning the Nobel Peace Prize? Have you had a dream of your son holding his first-born child? Has your child done the "cutest thing" that you were sure you would remember forever, only to discover a month later you didn't remember the moment as clearly as you thought you would? Maybe your older child has come to you and asked, "Mom, what was my favorite food when I was two?" Or "Tell me about the first party I attended?"

As our children grow, there are so many special moments that we experience and we have such a variety of hopes for their future, it is easy for them to be brushed aside in this busy world we live in. But these moments and thoughts don't have to be lost. Below you will find some ways to capture them for the future.

1. A picture is worth a thousand words. A quick click of a shutter can preserve a moment forever. So get out those Polaroid, 35 mm, digital and video cameras and capture a moment in time. Even if your children don't remember the specific event, they will enjoy the story you tell about the visual image.

2. Create a box of memories. Get a cardboard box and decorate it for your child. Then fill it with those special items he will want later in life. Christening gowns, favorite first toys, favorite books, special outfits, and cards received at holidays, etc. These can be items he will have memories of and ones that he won't. You can tell him why you picked the items that you did.

3. Buy a calendar. Jot down special occurrences: first tooth, first word, first kiss, first teacher...If you have more than one child, get a calendar for each one or use one calendar, make a copy of it for each child and place that copy in their memory box.

4. Make use of a notebook. Have a notebook for each child and write down special and everyday occurrences in it. You can do this daily, weekly or monthly. Include information about the world around them so they will know what historic events were occurring when they were

winning the soccer tournament. Then when they turn 18, give it to them as a gift.

5. Fill the Mason jar. Have a Mason jar for each child and keep small pieces of paper handy. When something happens that you want them to remember, jot it on a piece of paper, date it and toss it in the jar.

6. Write a letter. Letters are still a great way to communicate with another person. Write letters to your children when the mood strikes you. Tell them what you are thinking. Let them know how their presence in your life has impacted you. Share with them how much you love them. Seal the letter in an envelope and date it. Put it away to give them when they are older.

7. Scrapbook. The large scrapbooks with the paper pages work great. This is the perfect place to keep ticket stubs to special events, first drawings, favorite pictures, awards, and special cards.

8. Fill in that baby book. Be sure to get a thorough baby book and take the time to fill in all those blanks. This not only will show your child how much you cared, but will give them that all important information when their own child comes along and they want to know, "well, how old was I when I first smiled?"

9. Let the kids speak. Make an occasional audiotape of each of your children.

10. Talk while traveling. Stop spending travel time in silence. Share stories with your children while you are driving to your vacation destination or to the grocery store. The stories will help pass the time and give your children an oral history to share with others.

11. Remember grandparents. Collect stories from grandparents and other relatives. Give them an empty notebook and ask them to fill it with memories and events of their lives. Or you can choose the questions. Put a question on each page and ask them to answer it. The stories of their lives will be interesting to you as well as your children.

12. Don't forget your story. Write down your own experiences. Your memories of your first

apartment, how you met your spouse, how you felt when your children were born, your first job, and your first car... All of these things will be of interest to our children, as they grow older.

Kids love to hear stories about themselves and you. Build on their natural curiosity and enthusiasm and share your memories with them. We live in a society that is becoming increasingly detached from its past. We are on information

overload, but we are unable to answer simple questions about our family history. Keep the past alive. And who knows, maybe 100 years from now, your great-grandchildren will be reading about how amazed you were when you sent your first fax across town.

And remember, whether you do one or four or all of the ideas listed above, you will be creating a bridge from the past to tomorrow.

Keeping the Stress Out of Single Parenting

By Marta Dodd

Budget Your Money. Even if you are living paycheck to paycheck like most of us, knowing how much money goes to where can be a big help. This gives you the relief that the bills are being paid, with a feel of how much you can spend on allowance, school photos, birthday gifts, entertainment or just You!

Keep a Daily Schedule. Time is important, so teach that to the kids by implementing a routine. Put together a schedule reflecting chore & homework time. If the kids know their daily routine then it gives them something fun to work for when the Room is clean or the garbage is taken out. Don't be afraid to make your own chores so that your children see you set a positive example.

Let Your Kids be Kids. Even though taking on Single Parenting has sometimes forced you to become serious and lacking laughter, remember those precious children never asked to be in this situation. Don't force them to grow up any faster and deal with the "Single Parent Issues" that we have to deal with. They are still kids and they shouldn't have to worry about anything other than "Kid Issues."

Stay Positive about the Other Parent. No matter the circumstances, don't down talk the other parent. If the Other Parent isn't paying child support, it's none of the kids business and shouldn't be something that is talked about if not brought up by the child. Whether the parent is around or away, it shouldn't matter. We once saw good in that person and regardless of how it is now, your child may always think the world of that Other Parent. In time the truth always comes out, and

the only way a child will know is discovering for themselves.

Communicate to Your Children About the Special Circumstances of Your Family. You can keep your kids informed without telling them everything. If you talk to your kids early on, when they are ready, you can avoid having them learn from a distant relative, some other child from school or even a stranger.

Spend Quality Time with Your Children. Keeping your family going takes a lot of energy and a good amount of Quality time away from the kids. Set out a time each day to read, play a game, play on the computer or even learn something new. It could be 2 hours or 20 minutes. What matters is that your child know it's his/her time and they will look forward to each and every day.

Find Support and Use it. There is a lot of help out there, including the resources in this newsletter. Take advantage of them. They're there for you to utilize. I always keep in mind that one day soon I won't need them and I can turn around and help others in the same situation.

Take Time for Yourself. You may always have your children around, but don't forget you are still one person. Keep yourself healthy and feeling positive about being a parent. I know it gets tough and you feel like you are all alone, but you're not. Take some time out to spend with yourself or even to hang out with friends. Adult conversation and a movie is always nice after a long Saturday of nonstop giggling and cartoons!

5 Ways to Help Your Kids Do Math

By Murdo Macleod

Uh oh.

Your kids arrive home with their school reports and it's poor marks from the math department. Now what do you do?

You may not be a math teacher, but thankfully there are ways you can help your kids improve their grades.

Studies have shown that children are much more likely to perform well in a subject that interests them.

So here are 5 ways to get your kids excited about math and actually looking forward to the next math class:

1. Inspire them.

Some kids don't enjoy math because they just can't see the point of it. Unlike reading or painting, all those mathematical symbols and numbers don't seem to mean anything.

What you need to do is show them how important math is in the real world.

Tell them stories about the great engineering feats throughout history. From building the great pyramids of Egypt, to the Hoover dam, to the latest space missions to Mars, nothing would have been achieved without mathematics, and mathematicians.

2. Get practical.

Involve your kids in some real world math away from the classroom. Find something your child is interested in and relate it to math in some way.

For example, do they like baseball? Terrific. During a game, ask them how many points the losing team has to score to beat the other one. And how many games do they need to win before they have enough points to win the league?

If they enjoy helping around the home then let them do the "clever stuff". Ask them to work out the sizes for that wood you're going to cut. Or get them to measure out the ingredients for the cake you're about to bake.

When you're in a store, ask your kids to add up the prices and keep a running total while you shop. Then ask them how much change you

should expect at the checkout.

3. Take life "step-by-step".

Success in math - as in life - is largely about breaking large projects down into manageable, bite-sized pieces.

Many kids feel overwhelmed when they see a list of math questions, and it's at this point they may decide that math is "boring" or "hard".

Show them the magic of taking one question at a time, and breaking it into tiny steps that make it easy.

4. Encourage creativity.

Kids may become mentally "stuck" on a topic because they're only looking at it in one way. Perhaps they need to step outside the box and see it from a different angle.

Show them the beauty of alternative viewpoints. Help them to see situations from other people's perspective.

Get them into the habit of exploring different ways of solving a problem. Even something simple like tidying up a room can have several possible "solutions" or ways of approaching it.

Crosswords and lateral thinking puzzles are good for this kind of flexible thinking.

5. Be positive.

Eliminate negative statements like "math is hard" (even if you thought of yourself as a math dunce at school!).

Explain how everyone has a natural ability to do math and that solving math problems isn't so different from solving other kinds of problems in life.

Above all, inspire confidence in your kids. Teach them persistence and how there's always a solution to every problem.

We all perform better when we enjoy what we do, and getting kids interested in math is the real key to success.

They may not turn into mathematical geniuses, but they'll thank you in later life when they enter the world of work and start counting their salaries.

Now who said your kids couldn't do math?

Fun With Shadows

By Deborah Shelton

Are you looking for fun projects to do, but are short on supplies? The answer is simple: Shadows!

Shadow Tag

Turn an ordinary walk to the mailbox into a lively game of shadow tag. It's played much the same way as regular tag, except that instead of tagging a person, you tag the person's shadow.

Shadow Puppets

Who doesn't love shadow puppets? This is the perfect almost- no-materials-required activity for guaranteed fun. Simply direct light onto a wall (again, flashlights work great) and make shadows with your hands. Try some easy favorites such as a barking dog and a turkey with a droopy, dangly neck. Then invent shadow puppets you've never seen before just by moving and bending your fingers and hands in different positions.

Silhouettes

Use the combination of light and shadow to create frameable works of art. Use tacks or tape to hang a sheet of white construction paper or poster board to the wall. Sit or stand next to the paper so that the shadow of your profile shows up when a light (flashlights work well) is shined on you. While you sit very still, have someone

trace the outline of your shadow on the paper with a pencil. Once the tracing is complete, cut the silhouette out with a pair of scissors and mount it on a sheet of black paper. Make several silhouettes of your family members and display them together.

Shadow Town

Imagination is a wonderful thing-especially when there is lots of sunshine around! Make your own shadow town by arranging small boxes, cans, and other small items into a straight line in direct sunlight. Try doing this activity on a concrete driveway or on a large piece of paper or cardboard. Once the objects are lined up and casting a shadow, trace the outline of the shadow with sidewalk chalk to form your city's "skyline." When the skyline is finished, invite your friends to bring their toy cars over to play in your shadow town.

Day After Christmas

By Elizabeth Dulemba

Day after Christmas
and all through the house,
the dogs were sacked out
and so was the mouse.

Stockings were empty.
The chimney was bare.
Dad was indulging
in post-Christmas fare.

The children were out
shopping the malls,
spending their money
from the in-laws.

Mom did the dishes
and wondered with fear,
"Who'll help me take down
decorations this year?"

With New Years coming
and Christmas so near,
We wish you patience
and Holiday Cheer!

Chanukah Dreidel Song

I have a little dreidel,
I made it out of clay,
And when it's dry and ready,
Then dreidel I shall play.

Refrain:

Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel,
I made it out of clay;
Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel,

Now dreidel I shall play. It has a lovely body,
With leg so short and thin,
And when it gets all tired,
It drops and then I win.
(Repeat refrain)

I Don't Believe in Santa

By Marc Remus

"Just a few more hours and Santa will be here."

"Come on Mom, you must be kidding. Santa Claus doesn't exist. I'm too old for this stuff."

"But Billy! You always loved Santa Claus."

"Yeah, but now I know it's nothing but a fairy tale."

I had outgrown that make-believe story of Santa Claus. If Santa did exist, why didn't he get me that new horror DVD last Christmas? And, why did Santa always bring the presents that Mom found suitable for me? I was sure that tonight I would not get the present I wanted. Mom just didn't think that the new computer game "Tomb Warriors" was suitable for me.

"Tonight I'll show you Santa Claus," said Mom; "we'll wait in the closet till midnight and then you'll see him."

"Yeah, right. As if he'll show up," I said. But, I went along with her game. Mom always made Christmas fun.

Shortly before midnight Mom pulled me in the living room closet. It was dark but through the louvers we could see the brightly lit Christmas tree. We sat on a couple of boxes and waited and waited and waited - but Santa didn't come. I felt asleep, leaning on Mom's shoulder.

"Billy, Santa Claus is here!" whispered Mom, gently waking me up.

I opened the door just a crack to see and noticed a pair of brown boots. Then, my eyes wandered up along red felt pants, past a balloon-like beer belly, to a fluffy white beard. Santa trudged to the Christmas tree, emptied his bag, and neatly arranged all the presents underneath the tree.

"That's not Santa Claus," I whispered.

"Of course it is Billy."

I swung the closet door open, leaped over the sofa and jumped at Santa's big belly. Santa Claus caught me in the air, shouting, "ho, ho, ho. Not so fast Billy."

"You are not Santa Claus," I said again.

"Of course it is Santa," said Mom who came speeding out of the closet.

I grinned at Mom cunningly and pointed at Santa's boots. "How come, Santa is wearing the same boots as Dad?"

Mom started laughing hysterically as Dad pulled down his fake beard. "Guess you are too old to believe in Santa Claus," said Dad; "now come and look at your presents."

It was tradition in our family to open gifts on Christmas Eve, so I unwrapped all my presents while Mom helped Dad out of the Santa Claus costume. Of course, I didn't get "Tomb Warriors," just like I predicted.

If Santa Claus existed I would have gotten that game by now, I thought. As I folded up the wrapping papers I heard something in my room upstairs.

Tap, tap, tap. It sounded like footsteps. Tap, tap, tap again.

"What's that?" I asked.

"I don't know," said Mom, while pulling off Dad's fake fluffy eyebrows. "Why don't you go and find out?"

I raced up the stairs, flung the door to my room open, and there it was sitting on my desk; a nicely wrapped gift with a large ribbon. I opened it and to my surprise it was "Tomb Warriors." I had wanted that game for so long and now I finally had it.

Curiously I opened the envelope dangling on the ribbon and pulled out a card. It read in large handwritten letters, "Have a Merry Christmas! Yours truly, Santa Claus."



I DON'T BELIEVE IN SANTA
by Marc Remus

Explore the Kwanzaa Holiday with Crafts

By D.S. Foxx

Light the Way

Kwanzaa lasts seven days, and each day has a candle, three red, three green, and one black – one for each day and each principle. These mishumaa saba are going to be noticed – why not make your own?



Materials:

Candle wicks or taper candles
Red, green, and black crayons
A saucepan and heat source
or a heat-proof bowl and a microwave
Mold

I like paper towel tubes; they make thick candles, but you need a bunch of crayons for that. Craft stores have lots of different shaped candle molds, or use your imagination! Anything made of cardboard or plastic that you can cut away is good; if you find really thick straws, use those. The number of crayons depends on the size of your mold; one crayon will cover one small taper candle, but you need four crayons to cover one wick in a thin mold. If your family has a kinara (candleholder) they use every year, make sure your candles will fit!

Sorry, but you need an adult's help for this!

Directions:

1. Break all the crayons, keeping the pieces separated by color.
2. Melt your first color in a saucepan over low heat, or in the microwave on low. If you're using paraffin (it makes the candles last longer), add that now. Get the grownup to stir, making sure there are no chunks left.
3. Put your wick in the mold (tie one end to a pencil to keep it in place), and pour the melted wax in. Or, if you're using a taper candle, dip it into the wax, or set it standing on a paper plate and pour the wax on.
4. Do it again with another color. And again.

When your candle is completely cool, tear or cut the mold away. And go put your mishumaa

saba in your kinara.

Don't Eat That Fruit! Yet

Kwanzaa means "first fruits," and there are a lot of fruits to choose from to put on your mkeka. This year, ask your parents to let you help decide what goes in the mazao. (Remember: your fruit basket will be on the table for a whole week—don't pick anything that's going to get squishy!)

Materials:

Basket, cornucopia, or bowl
Fruit
Ribbon
Cloth
Food-safe or watercolor paint

Directions:

Decorate your basket or bowl (a cornucopia is a horn-shaped basket; crafts stores have them). You can tie ribbons around the outside and make a bow, or wrap the handle. Line the bowl or basket with the cloth, letting the edges show.

Pick some of these, and add your favorites, too, unless they're grapes or strawberries or something else that will spoil too soon. Ask your parents if you're not sure. You can use pumpkins, apples, pomegranates, dates, coconuts, grapefruits, oranges, tangerines, or any fruit that you have grown – even if you have to dry it first. Then arrange your fruits. Put the bigger stuff at the bottom! If you put a pumpkin or squash in there, or some other hard-skinned fruit, you can paint it, with faces or your names, or just pretty things.

Congratulations! You've finished your mazao.

Just remember, when it's time to eat the fruit, you have to wash it. (Not just at Kwanzaa, you should know that.)

'Ere I am!

Kwanzaa celebrates family; each child is represented by an ear of corn. This year, why not

decorate an ear to look like you?

You will need a dried ear of corn. (You wouldn't want to get mushy!) Get your parents to take you to a farmer's market or a craft shop. Ears come with lots of different colored kernels, and in different sizes. Pick one out that you like. If you have baby brothers or sisters, pick smaller ones for them.

Materials:

Watercolor paints
Raffia (straw rope from a craft shop), twine or ribbon
Markers
Dried corn husks or scraps of fabric
Toothpicks
Glue
Beads
Newspaper

Directions:

1. Get your parents to put down some newspaper for you to work on! (Otherwise they'll make you clean up the mess.)

2. Make your ear, the corn ear, a shirt out of fabric or cornhusks, or draw or paint on the husk that's still part of the ear to make a skirt.

3. Glue toothpicks on for arms if you want. Add beads for eyes. Use ribbon to make a belt or a necklace, and to tie the clothing onto the ear.

Does it look like you? Great! Now put your vibunzi on the mkeka.

What, you don't know what vibunzi are? Silly, you just made one. Vibunzi are the ears of corn that represent the children in the family. And the mkeka is the straw mat you put them on; it's like the foundation of a house, the beginning, a space for you to build.

Preschool Holiday Word Searches

By Suzanne Miles

In the puzzle below find these words relating to Hanukkah.

Lights Oil Temple Candle Menorah

L I G H T S C
M O I O E L A
E I G N M E N
N L T P P O D
O R A H L E L
R C A H E O E
A R T L T S E
H O T S M H M

In the puzzle below, find these words relating to Christmas.

TREE SANTA DEER BELL

S A B B R G T
V A G E E A R
N T N S L L E
S A T T A L E
D E E R A N A

Find the answers to the puzzles on page 25.

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www.marykay.com/Lureta.*

Easy Quick Breads for the Holidays

By Rachel Paxton

Quick breads are a quick, easy accompaniment to any holiday meal.

For the best-tasting holiday quick breads, here are some helpful hints:

- Only grease the bottoms of the loaf pans or the sides of the bread will pull away from the sides of the baking pan.

- Bake in the center of the center rack of the oven.

- When adding liquids to the dry ingredients, stir only until dry ingredients are moistened. Batter will be lumpy.

- Quick breads can be made ahead and frozen from 1 to 2 months.

Cranberry Pumpkin Bread

Ingredients:

2 eggs, beaten slightly
2 cups sugar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 cup canned pumpkin pie spice
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine eggs, sugar, vegetable oil, and pumpkin, mixing well.

Combine flour, pumpkin pie spice, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl. Make a well in the center of the batter and add the pumpkin.

Stir in cranberries.

Spoon batter into 2 greased and floured loaf pans. Bake for 1 hour.

Cranberry Bread

Ingredients:

2 cups flour
1 egg
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup cranberries, sliced
1 cup sugar 1 cup nuts, chopped (optional)
2 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon baking soda
Juice and rind of 1 orange
1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Add water to orange juice to make 3/4 cup liquid.

Mix all ingredients together and pour into a greased loaf pan. Bake for 30 minutes.

Pumpkin Bread

Ingredients:

5 cups flour
4 cups sugar
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
4 eggs
1 cup vegetable oil
1 large can pumpkin
2 cups nuts (optional)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large bowl, mix together vegetable oil, sugar, and eggs.

In another bowl, mix together flour and baking soda. Add flour and pumpkin alternately to the egg mixture. Add nuts.

Pour into 2 greased loaf pans. Bake for 1 hour.

Apple Bread

Ingredients:

3 cups flour
2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 1/4 cups oil
2 apples, chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped nuts (optional)
1 teaspoon baking soda

Directions:

Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

In a large bowl, mix together all ingredients until well blended.

Pour batter into 2 greased loaf pans. Bake for about 1 hour.

Kwanzaa - A Celebration of Heritage

By Jaki Ryan

Kwanzaa is a seven day festival celebrating the African American people, their culture, and their history. It is a time of community gathering and reflection. Kwanzaa begins on December 26th and continues through New Years Day, January 1st.

Based on ancient African celebrations, Kwanzaa was inspired by the civil rights struggles of the 1960's, and has become increasingly popular over the last decade. More than 20 million people celebrate in the United States, Canada, England, the Caribbean and Africa.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 in the U.S. by Dr. Maulana Karenga, an African-American scholar and activist. The African celebration of Kwanzaa was a ceremony of appreciation for the "first fruits of harvest." "Kwanzaa" means first fruits in Swahili. The guiding principles bring people together to remind us how important we are to one other.

Kinara Candles: Seven candles are replaced in a wooden candle holder called kinara (kee-nar-rah). For each day of Kwanzaa, the celebration is dedicated to one of seven principles, which are: unity, self-determination, responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. These principles are celebrated by activities which include singing, dancing, poetry, drumming, music and feasting.

Candles are then lit each day alternately from left to right. Three red candles (for the blood of the people) should be placed on the left and three green candles (for the hope and color of the motherland) should be placed on the right, and a black candle in the center (for the face of the people). The candles called "mishumaa" are the colors of the Black Liberation Flag.

Kwanzaa Gifts: Gifts, called Zawadi (zah-wah-dee), symbolizing African ancestry, are exchanged between parents and children. These gifts are made by hand. Some examples are fabric dolls with black-button eyes, homemade storybooks with African folk tales, and necklaces strung with beads. The last day of Kwanzaa, or "Imani", focuses on honoring traditions and reaffirming self worth through gift giving. The ultimate

goal is for these principles to become a way of life throughout the entire year.

Kwanzaa Song

(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle)

Kwanzaa is a time to light
A glowing candle every night
A time to show
How much we care
A time to think about the past
And values that we want to last.

Kwanzaa Music Makers

Create fun Kwanzaa music makers using empty film canisters and craft sticks.

Materials:

Two Empty Film Canisters
Two Popsicle/Craft Sticks
Colored Markers
Multi-Colored Construction Paper
Rice, Beans, or Beads
Scissors
Tape

Instructions:

1. Color the sticks with markers. Decorate the containers using strips of construction paper. Tape to secure.
2. Cut a slit in the tops to hold the craft sticks securely.
3. Fill containers half full with rice, beans or beads.
4. Replace the tops. Push in the crafts sticks. Enjoy!



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Christmas Videos for the Whole Family

By Dara A. Lehner

With the weather turning colder and more unpredictable, you might find yourself hearing the familiar "I'm Bored!" In hopes to create more quality fun family time, here's a list of almost 60 traditional Christmas videos. Holiday videos are often hard to track down at the video stores during the holiday season. Most of these are easily affordable and can usually be found on sale. Check out the previously viewed bins or garage sales to help build your Christmas video library. Some are even now available on DVDs, and you can search the web for bargains.

The majority of these videos are "G" rated and

suitable for viewing for all family members. The exception might be the in the Home Alone series. Some parents might find them too violent for young children.

So gather your family and friends for a video marathon. Mix up a pot of hot chocolate, air-pop some popcorn and settle in to string some popcorn garland. Don't forget to string some extra to feed the birds.

How many of these have you seen? Which ones would you like for your Christmas video library? They also make great stocking stuffers, exchange, and last minute or Secret Santa gifts.

All I Want for Christmas
Babes in Toyland
Ben-Hur
The Bishop's Wife
A Charlie Brown Christmas
A Child's Christmas in Wales
A Christmas Carol (1938)
A Christmas Carol (1951)
A Christmas Carol (1984)
A Christmas Story
A Christmas to Remember
Christmas in Connecticut
Christmas Lilies of the Field
A Disney Christmas Gift
Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas (Muppets)
Ernest Saves Christmas
For Better or for Worse: The Bestest Present
Frosty the Snowman
The Greatest Story Ever Told
The Grinch
The Grinch Who Stole Christmas
Hans Brinker
Holiday Affair
Holiday Inn
Home Alone
Home Alone II
A House Without a Christmas Tree
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
It's a Wonderful Life
Jesus of Nazareth
Jiminy Cricket's Christmas
The Kid Who Loved Christmas

King of Kings
The Little Drummer Boy
LHOPrairie: Christmas at Plum Creek
The Man in the Santa Claus Suit
March of the Wooden Soldiers
Mister Magoo's Christmas Carol
The Muppet Christmas Carol
The Night They Saved Christmas
National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation
The Nutcracker
The Nutcracker Prince
One Magic Christmas
Paddington Christmas
Pee-Wee's Playhouse
 Christmas Special
Pinocchio's Christmas
Prancer
Rudolph the Red Nosed
 Reindeer
The Santa Clause
Santa Claus is Coming to
 Town
Scrooge
Scrooged
Story of Christmas
The Ten Commandments
Veggie's Tales: Star of
 Christmas
White Christmas
The Year Without a Santa
 Claus
Yogi's First Christmas

Stay at Home Parents Mailing List

A free mailing list for parents who stay at home with their kids. Chat about life and the trials of being at home, get sanity checks, and make new friends. Come join the fun!

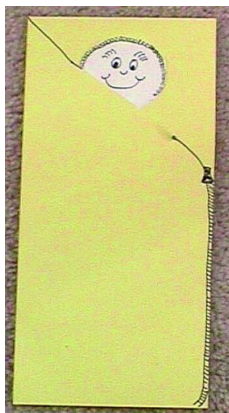


Night Night New Year's Eve Party

By Tina Musial

Kids and New Year's Eve - it's kind of like mixing oil and water. Do you need a way to blend the two successfully, and still have fun yourself? Stay home and have a party! I successfully rang in the new millennium with a party AND an 18 month old with a pajama party. Here are the details for hosting a successful Night Night Party on New Year's Eve.

To start, you need clever invitations. I created a person looking snug under a sleeping bag (see picture below). Cut colored paper to sleeping bag shape (rectangles to fit in a business envelope.) Cut a diagonal line to look like a flap of a sleeping bag near the top. Make a body with a head to fit through opening. Write party details on "pajamas" of person.



On the invitation require guests to come in pajama's and bring a sleeping bag, regardless if they are spending the night or not. It adds to the ambiance. Once the guests are invited, they will need the necessary party paraphernalia: hats, noisemakers, balloons, crepe paper, and streamers.

Now it is time to set the stage. Open up the couch bed or pull out all kinds of pillows and blankets to snuggle up with. Warning: This may cause lightweights to "accidentally" fall asleep during the party - hint hint.

All of these pajama-clad guests will need entertainment. Movies are optional, but watching the ball drop at midnight is not. Some

"sleep" movie options are Sleeping Beauty, Bedknobs and Broomsticks or Snow White.

Not everyone is content to be planted in front of the tube, so have some games and/or crafts handy. Buy a bunch of colorful, cheap socks and have a "Funny Slippers Contest." Use yarn, buttons, markers, glitter or glue to jazz up your entry. Have a modeling show and award prizes for funniest, ugliest, most creative, and so on!

Or you could have them bring the slippers they already have and have a fashion show. The Pajama Ball of 2003!

To continue with a Sleep theme, Pin the snore (a bunch of Zs) on the sleeping prince. Make up word puzzles for older kids and have them make as many words as they can out of Sleeping Beauty. Have a Treasure Hunt out of the story, Princess and the Pea. Use a green ball (pea) and hide it. The finder gets the prize!

If you want to use a New Year's theme, pin the crystal ball on Times Square building. Make as many words out of New Year's Eve as possible. Create and decorate your own party hat. If you are feeling really brave, have the kids make their own confetti to throw at midnight. The only limit is how much of a mess you want to clean up.

Now this crowd that has been entertained will now want food. Anything round can be decorated to look like a clock face with numbers: cakes, sugar cookies, and cupcakes using frosting. Pizza or a veggie tray using cut up olives or peppers creatively. Put the time to read a few minutes before midnight.

Here's a recipe using a round dish:

Clockwork Bean Dip

Ingredients:

- 1 large can refried beans
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning
- 1 diced tomato
- 1 diced small onion

Directions:

Mix together and pour into round dish. Using a frosting decorator, or bag with the corner cut off;

squirt sour cream numbers for a clock. Serve with nacho chips.

It's finally nearing midnight, some of your guests may have already dozed off, but have a toast ready, whether it is in sippy cups with juice or an adult beverage. Watch the ball drop and

celebrate with a cheer.

The well-fed, well-entertained guests will hopefully be getting sleepy. Share some bedtime stories to slow the evening down. They will either go to sleep or go home, and Night Night New Year's Eve is a success!

Teach Your Children About Holiday Spirit

By Christine Louise Hohlbaum

Jesus' birthday is the most widely celebrated one in the world, and yet many people seem so busy at this time of year. With budgets tighter than usual this year, you still want to make this celebratory season a special one. Children can be involved in preparing for this season of light with a few simple tips.

1. Create a book of thanks with your children. Ask your children what they are grateful for. Have the kids clip out magazine photos, paste photographs of themselves, their friends, family, pets, etc. onto several sheets of paper. Staple the paper together in the middle.

2. Integrate the message of giving into your craft activities.

3. Make a loaf of bread together and give it to a neighbor.

4. Go through your children's closet together and donate items to a nearby homeless shelter.

5. The National Database of Nonprofit organizations has a web site which features over 850,000 non-profits and their respective ratings. Check out www.guidestar.org to find your favorite organization. Donate a sum in someone's name.

6. Create your own Twelve Days of Christmas song and act it out.

7. Make a calendar with old photos and write captions under them.

8. Decorate holiday cookies with your kids, place them in colorful bags, and give them to friends as gifts.

9. Start a new family tradition (for example, lighting the same candle every year, going for a hike, sledding, or making your own Christmas ornament for the tree).

10. Create your own crèche and read the story of Jesus' birth from the Bible as you set it up.

11. Reuse the tops of old holiday cards and

send them as postcards. Have your children write cards to relatives and friends with you.

12. Instead of making a wish list, ask your children to make a list of things that they wished someone else had. The list may not be long, but it will make them think.

Have a happy, healthy, and loving holiday!

Christmas 1931

By Charles Langley

Jeffie hung up his stocking as he had done each year that he was tall enough to reach the mantle. Since Santa traveled by sleigh, he was certain the three foot drifts of snow from yesterday's blizzard wouldn't keep him away. His parents looked at each other with sadness and heavy hearts. Even if the battery in the Essex wasn't dead and they somehow managed to get to the general store, not a cent was in the sugar bowl where they kept their meager funds.

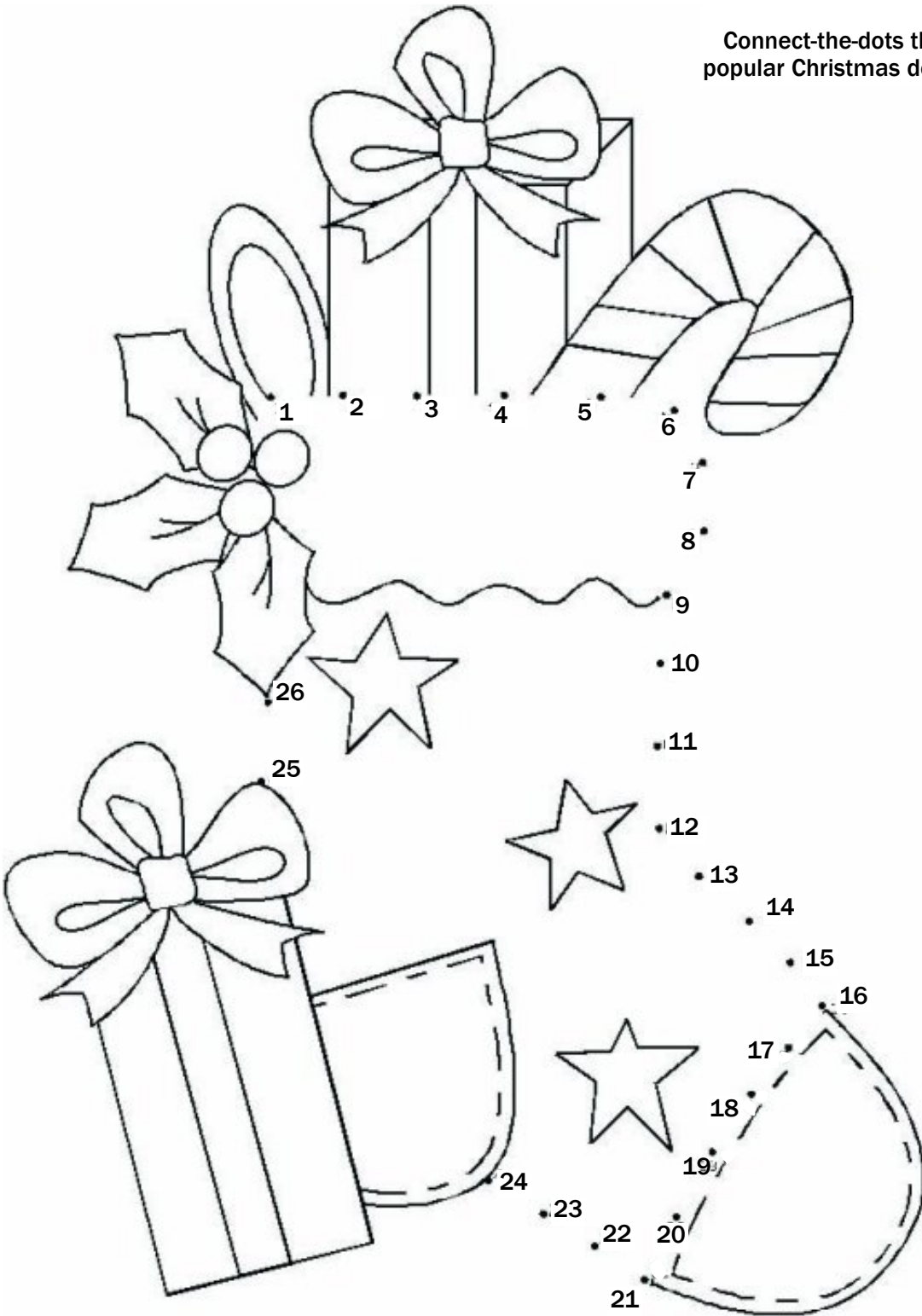
"He'll have to learn someday that some things just can't happen," his father said. "It might as well be now."

Christmas morning Jeffie rushed downstairs and took down his stocking. Emptied out, it yielded an orange, an apple, a handful of mixed nuts, and a toy, just like every other year. His parents looked on, shaking their heads.

At the next farm the man the children called "Mr. Mean" took off his fleece-lined coat, pulled off his galoshes. His face was florid from the cold and there were snowflakes on his lashes. But the smile on his face warmed the atmosphere and his lips formed the words, "Merry Christmas, Jeffie". And the small room was suddenly bright and warm.

By Jaki Ryan

Connect-the-dots then color this popular Christmas decoration.



A Lesson on How Children Learn

By Shelley Ruiz

Nurture and Teach

The single most important thing caregivers can do for a child is provide a nurturing environment. By doing this, we influence children's brain development and their ability to learn. Introducing nurtured children to learning opportunities every day will help them become happy, well-adjusted adults. In all stages of child development, each experience builds on the one before it. The most basic foundations can serve as the basis for the comprehension of more complex ideas in future years.

Learning Begins at Birth

We are born with billions of brain cells - in fact, all we will ever have. What is missing is a large amount of connections - synapses - between those brain cells. Synapses start developing based on a child's experiences. Children's brains develop faster from birth to age three than any other time; and more learning takes place during this time than any other. The more learning opportunities parents provide for their children from birth until school age, the more synapses are made. The connections will serve as a pool of knowledge for a child to access in later years.

Because children's earliest experiences affect how they will think, learn and behave, helping children learn from birth to school age is a crucial activity. Parents and other caregivers can create a strong foundation for learning by providing a nurturing and rich learning environment from the very beginning.

Children Seek Learning Experiences

Not only do children need to be physically active, it is their nature to look for opportunities to learn. They participate in learning by using their senses and asking countless questions in order to more fully understand the task at hand.

Creating a Learning Environment

Children enjoy learning when they can master an activity. Begin with a simple task and expand or complicate it after your child has enjoyed

some successes.

Create a safe and secure learning environment. This will help children do their best learning rather than distract them. Key to creating this environment is treating your child with respect and caring.

Where Do Children Learn?

Children learn everywhere from school to the doctor's office to the grocery store. As do adults, children learn from interacting with others and watching their parents' behavior. Kids are highly influenced by the people in their lives, especially adults who they are close to.

Not All Children Learn in the Same Way

In the book *Frame of Mind*, Howard Gardner described his theory of multiple intelligences. We all have a certain way we prefer to learn. The seven multiple intelligences Gardner points to are interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily-kineshetic, spatial, musical, logical-mathematical and linguistic. We have the most success teaching our children when we can recognize their style of learning (as well as our style of teaching) and incorporate activities accordingly.

Playing and Learning

The main way children collect and process information is through play. Play is the repetition that reinforces old skills and encourages new ones. Because play is enjoyable, children's minds are open. Children are capable of much learning through play because they are very receptive and relaxed. Take advantage of this benefit and select activities that are fun and educational. Your children will learn, and you will both enjoy the experience.

**Do you have a flare for writing?
Kids Holiday Crafts Magazine is
looking for writers. Click on the
submission guidelines link today!**

No Matter How You Say It

By Dara A. Lehner

This time of year, we are all thinking of our blessings of family and friends. This article is written extending our wishes for a joyous and peace filled holiday season, no matter in which language it is spoken.

To our Christian friends our profound wishes for a blessed Christmas.

To our Jewish friends our extended wishes for a Happy Chanukah.

To our brothers and sisters of Abraham, we send our most sincere belated wishes for Ramadan, which began on October 27 and for a blessed Eid.

Though Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday, to all who celebrate, may you find joy and peace in this Kwanzaa season.

Finally to all global citizens, regardless of your age, gender, religious, or ethnic affiliation, our heartfelt desire is that we all will experience love, peace, hope, and prosperity throughout this holiday season and upcoming year. God bless us each and every one.

In the spirit of the season and honoring all cultures, here are a few greetings from around the world saying Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Apache (western): Gozhqq Keshmish

Arabic: l'D Miilad Said ous Sana Saida

Bengali: Shuvo Baro Din – Shuvo Nabo Barsho

Cantonese: Seng Dan Fai Lok, Sang Nian Fai Lok

Cherokee: Danistayohihv & Aliheli'sdi Itse Udetiyvsadiv

Choctaw: Yukpa, Nitak Hollo Chito

Dutch: Vrolijk Kerstfeest en een Gelukkig Nieuwjaar !

English: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

French: Joyeux Noel and Bonne Annee !

German: Frohliche Weihnachten und ein gluckliches Neues Jahr !

Hawallan: Mele Kalikimaka & Hauoli Makahiki Hou

Hebrew: Mo'adim Lesimkha. Shanah Tova

Hindi: Shubh Naya Baras

Irish: Nollaig Shona Dhuit

Italian: Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo

Japanese: Shinnen omedeto. Kurisumasu Omedeto

Korean: Sung Tan Chuk Ha

Kurdish: Seva piroz sahibe u sersala te piroz be

Latin: Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis

Polish: Wesolych Swiat i Szczesliwego Nowego Roku

Portugese: Boas Festas e um feliz Ano Novo

Russian: Pozdrevlyayu s prazdnikom Rozhdestva i s Novim Godom

Scots Gaelic: Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna mhath ur

Spanish: Feliz Navidad y Prospero Ano Nuevo

Vietnamese: Chuc Mung Giang Sinh – Chuc Mung Tan Nien

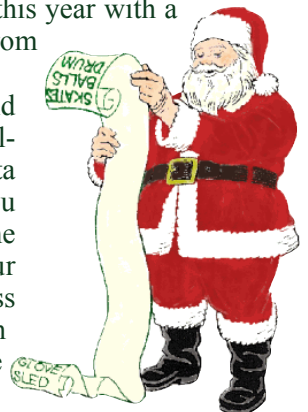
Welsh: Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

Yiddish: Gute Vaynakhtn un a Gut Nay Yor

Personalized Letters from Santa

Checking it twice, gonna find out whos naughty or nice Santa has been making his list and he wants to let your child know that he/she has been good this year with a personalized letter from the man in red.

For just \$3, your child will receive a personalized letter from Santa and a small gift. You can print and fill out the form then mail your payment to the address on the form, or you can order the letters online thru Pay Pal.



[Click here for more information and the form.](#)

Winter Blahs Become Family Fun

By Sarah Zanger

After spending another dreary winter Sunday with not much to do I decided our family needed an exciting activity. I thought I needed a break from planning dinner so I'd give myself a break and give them an activity.

I told my children that they were in charge of dinner tonight. They'd each need to prepare one part of the meal- their choice. Three of my four children were home and quite excited about the prospect of dinner plans. Even my sixteen year old son, who only gets excited about playing hockey was in to it. My husband wasn't as keen on the idea.

Each of my children started their dinner plans. They ran to the computer to locate good recipes. I sent them to Simply Delicious (<http://dateable.com/simplydelicious>) where they found

some good recipes. They pulled out cookbooks and ran to find their supplies.

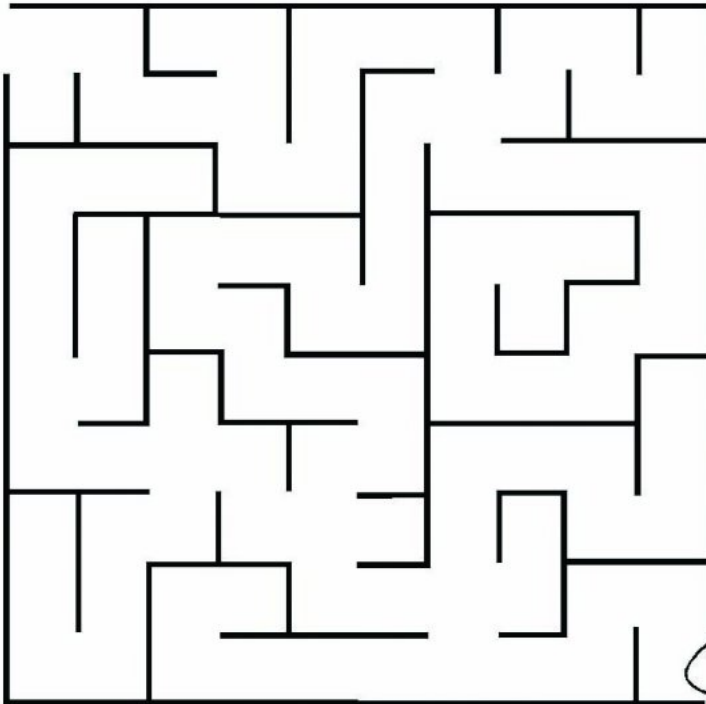
Of course, what I thought would be a treat for me turned into a bit of extra work but watching everyone scurrying around the kitchen was fun.

My husband didn't realize I meant business and when he returned to the kitchen I told him if he wanted dinner he too needed to bring something to the meal. He's not much of a cook so he took out our dusty juice maker and went to work. He used up a good amount of old fruit and resurrected the use of the juice maker.

What started out as a boring Sunday became a wonderful way for our family to spend quality time together. The kids learned some new recipes and we're back to using our juice maker!

Penguin's Christmas Maze

Help the penguin find his way home for the holidays. Find the solution on page 25.



Jaki Ryan

The History of the Christmas Stocking

By Yuwanda Black

Nothing signifies Christmas like the hanging of fluffy red stockings with white trim above the fireplace mantle. In the United States, families have been practicing this tradition for years in preparation for that special day of spiritual celebration and giving.

Though in modern times the Christmas stocking is often used as a holder of small gifts for children and loved ones, there are many legends associated with the actual history of the Christmas stocking.

The Dutch Theory

Some say the Dutch introduced the Christmas stocking to America. It was told that during the 16th Century, children in Holland would leave their clogs by the hearth filled with straw for the reindeer (or "donkey").

A treat for Santa was left in the house near the fire. In return "Sinterclass" would leave the children treats. Later the clogs would become stockings, and the Saint known to all would become "Santa Claus."

The Poor, Kind Nobleman Theory

Many believe there was once a kind nobleman whose wife had died of an illness leaving the man and his three daughters in despair. After losing all his money in useless and bad inventions, the nobleman and his daughters had to move into a peasant's cottage. When it came time for the daughters to marry, the father became even more depressed as his daughters could not marry without dowries.

One night after the daughters had washed out their clothing, they hung their stockings over the fireplace to dry. That night Saint Nicholas, knowing the despair of the father, stopped by the nobleman's house after the family had gone to bed. He peeked in the window and saw the daughters' stockings hanging by the fire.

Inspiration struck Saint Nicholas, and he took three small bags of gold from his pouch and threw them carefully, one by one, down the chimney into the stockings. The next morning when the daughters awoke, they found their

stockings contained enough gold for them to get married. The nobleman was able to see his three daughters marry, and he lived a long and happy life.

The North American Theory

Still others say in North America the traditional Christmas stocking actually dates back to the end of the XIXth Century. Some believe the first mention of Christmas stockings being hung from a chimney were by Thomas Nast, an illustrator, through his pictures and by the writer, George Webster, in a story about a visit from Santa Claus.

Cultural Variations in the Celebration of the Christmas Stocking

No matter the origin of the custom, families the world over continue to practice some act associated with the tradition of the Christmas stocking. In Puerto Rico, children put flowers and greens in small boxes and place them under their beds for the camels of the Three Kings; Italian children leave their shoes out the night before Epiphany, January 5, for La Befana the good witch; and in France, the children place their shoes by the fireplace, a tradition dating back to when children wore wooden peasant shoes.

An Ethnic Take

Today, Christmas stockings are available in a variety of colors, styles, shapes and sizes. Ethnic Home Décor, an online retailer and wholesaler of home accessories with ethnic themes, has created Christmas stockings made of mudcloth, an authentic African fabric. No matter how much the styles (or tales!) differ, the Christmas stocking seems to have one common theme enjoyed by all: the element of fanciful surprise during the Christmas season.

Let's get chatting! Sign up on the Forums today!

Traditional Chanukah Recipes

By Dara A. Lehner

A traditional Chanukah Dinner would include potato latkes served with sour cream, homemade cinnamon applesauce, with sautéed green beans, and featuring brisket braised in wine, with sufganiot for desert.

Latkes

Latkes are potato pancakes fried in oil. The oil is a reminder of the miraculous oil that lasted for eight days when the Temple of Jerusalem was rededicated.

Ingredients:

4 cups peeled, grated potatoes
1 large onion,
chopped
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons flour
2 eggs
pepper to taste
2 teaspoons chopped
chives (optional)



Directions:

1. Wash, scrub, peel, and grate the potatoes. Squeeze out liquid.
2. Combine grated potatoes with chopped onion, salt, flour, and pepper (and chopped chives).
3. Lightly beat the egg, and stir into the mixture.
4. Heat the oil in a skillet, and spoon in tablespoons of the potato/egg mixture to make medium sized patties.
5. Brown on one side, turn and brown lightly on the other.
6. Repeat with the rest of the mixture.

Serving suggestions: Serve warm and with applesauce, cottage cheese, yogurt, or sour cream.

Sufganiot

For added fun when dusting with powdered sugar, place a stencil of the Star of David on the doughnuts.

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups milk, hot
2 packages active dry yeast
1/4 cup milk, lukewarm
6 egg yolks
2/3 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon orange extract
zest of half an orange
1/2 cup butter
jam
oil for deep-frying
powdered sugar

Directions:

1. Sift one cup of flour into a large bowl.
2. Whisk in the hot milk, whisk until smooth, and set aside to cool.
3. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm milk.
4. Add the yeast/milk mixture to the flour/milk mixture. Cover bowl with clean dish-towel and set aside for 30 minutes.
5. In another bowl, mix the egg yolks and granulated sugar until light and fluffy. Combine this to the flour/yeast mixture. Mix well.
6. Add vanilla, orange extract and zest.
7. Add the remaining flour and the butter. Mix well.
8. Knead until smooth.
9. Set aside and let rise until double in bulk, about 45 minutes.
10. Roll out on a floured cutting board to 1/2 inch thick.
11. Cut out rounds with a large mouth glass. Put a teaspoon of jam into the center of one round. Cover with another round. Seal edges securely. Allow to rise again.
12. Heat oil in a pan. Careful not to overheat and burn oil.
13. Fry doughnuts a few at a time until golden brown on both sides.
14. Drain on paper towels.
15. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve warm with a large glass of milk.

Make Some Glittering Snowmen

By Melissa O. Markham

Materials Needed:

White poster board
Pencils
Scissors
3 Cookie cutters - 1 3/4", 2 1/2", 2 3/4"
Black construction paper
Clear tape
Round, star and snowflake sequins
Glitter glue
Buttons
Glue

What to Do:

1. Let the children use the cookie cutters to trace a circle of each size.
2. Draw a top hat for each child. It should

match the size of the smallest circle. Or let the children draw a long, thin rectangle (for the hat brim) and a shorter, fat rectangle for the top of the hat.

3. Let the children cut out the circles and the top hat or top hat pieces.

4. Overlap the circles slightly. The largest should be on the bottom and the smallest on the top, with the top hat at the top of the smallest circle. Use small pieces of clear tape to hold the pieces together. For a sturdy snowman, put tape on the front and the back.

5. Use the sequins, glitter glue, buttons and glue to decorate your snowman. Once dry, hang them on the wall. Their glittery smiles won't melt away no matter what the temperature outside.

Shocking Bending Balloons and More

By Nancy Cavanaugh

Bending Water

What You'll Need:

Small Rubber Balloon
or comb
Water Faucet



What to Do:

1. Blow up and tie off the balloon.
2. Turn on the faucet so that you have a thin, unbroken stream of water.
3. Rub the balloon (or comb) back and forth quickly on your dry, clean hair a number of times. Notice what happens as you lift the balloon away from your head.
4. Hold the balloon close (1-2cm) beside the stream of water. Make sure the balloon doesn't touch the water. You should see the water bend towards the balloon – be careful that it doesn't touch the balloon as this can stop the effect.

What happens:

When you rub the balloon on your hair, it becomes charged with "static electricity". As the

rubber slides over the hair, molecules of rubber form temporary bonds with molecules in your hair by sharing some of their electrons.

When the balloon moves away, the bonds break, sometimes leaving an electron or two stranded on the wrong side of the bond.

As the electrons spend slightly more time on the rubber side of the bond, the balloon ends up with many more electrons than it began with – leaving it with an overall negative charge.

Conversely, your hair has lost some of its complement of electrons so it is now some of its positively charged protons are not cancelled out anymore – leaving the hair with an overall positive charge. As oppositely charged objects attract each other, your hair sticks to the balloon as you pull it away.

Watch out though, these unbalanced charges repel themselves – if you put enough charge on the balloon, some of the electrons will be kicked out and jump to another object - forming a spark. Fortunately, due to the large size of the balloon's surface, it is very hard to get so much charge on the balloon that a spark will jump to

an uncharged object. However, it is much easier to get a spark to jump from the balloon to a positively charged object, like your hair. Also, the positive charge on the hair that touched the balloon will attract electrons from the surrounding hair, making tiny sparks jump within your hair.

Don't worry too much, these sparks should not be large enough to hurt at all. In fact, they're so small that if you want to see them, your best option is to charge your hair up in a very dark room in front of a mirror, then you should be able to see sparks jumping through your hair.

Light a Fluorescent Bulb

What you'll need:

- Fluorescent light
- Balloon
- Wool sweater



What to do:

1. Darken the room. Hold the fluorescent bulb in one hand and the balloon in the other. Rub the balloon vigorously on your hair.

2. Bring the balloon near the bulb and watch what happens. Was that a flicker of light? Did the bulb really light up?

3. Move the balloon up and down the bulb without touching the bulb. The light should sort of "follow" the balloon.

4. Touch the balloon to the glass and see if you can get a spark to jump.

What happens:

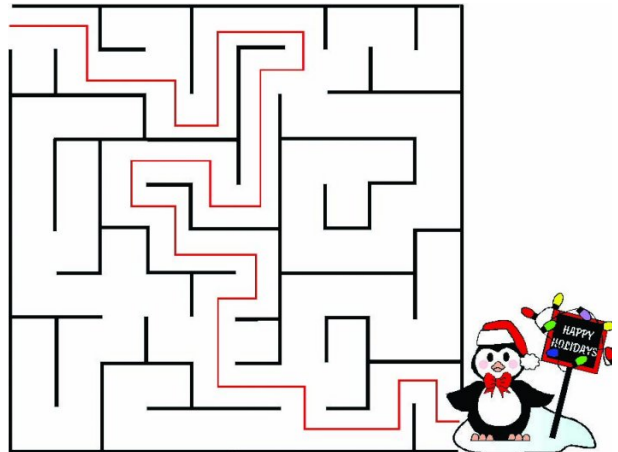
Electrons are relatively free to jump from one atom to the next, and they're attracted to some materials more than others. When you rub a balloon on your hair, electrons from your hair jump over to the balloon and stay there.

The inside of a fluorescent tube is coated with a white material made up of phosphors. If you bombard phosphors with ultraviolet light, they re-emit visible light.

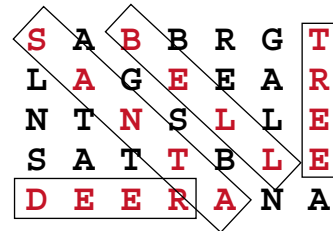
In normal operation, the fluorescent tube is connected to a source of electrical current. The current supplies electrons that slam around inside the tube. Inside the tube there is also mercury vapor. When electrons collide with the mercury vapor, they cause the vapor to emit ultraviolet light, which hits the phosphors and the tube lights up.

Bringing a negatively charged balloon near a fluorescent tube stirs up the electrons in the mercury vapor. This produces an electrical current, which excites the mercury atoms. The excited mercury atoms emit ultraviolet light and cause the phosphors to glow. When a spark jumps, you get a big release of energy and a correspondingly brighter glow.

Maze answer:



Christmas puzzle answer:



Chanukah puzzle answer:





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Meet the Writers

LeAnn R. Ralph is a freelance writer for two newspapers in west central Wisconsin, is the editor of the Wisconsin Regional Writer (the quarterly publication of the Wisconsin Regional Writers' Assoc.) and is the author of the book, *Christmas In Dairyland (True Stories From a Wisconsin Farm)* (Aug. 2003); trade paperback. For more information about *Christmas In Dairyland*, visit <http://ruralroute2.com>

Melissa O. Markham is a stay home mom, homeschooler, and writer. She lives in Virginia with her husband, 17 year old step son, 6 year old son, and 3 year old daughter. She has been published in *Weeonesmagazine.com*, *Focus on the Family Clubhouse*, *Lighthouse Magazine*, *Story Art*, *Boys Quest*, *The Writer*, *The Willamette Writer*, *FellowScript*, and *The Working Writer*. She is currently working on several fiction and nonfiction picture book manuscripts.

Marta Dodd is a single mom and webmaster of www.navygirl.com and www.onemilitaryparent.com. She has been a single mom for 12 years and is also serving in the United States Naval Reserve. Balancing single parenthood and the military is a challenging task which she shares with the world.

Murdo Macleod's *Fun With Figures* shows anyone of any ability the easy way to do mental math. Visit his site today and find out what you didn't learn in the math class at <http://FunWithFigures.com>

Deborah Shelton is a mother, freelance writer, and author of the brand new book, *"The Five Minute Parent: Fun & Fast Activities for You and Your Little Ones."* Visit Deborah's website for more family-friendly ideas: <http://www.fiveminuteparent.com>

Elizabeth Dulemba is a former graphic designer currently writing and illustrating children's picture books. Her website is Dulemba.com. You can also email her at elizabeth@dulemba.com.

Marc Remus is an acclaimed illustrator with a degree in illustrations from Art Center College of Design, CA. The German-born artist has pursued the children's field for many years, illustrating for reputable companies as American Express, BBC Network, *Cicada Magazine* and *Once Upon*

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D.S. Foxx is a freelance writer and editor. Her short story "Dreads" will appear in *Dark Dreams*, Kensington Press 2004 Look for it at <http://bookwyrn.hypermart.net>

Suzanne Miles has a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education with a concentration in art. She has taken children's writing courses with Barbara Seuling and is currently enrolled in the writing course at The Institute of Children's Literature. She is a member of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators'.

Rachel Paxton is a freelance writer and mom who is the author of the "What's for Dinner?", a cookbook containing more than 250 quick easy dinner ideas. For recipes, tips to organize your home, home decorating, crafts, and frugal living, visit *Creative Homemaking* at <http://www.creativehomemaking.com>

Jaki Ryan resides in Arizona and is the author of *Kroppin' Your Kids, A Step-By-Step Guide to Scrapbooking Your Children's Photos*. In addition to homeschooling her three children, she has owned and operated a daycare/nursery school in her home and was the craft coordinator for an agency that funded educational programs for all home daycares in her state. She is currently working on several picture books and non-fiction articles.

Dara A. Lehner is a writer and photographer. She lives in Ohio with her husband of 22 years, their 18 year old son, 20 year old daughter, and 2 year old granddaughter. Dara writes about science, nature, math, and multicultural topics for both children and adult magazines. She has several fiction and non-fiction manuscripts currently in the works. When she is not out exploring nature with her camera, Dara loves tending her flower and vegetable gardens with her granddaughter.

Tina Musial is a freelance writer in New Jersey. She hopes to keep the magic of Christmas alive for her two boys, ages 2 and 4 1/2, at least until they have their own children. Email comments to tina_musialwrites@yahoo.com or visit her web page at www.tinamusial.smartwriters.com.

Christine Louise Hohlbaum, author of "Diary of

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Since returning to writing three years ago after a fifty-nine year hiatus, **Charles Langley** has written over one hundred short stories, articles, poems or columns for print magazines, ezines and books. Last year Gannett newspapers gave him a full page nationwide write-up about his days as cub reporter at the Hauptmann trial in Flemington, NJ, in 1935.

Shelley Ruiz is a homeschooling parent and the owner of Magic Lark Learning ([www.mag-](http://www.mag-iclarklearning.com)

[iclarklearning.com](http://www.mag-iclarklearning.com)) which provides parents and teachers with resources for making learning fun, including a free quarterly online journal of poems and stories for kids.

Sarah Zanger is a freelance writer and mother of four. She is an editor at Dateable.com. Dateable.com is an exciting online community for singles, couples and romance lovers. Dateable.com has romantic resources, advice, poetry, message boards, event postings, greeting cards, contests, personals, opinion polls and more.

Cassandra & Yuwanda Black are co-owners of EthnicHomeDecor.com, an online retailer of soft home furnishings with ethnic themes at affordable prices. Products are also available to wholesale vendors. Ethnic holiday decor available soon! Visit <http://www.EthnicHomeDecor.com> for full details.

Story of Chanukah

By Dara A. Lehner

Chanukah means rededication; it is also called the festival of lights. Chanukah begins on the 25th day of the month of Kislev in the Jewish calendar (November/ December). The holiday honors the Jewish victory over foreign domination.

This fight came during the second century B.C.E. (Before the Common Era). During this time in Judea (Israel) there lived many Hebrew people. King Antiochus IV, who was a wicked man, ordered all Jews to denounce their God and customs, and to worship only Greek Gods. By Antiochus' orders, the Jewish temples were destroyed or used as places to punish or kill the Jews who would not comply.

Some Jewish people chose to obey Antiochus, others like Mattathias with his brothers and son, Judah, led an open revolt against this evil regime. After his father's death, Judah was given the nickname "the Maccabee" (the hammer) and those that fought with him were called Maccabees. Their goal was to defeat their oppressors, the Syrians; so Jewish people could practice their faith as they believed.

Antiochus sent the most well-trained and best-armed troops into Israel to end the rebellion. The

Maccabees countered with a campaign of guerilla warfare and after three years of harsh fighting, they drove the oppressors from their land.

The Maccabees arrive in Jerusalem in December 164 B.C.E. Here they found the sacred temple defiled and desecrated by the foreigners. They went about cleaning and scrubbing the temple left in shambles. They removed all the Greek symbols and idols from the temple. On the 25th day of the Jewish month Kislev, they rededicated the temple; with only one problem, they could only find one very small cruse (earthenware pot or jar) with oil. They knew this was only enough oil to last for one night; miraculously it burned for eight days. This is why today the menorah has eight candles.

The Chanukah menorah is a special arrangement of nine candles. In the contemporary celebration of Chanukah, one feature is the lighting of a hanukkiyah, a special eight branched menorah with a ninth holder for a shamash, or "servant" candle used to light the other candles. On each successive night, a new candle lit, until finally eight candles are glowing in celebration of the miracle that occurred over 2300 years ago. Special blessings and prayers are recited each night before the candles are lit.

Chanukah starts at sundown December 19 this year. Happy Feast of Lights!