

Free December Stuff



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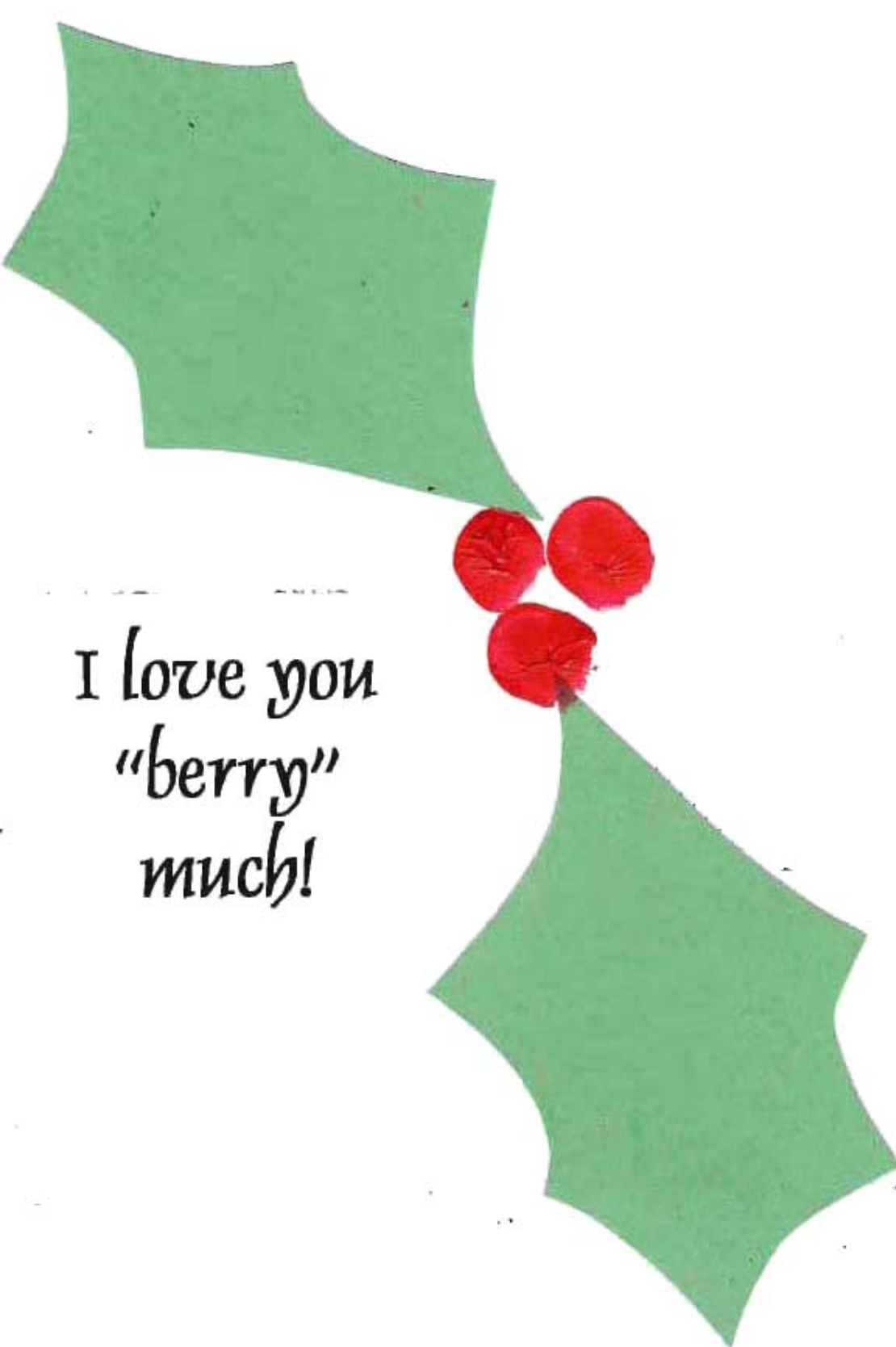
Wreath Pokey

Put your wreath in
Take your wreath out
Put your wreath in
Now you shake it all about
You do the Wreath Pokey and you turn yourself around.
That's what it's all about.

You put your wreath up.
You put your wreath down.
You put your wreath up.
Now you twirl it all around.
You do the Wreath Pokey and you turn yourself around.
That's what it's all about.

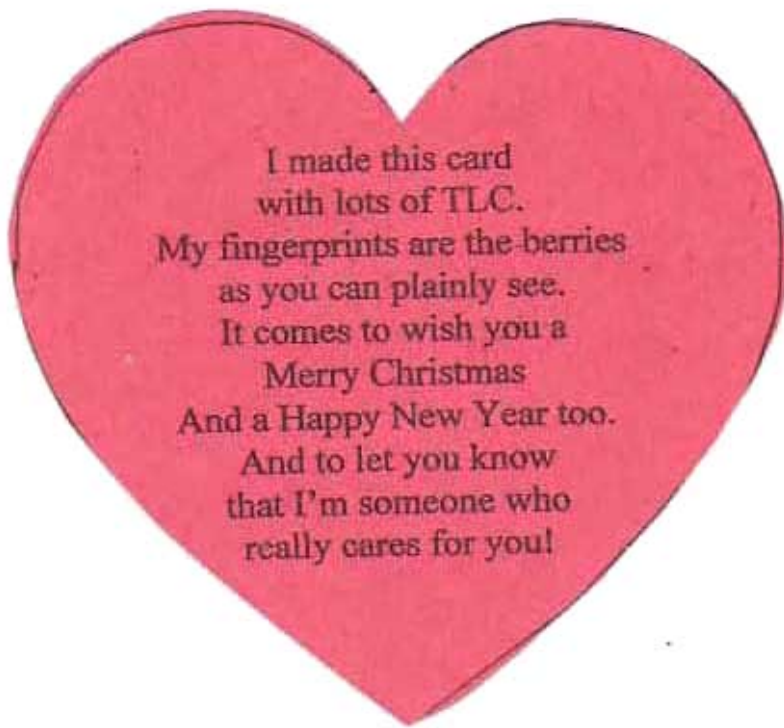
You put your wreath to the left.
You put your wreath to the right.
You put your wreath to the left.
Now you hide it out of sight.
You do the Wreath Pokey and you turn yourself around.
That's what it's all about.

You do the Wreath Pokey.
You do the Wreath Pokey.
You do the Wreath Pokey.
Merry Merry Merry
Christmas!

A decorative graphic featuring two green holly leaves and three red berries. One leaf is in the top left, and the other is in the bottom right. The three red berries are clustered in the center, between the two leaves.

I love you
"berry"
much!

I ♥ U



I made this card
with lots of TLC.
My fingerprints are the berries
as you can plainly see.
It comes to wish you a
Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year too.
And to let you know
that I'm someone who
really cares for you!

Diane

Holly Card

Materials:

- White construction paper
- Green construction paper
- Red paint
- A small paper plate to place paint in.
- Hand wipes to wash off children's finger.
- Crayons
- Glue sticks
- Scissors

Directions:

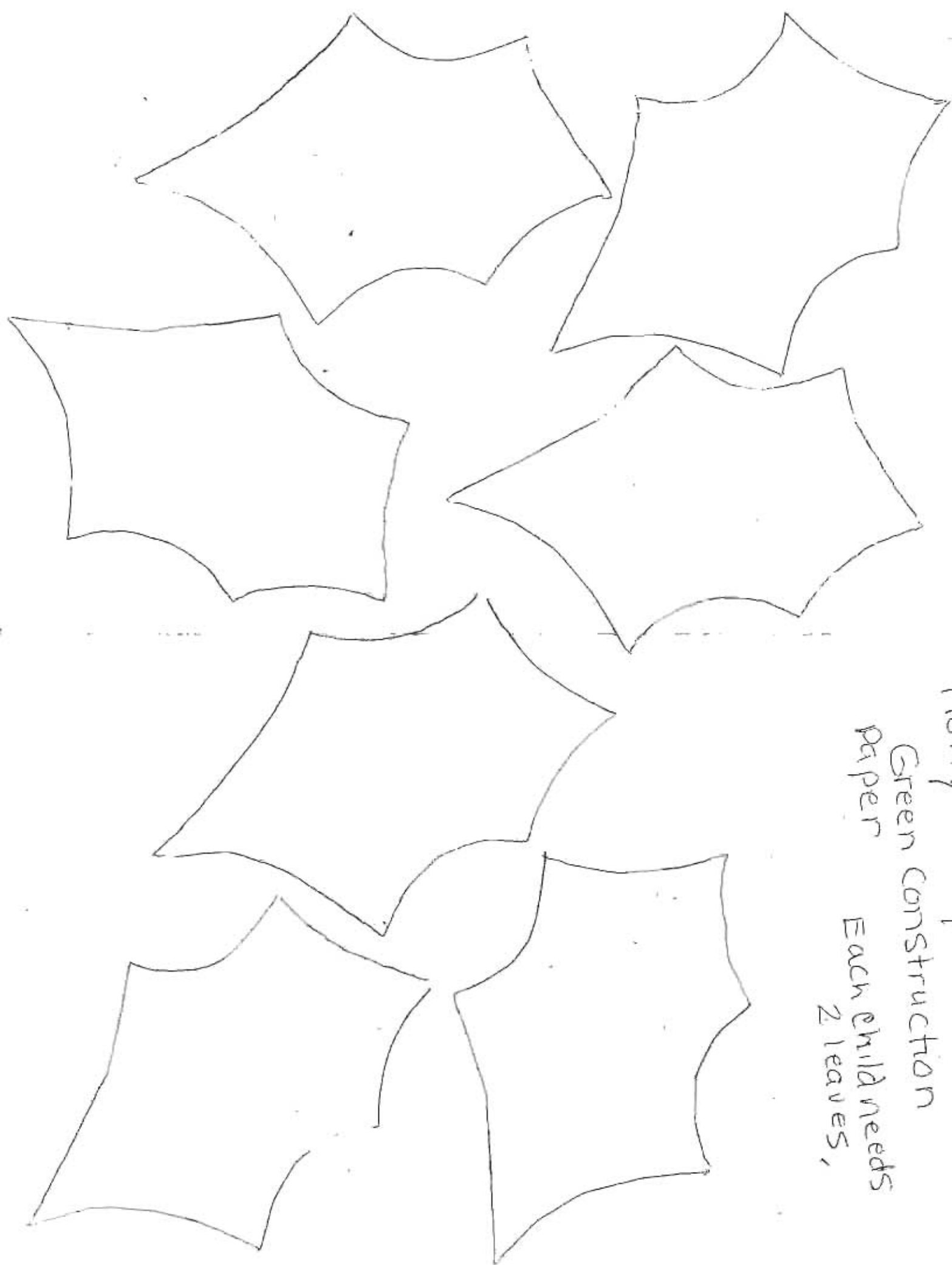
Prep:

- Fold white sheets of construction paper into a card.
- Run off holly leaves on green paper and rough cut. Each student will need 2 leaves.

The next day...

1. Children CUT out their 2 leaves.
2. Children GLUE them to their white card. Demonstrate and display your sample.
3. Remind them to leave a GAP in the middle so that you can make the berries in the middle.
4. Children GLUE the poem to the LEFT of the leaves.
5. Children GLUE heart poem to the **inside-right** of the card.
6. Children WRITE their name **under** the poem.
7. When children are done they transition to another activity.
8. Teacher calls them to the paint table and works with each child one-on-one pressing their pointer finger into the red paint and then stamping 3 red berries to the center of the card where the leaves left a gap. (See sample.)
9. Send cards home with the children or include them with a gift that they made in class.

Holly Berry Card
Green construction
paper
Each child needs
2 leaves,



I love you
"berry"
much!

I love you
"berry"
much!

I love you
"berry"
much!

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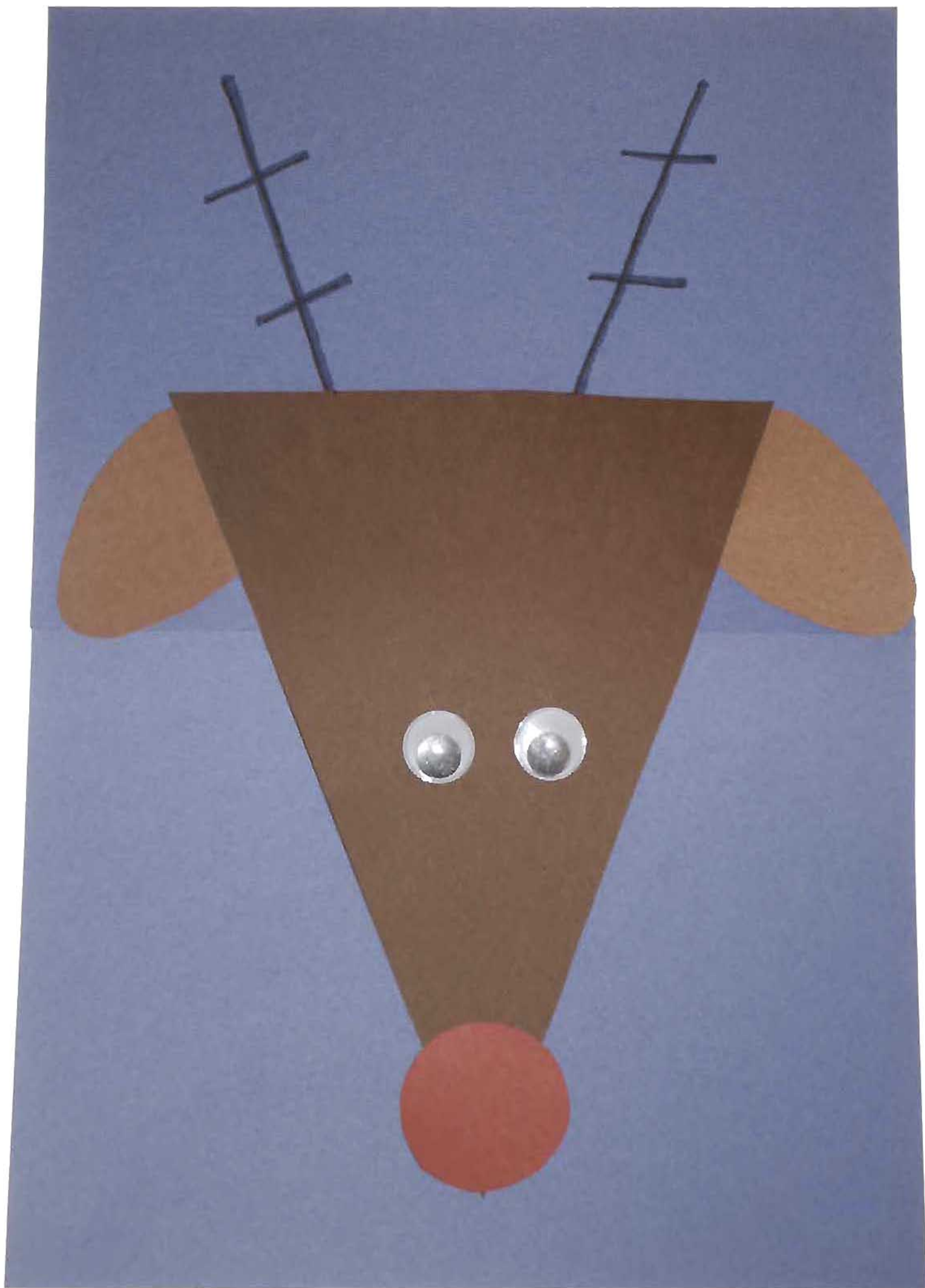
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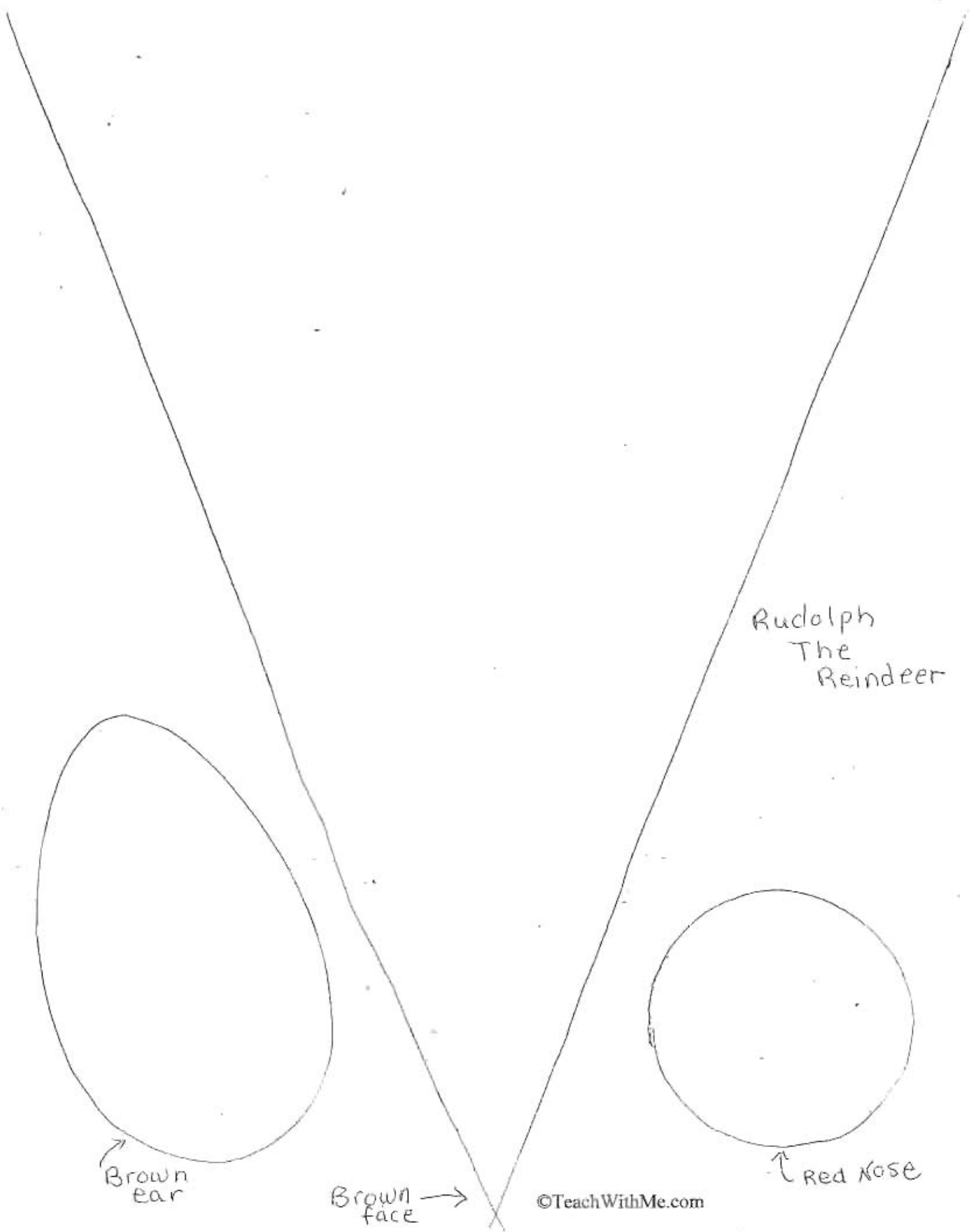


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Rudolph
The
Reindeer

Brown
ear

Brown
face

Red nose



Rudolph The Red-Nosed Shaped Reindeer
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Materials:

- Red, light and dark brown, construction paper
- Large blue construction paper
- Wiggle eyes
- Black markers
- Glue dots or Elmer's glue
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Directions:

1. Make templates or draw a master and run pieces off on a Duplo.
2. Review shapes
3. Children CUT out the shapes and ARRANGE them on the blue construction paper.
4. When they look like a reindeer they pick up each piece and GLUE it down.
5. Children make antlers with a black marker or you can trace their handprints on light brown construction paper and they or an adult can CUT them out.
6. Children GLUE them to the top of Rudolph's head.
7. Students ATTACH their wiggle eyes with glue dots or DRAW eyes on their reindeer with a black marker or crayon.
8. Review horizontal, vertical and parallel vocabulary words.
9. Children WRITE their name on the bottom of their paper.
10. Hang on a b. board or wall in the hallway.



Rudolph The Red-Nosed Painted Reindeer

Materials:

- Brown, black, and red paint
- White construction paper
- Easel
- 3 Paint brushes
- 3 plastic cups to hold paint
- paint shirt
- white reinforcement holes

Directions:

1. Write child's name in the corner of the paper and call them to the easel.
2. Child puts on a paint shirt.
3. Student paints a big brown triangle in the middle of their paper with the pointed end facing down. (See Sample.)
4. Child paints two black lines for antlers at the top of the triangle and then makes two lines going across those lines so they look like a lowercase letter t only with two lines going across. (See Sample.)
5. Children paint a big red circle at the point of the triangle and then fill it in. This is Rudolph's nose.
6. Set aside to dry.
7. When dry give the children a black marker to make two circle eyes.
8. Give them two white reinforcement holes to add "life" to the eyes by putting one in each corner of the black pupil.

December Writing Prompts

To Be Aware or not to be aware...

- December is National Awareness month. Organizers say that obliviousness is a national epidemic. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Their slogan is “Hey you! Come on, snap out of it!” They feel that people need to be more aware because being aware is related to decision making, prioritizing, and simply existing without bumping into the world around you. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Do you feel you are aware? Can you carry on a decent conversation? Do you know what’s going on in the world? Are you up on current events? Do you know who your political people (congressmen, governor, mayor, senators etc.) and lawmakers are? Could you identify them if someone showed you photographs? Are you aware of your surroundings, self, what makes your friends tick? On a 1-10 scale how do you rank your awareness with 10 being great?

National Drunk & Drugged Driving Month:

- Here’s the scenario: You’re at a party. Your friend’s older brother has a few of his college buddies over. They arrive with alcohol. You’re all underage. What do you do?
- Suppose you are of an age where you can drink, and you’re at a restaurant. One of the couples has had one too many, but still wants to drive you all home. What do you do?
- How do you say no to drugs when the “it” crowd is passing a joint around at “the” party of the year.

It’s a TIE:

- It’s National Tie Month. Design the winning tie. What does it look like? What’s it made of? Who’s wearing it? How much does it set for? Details please.

Read To Succeed!

- It’s “Read A New Book” month. What new book have you read? Write a 1 paragraph review. Who would you recommend it to? On a five-star ranking what do you rate the book?

Shine On!

- It’s rising star month. If you could truly be anything you wanted to be, including a moving star, or rock star. What would you want to be and why?
- Some people like reading horoscopes and feel they are true. Do you? Why or why not? What’s your sign? Tell me about how that does or doesn’t reflect you.

Let's Here It For Safety!

- It's Safe Toys and Gifts Month. Tell me about a favorite toy you received as a child for Christmas. What was it, why was it your favorite, do you still have it ? Details please.
- What is your favorite gift to give? What's your favorite gift to get? Details-details-details.
- Here's the scenario: You are planning a surprise birthday party for your best friend. You've all chipped in to buy her a special gift. What is it? How will you give it to her/him, how is it wrapped? Do you hide it and make them find it giving them clues to find etc. Let's hear all about it.

Hey! No fair! I Have RIGHTS!

- It's National Human Rights Month. Make a list of 10 rights you have as a student/kid!
- How do you feel when someone violates your rights? Give me an example when this has happened.

High Five For Hand Washing!

- It's National Hand Washing Awareness month. You're an elementary teacher and you need to make sure your students are not getting sick by passing germs around. Tell me 5 ways to make hand washing fun for little kids so they are more apt to wash those piggies!

The Pie's Have It!

- It's National Pie Day December 1st. What's your favorite pie. Why?
- You're in charge of the pie eating contest to raise money for your school. How are you going to pull that off? Tell me about the launch to the pies, to the winner and prizes.
- December 1st is also "Eat A Red Apple Day." If you could only eat one fruit for an entire year, what would it be and why? How would you add variety to that fruit to make it non-boring. i.e., I like apples so I'd have apple sauce, drink cider etc.

Home Sweet Home:

- December 3rd is National "Roof-Over-Your-Head" Day! What's your favorite room in the house? Why?
- You have \$10,000 to design a dream bedroom, so get started. What does it look like, what's it filled with, what kind of furniture do you have in it, what does the window look out over etc.

Ring-a-ling-a ding-a-ling!

- Dec. 12th is National Ding-A-Ling Day! It's your opportunity to hand out 6 awards! What are some things that people do that make you think they are complete ding-a-lings? Does this turn you off, drive you crazy? Let's talk!

Just Go For It!

- December 20th is National Games Day. What's your favorite game to play and why? How often do you play it? Are you good at it? Who do you play it with? This is a family game, board game, card or dice game etc. NOT a sport.
- You're in charge of Game Night at school. So tell me about it. How do you promote it, posters, invites, announcements? Who's coming? What games will you play? What will the prizes be? Details please.
- Games can also be sports! So what's your favorite to watch or play? Same questions as number one, only this time the key game is SPORTS.
- You're a Game Show Host! What TV game show are you the host of? You can make up a game show or tell me about one that's already on TV. Give us a scenario.

Ooooh this is creepy!

- December 21st is National Flashlight Day and I'm handing you yours at the museum. I just love that movie *Night In The Museum* and that's just where you've landed with 3 of your friends! The electricity's gone off, the doors are locked, the displays have come alive and all you've got is your flashlight. Ready-set-action!

Go ahead; It's OK!

- I used to ask my children: "*Where do you go when you whine and cry?*" "*To bed!*" they'd answer! But not on National Whiners Day. It's OK. Go ahead and whine all you want. In 3 paragraphs whine away about whatever you feel like whining about!

It's Time For A Change!

- It's National Festival of Enormous Changes At the Last Minute Day on December 30th. What are some of the changes big or small that you'd like to make in your life for next year?
- They say the only people who really like change are babies with a dirty diaper. Is that true for you? Do you like change or do you like to keep things the same? Why or why not?
- How do you feel when people change their minds at the last minute? Can you go with the flow or does this drive you up the wall. Give me some examples please and explain yourself in both circumstances.

Lucky or not so lucky?

- The last day of December is unlucky day! Yuk! Who'd think up a day like that and then expect us to celebrate it? Some people are simply nuts with too much time on their hands. Anyway....Finish the phrase in as many ways as you want. I feel unlucky because... then end on a positive note and flip it around with: I feel lucky because...
- Finish these sentences in detail: The unluckiest day of my life was when..., but the luckiest day of my life was when....

Merry Christmas!

- You're planning the school's Christmas Dance. Tell me all the details from the invitations and decorations to the DJ or band as well as the food and other festivities + who all is coming.
- What's your most memorable Christmas that you've ever had? Details please.
- You can travel anywhere in the world with your entire family to celebrate Christmas. Where will you go and what will you do?

December

Hot Tips and Cool Solutions



Heads Up:

- If you are going to be doing some of my projects in later months buy the materials now when they go on sale, like the following ideas:
- Metallic plastic garland that's tied together that costs .99¢ goes for as little as .10¢ I buy red, green or gold. The red is perfect for Valentine's or Clifford Day, The gold or green works for St. Patty's Day.
- Simply cut it in lengths that will make a necklace for your students and knot it together with matching yarn. Depending on the length of the garland, I usually can get three necklaces from one garland.
- The wooden bead garland is perfect for my students to string. Again the red and white beads I bag up for February the gold and green I save for March. If they have purple which has become a popular Christmas color, I buy that and save it for October.
- If you plan on doing my April shower cloud activity ([Click here in Spring Art + Activity Book Pix](#)) you'll want to buy some silver tinsel. This is also usually only .99¢ a box and goes for as little as .10¢ It makes the perfect dripping RAIN! And looks great for fairy wands taped at the end of a star!



Wrap It Up!

- I wrap the bottom of a big box as well as the lid so that you can remove it.
- Top it off with an extra large bow.
- Cut a circle the size of a paper plate in the top of the lid in the front of the bow. Weight it down with an old phone book.
- Allow your students to set it against a wall and toss bean bags into the hole. How many can they get in?
- Makes a nice Tummy Tubby Time Activity or Game for your Christmas Party too.



Buddy Up:

- So that my students aren't always choosing their same friend I sometimes mix things up and have them pick a partner in a different, but fun way.
- For Christmas I toss 20 bows in a Santa Hat. They are 10 different patterns or colors. Their partner is the one that matches theirs.
- I also can find individually wrapped lifesavers at this time. I put in 20 wrapped lifesavers in the Santa Hat; there are 10 different colors/flavors including white.
- Their partner is the matching Life Saver. Go find and work with your Flavorful Friend. It's also a super duper-shutter upper as they suck on their sweet treat. No biting allowed! ☺



Bingo Dot Game:

- <http://www.crayola.com/free-coloring-pages/print/christmas-bingo-board-no1-coloring-page/>
- Run off these 5 then change 15 cards to make a class set of 20 to have a fun game to play at your Christmas party. Copy them on colored construction paper and laminate them.



An Inexpensive Gift For Your Students, or a gift they can make and give.

- Buy a bag of the 1 ½ inch **CLEAR** flat stones from Hobby Lobby at 50% off. Use the online coupon or wait 'til that particular item is on sale.
- Then shrink seasonal clip art or buy wrapping paper that has a picture on it that size. This picture will go behind the glass and show through and become a pin. I use snowmen and have also made Winnie the Pooh. Here's how.
- I scanned clipart for Winnie the Pooh and made it the size to fit the pin. I traced a circle around it and cut it out.
- Spray it with adhesive and stick it to the back of the stone. Cut out another circle out of tag board the same size and brush it with glue.
- Stick it to the back of the picture. Put a pin back on the back of the tag board using E6000 glue.
- You can make these with tiny flowers for Mother's Day, hearts for Valentine's Day, Pumpkins for Halloween etc. whatever season or Holiday you want to give them for. You can also put your student's photo in them. It just looks sooooo cool and is the sweetest little pin! Enjoy. ☺



What's In The Stocking?

- A fun game for your Christmas Party or just as a nice way to end the day during circle time is to put 10 items in a Christmas Stocking.
- Children pass the stocking around the circle and have 5-10 seconds, depending on the amount of time you decide to feel as many things as they can in the sock.
- After everyone has had a chance to feel you call on students to give you an answer.
- Write them numerically on the board.
- If your class gets them all award a prize.
- Older students can be given 15 seconds and a paper to write down as many as they can as soon as they pass the stocking to the next person, with a prize being awarded to the one with the most correct.

Make A Crystal Rock Garden:

- It's great science and oh so pretty to form real crystals in your classroom.
- You'll be able to click on the recipe link after the article.



*******Tissue Paper Lights***

- If you're a faithful reader, you'll remember how I shared in October, hanging orange and black tissue paper in a drooping affect from the fluorescent light tiles in an ABAB pattern.
- Do it this month in RED & GREEN!



A Sweet Treat:

- Get 2 large cans of hot chocolate and some mini snack baggies.
- As a math extension have children measure and fill them with the hot chocolate powder and seal them.
- Give your students some Christmas stickers to decorate their baggies with. I also give them a name label.
- Tuck them in your students' handmade Christmas cards for that extra sweet touch.



A Sweet Treat

- Relatively inexpensive and fun gifts for my students to make with me to give as a little gift for their parents or grandparents are chocolate spoons.
- You can send a note home to ask the parents to donate .50¢ for supplies or ask if a few parents are willing to donate 2 bags of Nestle Toll House chocolate morsels.
- I have a can of Crisco Vegetable shortening at home, and I ask our cafeteria if I can have 2 spoons for each of my students.
- I also have saran wrap and curling ribbon in my class supplies so I'm all set.
- I have a mini crock pot that is especially made for simmering potpourri. But you can melt this in a microwave too.
- I dump the morsels in there and stir til they are totally melted.
- I call the children over one at a time and they get to dip 2 spoons into the melted chocolate. We dip them three times and count to ten between each dip.
- I twist and swirl them in the air so they don't drip and lay them on wax paper. It doesn't matter who gets what spoon because they're all the same.
- When they are dry, I again work one-on-one with the children. We put them in saran wrap and tie them with curling ribbon.
- We tuck two in a snack baggie and tuck in this poem that I wrote. Instant "I love you" gift for Xmas or whatever. And they are mmmm! MMMM! Delicious.
- My daughter loves them so much she eats them like a lollipop. I dip hers 5 times and add a drop of food flavoring to the batches I make especially for her. ☺
- I also use this recipe for dipping strawberries. It's the best. Chill the fruit before dipping and make sure it's thoroughly dry. You will be the hit of the party! Enjoy!

Here's the Recipe:

- 2 cups (12 oz pkg.) Nestle Toll House Milk Chocolate Morsels
- 2 tablespoons Crisco vegetable shortening
- 24 spoons or small chilled dry strawberries or other fresh fruit, but strawberries are the proven favorites!
- Baking sheet covered with waxed paper.
- Microwave morsels and shortening in medium, uncovered, microwave-safe bowl on medium to high heat for 1 minute. Stir. Morsels may retain some of their shape. If necessary, microwave an additional 12-15 seconds stirring 'til melted.
- I use the potpourri pot and it keeps things liquid and does not over cook so it's perfect for everyone to get a chance without having to reheat as the chocolate cools relatively fast.
- Dip spoons/fruit into the melted morsels 2 to 3 times.
- Place on prepared baking sheet. Cover with another sheet of waxed paper or aluminum foil, refrigerate until set.
- You can also do pretzels, nuts, dried fruit (dried pineapple and apricots are yummy!) mini cookies and pound cake is great too!

- For more great recipes check out **Toll House at VeryBestBaking.com**

Here's the poem to tuck in with your spoons!

This is a sweet treat I made for you.

Stir your coffee, tea or cocoa—that's all you do.

Stir and stir until the chocolate melts off the spoon.

So you can warm yourself up some chilly afternoon.

I made this with lots of TLC

It's a special gift to you from me!

Love, _____



*****Liquid to a Solid Gross Motor Game:**

- I make a white square (ice cube) and glue the typed word solid on it. I also make a light blue circle (puddle) and glue the word liquid on it.
- These are 2 of my December & January word wall words and a fun way to reinforce them.
- During Music and Movement time, I let the children jump and wiggle around and then silently hold up one of the shapes. If it's the ice cube they have to freeze into a solid; if it's the circle they have to melt into a liquid puddle on the floor.
- They love this game and dissolve into all sorts of giggles. I vary the speed and how often I do it and have them freezing and melting slowly and rapidly.
- It really "warms" them up and gets the "wiggles" out!
- I also do another version: Put some gentle music on so they can dance and prance like a snowflake. When the music stops they freeze and then slowly melt onto the floor until you restart the music.
- I've posted a MELT and FREEZE version in my [Behavior Modification article](#) on the blog. **Check out the link to print copies of the posters.**



Special Super-Sized Decoration:

- I bet you hadn't thought of using those adorable plug-in blow up air machine decorations that you see outside, as a decoration for your classroom. Well think again!
- They are an inexpensive and quick way to decorate! I bought a Christmas Snoopy after Christmas for only \$8.
- He fits wonderfully in the corner of my classroom and was the perfect "greeter" in the hallway for our party.
- The children enjoy him, and the light inside offers a soft glow during quiet time.
- My fellow teacher Anita gave me Frosty the Snowman that I use for January.



A Because “You’re Sweet” Ornament:

- After Christmas the mini candy canes are everywhere for as much as 90% off.
- Since we won’t be eating them, I buy 50 of them and store them for a quick kid’s craft for next year.
- Have your students TRACE the shape of the candy cane so that it looks like the outside edge of a heart, then cut out a red construction paper heart and GLUE two candy canes, one on each side, to make a sweet ornament for their tree.
- Glue a green bow with a loop at the top.
- They can write their name and the date in the middle of the heart with a green marker. ☺



Shapely Presents:

- Wrap a circle, triangle, rectangle and square piece of tag board with Christmas wrapping paper.
- Paste a sticky bow to the top of each one.
- Hang it somewhere in your room.
- Send a note home to parents that you’d like their child to go through magazines and catalogs looking for pictures of things that are shaped like circles, triangles, rectangles and squares. i.e, a clock is a circle, a toy teepee tent is a triangle etc.
- Their child needs to bring in at least one item of each shape to glue on the Christmas gift of that shape. Bonus points if it’s really something they’d like to have!

I’m Independent! I can zip my coat!

- As an incentive to getting my students independent, and because it’s one of my report card standards, I made up “*I Can Zip! I’m Independent!*” **Certificates**. You can print one off and make them for your kids too! Click on the link after the article. It’s amazing what a child will do for a special certificate. I print them off on pretty colored paper; put an impressive looking gold-foil seal on the star, and another little sticker somewhere else on the certificate.
- I print their name with a metallic marker and the children think it’s “way cool”!
- I post one in the hallway on our *Wall of Fame* with a list of everyone’s name who’s earned one.
- Another little prize you can make is cut a 2 x 4 inch piece of rectangular foam.
- Hot glue a pop top pull tab to the top, draw a zipper below it with black marker, or hot glue a row of plastic that will look like a zipper from a sheet of those plastic square needle point sheets.

- Peel and stick a magnet strip on the back. It looks like a little zipper.
- These are quick and inexpensive and easy to make.
- My students enjoy getting them as a little award. I write a tiny congratulations note that they can stick to their fridge with the magnet.



Awesome Easel Painted Christmas Trees:

- To help increase upper body strength and because it's just plain fun. (My students LOVE it!) We easel paint something every month.
- For some reason making a triangle is still especially difficult for them.
- I kept having my little ones make a rectangular tree or paint the entire paper green 'til I simply started them out with the 2 "slides" at the top, and wahla! Success.
- Now all the trees are lovely triangles! Seems no one has a problem guiding their paintbrush down the "slide"
- Simply make that upside down V at the top of the page (leave room for a star if you want them to make one later) and you too will have budding Michaelangelos.
- To make decorating their tree when it's dry easier, I bought round sponge-tipped brushes! I set it up as a center.
- I have a different brush for each color. They decide what color ornaments they want. A little dab, they press and wahla! Instant decorated tree.
- This way I only have to have two colors at the easel (green and brown (trunk) and the ornaments come out a perfect circle!
- I've also tried bingo dot markers, but they run because the children press too hard and the colors are not as vibrant.



Count Down To New Year

Ringin' it in right!

- Since little ones have no real concept of time, I help them with that, and reinforce their counting and subtraction skills while they are on vacation with a paper bell they make to take home and hang in the kitchen or in their bedroom.
- I follow it up with a note in my newsletter telling the parents about it, as well as one attached to the bell.
- I use the bell from the **December Pencil Toppers** in the [December Art and Activity Book](#). but you can simply make one any size you want, and cut red and green paper strips for a chain. I use an ABAB pattern because that's one of our report card standards.
- We count the days that they will be gone from school on vacation, put a sticker on the link that is Christmas, and one that is New Years.

- I write “Ringing in the New Year” on the bell for them to TRACE, along with the number date of the New Year.
- They take a paper chain off each day they are home ‘til they are all gone and it’s Happy New Year!



Gingerbread Play House

- I ask an appliance store a few months ahead of time if they will save a washer or dryer box for me when their shipments come in. They have always said yes. I leave them my number and they give me a call. I store it flat, ‘til I need it in December.
- I spray it with sticky adhesive spray outside so my students can decorate it with their “shingle”.
- I give them each a brown 24 x 12 sheet of construction paper + run offs of a variety of colored shapes for them to cut out and decorate with stickers and crayons.
- Before hand I cut out windows and a door.
- We cover the sides of the house with these shingles.
- The roof is made from the flaps of the boxes. I tape them together in a slant. I cut out multi colored 12 inch circles and glue them on for roof shingles.
- We set a timer so that each group of 3-4 children has a turn playing or reading in the gingerbread house. I keep it up through January.
- For a quick project, I’ve also covered it with brown paper that we use to cover our bulletin boards. Then my children just cut out large multi-colored shapes (candy) that I spray with sticky adhesive.



Cookie Recipe Book:

- Make a Class Cookie Recipe Book as a great Christmas present.
- I have my students color the cover.
- I buy 2 for a dollar potholders at the Dollar Store and paint my students handprint brown, press it to the potholder and include their gingerbread ornament, the potholder and cookbook all wrapped in tissue paper for a great gift for their mommy.



Help For Dry Skin: I’m allergic to so many cosmetics and lotions including soap! I have eczema so winter really plays havoc with my skin. I have an identical twin Kathie and she just turned me on to ***Gold Bond Ultimate Healing Skin Therapy Lotion.***

It runs \$9 a 14 oz. bottle and I could take a bath in it! I get the one with ALOE in it and I LOVE it. So if you look like you're cousins with alligators and can compete with snow flakes for being flakey you may want to try it.



Chapped Lips:

- My little ones are always licking their lips outside and even have chapped skin above their lips, so I keep a big jar of Vaseline with Q-tips in my cupboard.
- When they complain that they are hurting, or I see that their lips are cracked and even bleeding I'll offer them a Q-tip dabbed in Vaseline.
- I also watch for after Christmas sales when 12-pack gift packs of Chapstick go on sale. And I'll buy them for my students.
- I run off name sticker-labels and I have them keep their Chapstick in their pocket.
- My room helper Cheryl buys each of my students their own Chapstick from Avon and gives it to them for a Christmas gift. They think that's "way cool".
- I print out a sheet of address labels and we stick them to the side.



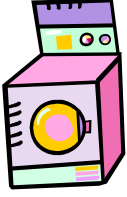
Patterned Writing:

- Now that my Y5's know how to write their name, I want them to slow down, and take more pride in their work.
- They also know what an ABAB pattern is, so I have them pick a red and green crayon and on their special keepsake projects I have them write their name in an ABAB pattern. It really adds pizzazz to their work and they LOVE writing their name in this fun way!



Poker Chip Christmas Tree:

- They're cheap, fun and colorful and make a great fine motor skill.
- Run off a class set of the tree grid on green construction paper and laminate them.
- You'll have to fill in the top chip and the bottom row as the copier cuts the edges off, but there's plenty of room on the construction paper.
- Put a bowl of chips on each table and have children cover their paper, or make it a game and have them roll the dice and put that many chips on their paper.



Warm Them Up!

- I tell parent to toss their child's outerwear mittens, jacket, snow pants and all in the dryer on high for about 5 minutes before they go outside to play for a nice toasty warm feeling.



Cub Rubs: Give your little cub a rub and reinforce report card standards at the same time. Here's how: Write a number, letter, or draw a shape with your index finger on their back. Ask them to identify it, then "erase" it with your hand (rubbing it out) MMMMM feels wonderful. Then they can do it to you too. ☺ Practicing their writing skills! What a fun way to learn.



Shaving Cream: The perfect inside "snow"!

- Get yourself to the Dollar Store and buy a couple of cans of pure fun!
- Did you know that shaving cream will get all that icky glue off your desks and tables?
- It will make your kids hands feel soft! Your room will smell great. Your students will not only be learning, but they'll be having a really fun time doing so!
- Here's how:
- Shake up the can.
- Give them each a big dollop.
- They spread it out on their table top/desk making a white board.
- I ask them to make the different shapes, letters and numbers, and I whole-group assess as we go.
- We finish with having them write their name.
- I give them one more dollop and they play for another 5 minutes til friction has gotten most of the shaving cream to disappear.
- We discuss this science phenomenon and I have them help each other "erase" via friction the remaining shaving cream off the tables.
- I clean up with Lysol and a damp cloth and we make a trip to the bathroom to wash our silky soft hands.
- We revisit this activity in January too. The children LOVE it!



Gingerbread Unit:

Let's Play Candy Land!

- I play Candy Land with my students as a 15 minute end-of-the-day activity with my students during my gingerbread theme day(s). It's amazing how many of them have never played it.
- I have a class set so everyone can play. I simply found them for as cheap as a dollar at garage sales, they're often offered as "door busters" at Christmas and I've put them on my donation list at the beginning of the year.
- I have 5 games. I kept only two boxes. One holds the boards, the other 5 baggies of pieces.
- It's perfect for color and counting review and fits right in with our theme. It also reinforces many of our report card "life-skill" standards.



Let's Play With Play Dough

- I make up a batch of cinnamon-scented Play-dough tinted brown to make as a Free Play Center activity on gingerbread theme day.
- I also make sure that we have Play-Dough time as a 15-minute whole group activity during the month of December to make "cookies".



The elves are listening!

- I get a lot of "Quiet" mileage out of listening for Santa's bells. I tell them the true story that when I was a little girl my grama told me to listen for Santa's elves spying on us.
- We couldn't see them, but they could see us! And if we were really quiet, we just might hear a jingle or two of their bells.
- I ask our secretaries if they would please take a moment out of their busy day to carry a jingle bell around in their pocket, so that when they are running hither and

yon delivering bus passes and what not they can give a little jingle when they pass my door.

- I also have a sleigh bell strip hanging outside my door and fellow teachers know of my secret and when they are out and about they give that a little nudge so it jingles too. It is instant silence in my classroom followed by: *"It's the elves! They're watching us."* I say: *"I hope they're catching you being good!"*
- I mention the bells on the elves shoes in my letter from Santa. .



Letter From Santa.

- This is also a big thrill for my little ones. Since it involves "reading" and "communication" my school picks up the tab for postage.
- The day after the letters are delivered, it is an absolute high for me to hear how excited my little ones are that they got a letter from Santa. They feel soooo special.
- I buy my Christmas paper with Santa on it 50%-75% off after Christmas along with Christmas cards also with Santa on it.
- I sign Love, Santa in red or green marker.
- Make address labels with a picture of Santa in the corner. Address: *Candy Cane Lane, North Pole.*
- On the back I have another sticker: *A letter from Santa.* This one I have a picture of Santa on his sleigh.
- I bought a stamp with Santa checking his list, as I make reference to that in the letter. I also teach the song *"Santa Claus Is Coming To Town"*.
- Wal-Mart, Hobby Lobby and Michaels all sell the mini 2x3 inch zip lock baggies. Hobby Lobby has them at the check out for \$1.99 for 100. They are called self-sealing jewelry bags.
- Mix a tube of blue glitter with a cup of dry oatmeal and put a teaspoon in each baggie. Children enjoy sprinkling it on their lawn.
- Include it in your card/letter. "Santa will see the sparkles from the sky and Rudolph will smell the oats."
- You can also include a coloring page.
- If you want to make a letter check out my [blog article](#) to print one for a boy or girl.



Christmas Cards:

- When Christmas cards are at 80% off I buy several boxes and keep them at my writing center.
- It is my students' responsibility to write at least one family card to be included with their gift.

- I also have stickers and red and green markers for them to add a bit more flair to this activity.
- Word cards with LOVE, MERRY CHRISTMAS, To: MOM & DAD etc. Help with this center.
- As soon as they're done they check off their name, and put their "mail" with their gift bag stuff so that I know they have completed this task and their work is safely tucked in their take home gift bag.



Laminate the Cards and make game puzzles!

- Make a Xerox copy of the card.
- Cut off the front of the cards.
- Laminate them
- Cut it in 6 rectangular pieces.
- Number the pieces 1-6
- Put each card with its Xeroxed picture mat in a baggie.
- Children play with a partner and take turns rolling the dice.
- If they roll a 1 they put that numbered puzzle piece down.
- The first one to get their puzzle completed is the winner.



Christmas Necklaces:

- The wooden bead garland that goes on sale for as much as 90% after Christmas is perfect for Christmas necklaces! I cut it apart and bag up the beads for stringing.
- If I have plenty for December I sort the red and white for Valentine's Day and the Green for St. Patty's Day necklaces!
- The glittery flat-plastic garland that has candy canes, snowflakes, etc. on it, is perfect cut apart and made into little pins.
- Just put a tiny gold safety pin at the tip. My students love to wear them.
- Hobby Lobby sells this garland for all of the Holidays.
- I have also had my students string this little pin as the center "bead" for their necklace.



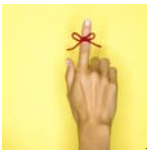
Gifts:

- I buy my gifts for my room mommy helpers and aides after Christmas when things are 50% off and put them along with the prizes etc. for my students in a box labeled party for next year, and store it with my Christmas stuff.



Plan Ahead:

- I send ***At Home Helper bags*** for Christmas Crafts home over Thanksgiving break. So that bows that I need tied, and stuff I need cut out or assembled for December, is already to go when children come back from break. Mom's who are my volunteers said they have the time, because they have off because their children are home and can do more.
- I keep a December "To Do" list in my November file so I don't forget.



Don't Forget:

- If I didn't find the crafts I needed on sale after Christmas and there's still things I need for next year, I make a list of what I don't have packed away and will need to buy and put the "don't forget to get" list in my November file folder, along with the above note.
- Then I don't have to go through a zillion boxes wondering what I do and don't have.



- ***Cotton Balls are a cheap substitute for white pom poms.***



- ***Hot chocolate is a nice earn-a-treat for your students in December and January. ☺ I let mine stir theirs with a candy cane.***



- ***Christmas Crack Ups:*** To increase verbal acuity and verbal recall I tell jokes to my students and encourage them to retell them to their parents. So that they are more inclined to do so, I send a note home to parents giving them a

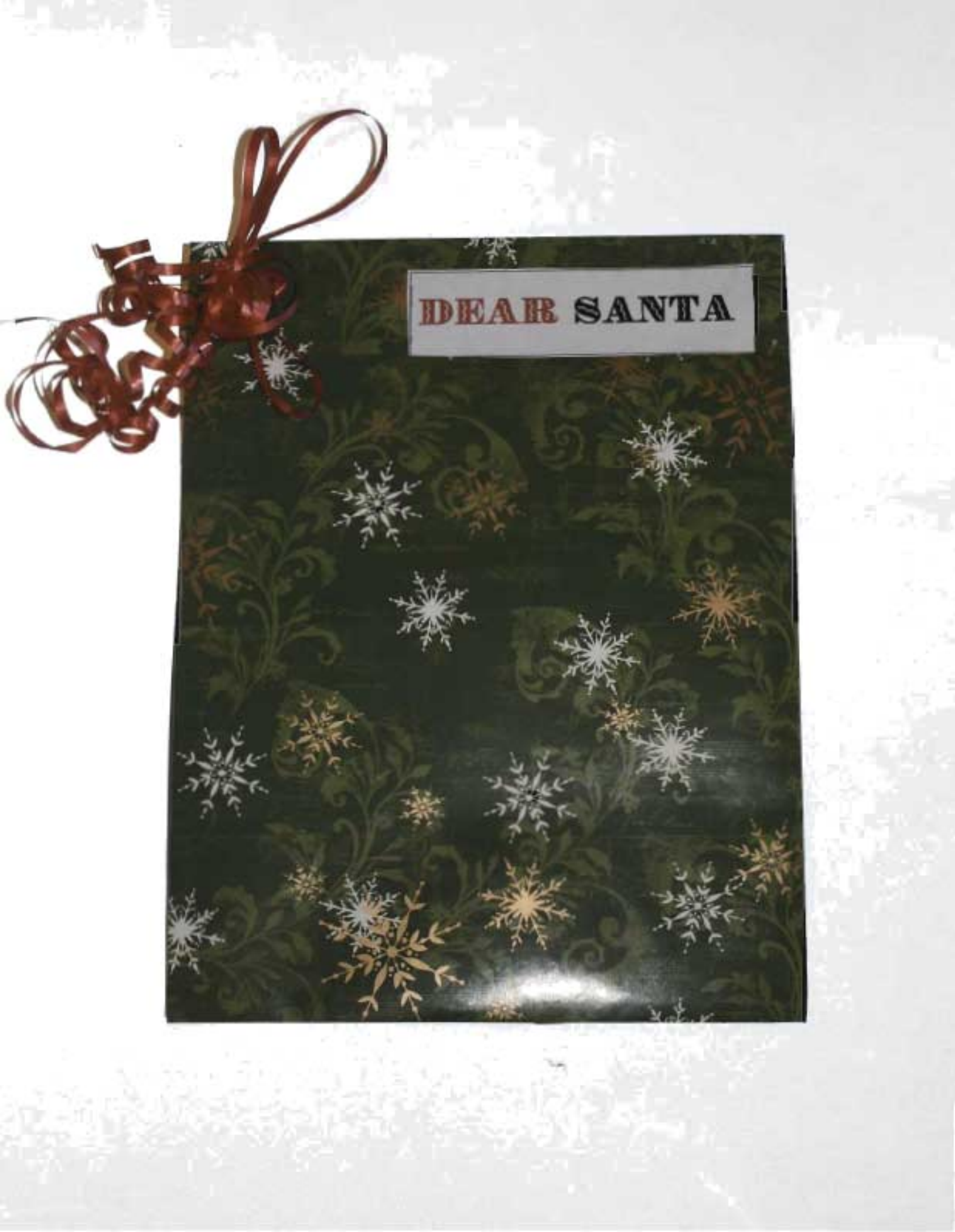
list of the jokes and asking them to ask their child the “Joke of the Day.” Sometimes my students’ punch lines are even more hilarious. Gotta Joke or Riddle? Please share it with us. ☺




- ***An” I Love You” Gift You Never Open:*** Was something that was going around when I was in college. I made a bunch into magnets and gave them to friends and family. I revamped the poem for my Y5’s. For a quick and easy craft gift here’s what you do: Buy the little wrapped metallic package ornaments that they sell at Dollar Stores and Hobby Lobby. They come in several sizes and colors. Run off a copy of the poem on white copy paper, cut in strips, have the children glue poem to red or green construction paper. Put a piece of self-stick, magnet strip on the back of the package and glue dot it to the right or left side of the poem. Children write their name and “I love you” on the back of their paper strip.

Poem: This is a very special gift, one that you must never open. It’s simply a reminder of my love for you that fills the box inside.

Whew! Hope you’re all a buzz with some wonderful things you can do with your students/children to make this season a very merry and happy one!



DEAR SANTA



Dear Santa,

Dear Santa,

I have been behaving.

I have been behaving.

I would like a

I would like a

doll

and

game

for Christmas.

for Christmas.

Thank you.

Thank you.



Fancy Dear Santa Letter

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Materials:

- Wrapping paper
- Stapler
- Curling ribbon / bow
- Red and green markers
- **Optional:** Tag board

Directions:

Prep:

- Run off the masters
- Rough-cut tags so children each get one.
- Pre-cut wrapping paper and tag board if you're using it.

The next day...

1. Ask children what they want for Christmas and make a list of things on the board so that they can copy it. They will need to choose only TWO things to write on their paper.
2. Children TRACE then WRITE the sentence, filling in what two things they are asking Santa for.
3. I have my children write with green and red markers in an ABAB pattern.
4. Children wrap their piece of tag board and put a bow on it.
5. You don't have to use tag board if you don't want to. You can simply cut sheets of wrapping paper the size of your copy paper and staple it to the corner of a student's paper. The new thicker wrapping paper works nicely.
6. If you'd like it to look better when a child flips their page open, and be less flimsy too, cut 2 sheets of wrapping paper for each student and have them glue the pages back-to-back.
7. Children cut out their "Dear Santa" tag and attach it to their cover with a piece of curling ribbon.



Dear Santa,

I have been behaving.

I would like a

and

for Christmas.

Thank you.

DEAR SANTA

DEAR SANTA

DEAR SANTA

DEAR SANTA

DEAR SANTA

DEAR SANTA

DEAR SANTA

DEAR SANTA

DEAR SANTA



There was a man at Christmas time
who laughed with a Ho -Ho-Ho Oh!

S-A-N-T-A

S-A-N-T-A

S-A-N-T-A

And SANTA was his name Oh!



Or...

There was a man at Christmas time
who gave us lots of presents.

S-A-N-T-A

S-A-N-T-A

S-A-N-T-A

And SANTA was his name Oh!





Directions:

1. Run off the Santa cards on white construction paper.
2. Color them with markers or crayons.
3. Laminate the cards.
4. Attach white pom-poms to the hats with glue dots.
5. Add wiggle eyes if you like.
6. Add a piece of scratchy Velcro to the backs of the cards if you're using a flannel board, or a piece of magnet strip if you're using a white board, or simply put the cards in a chalk sill.
7. When you sing the song take the letter away and clap in its place.
8. I use the song as a math extension and say 5- I ='s_____ etc.
9. I also reinforce spelling and reading the word Santa and ask the children to tell me what letter I'm taking away.
10. I do a bingo song each month.
11. For all of the bingo songs check out. <http://bit.ly/h5ZxiZ>



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A

There was a man at Christmas time
who gave us lots of presents
S-A-N-T-A
S-A-N-T-A
S-A-N-T-A
And Santa was his name oh!



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There was a man at Christmas time
who gave us lots of presents

S-A-N-T-A

S-A-N-T-A

S-A-N-T-A

And Santa was his name oh!



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I run Santa off on white paper and color him.
Then I laminate him and hot glue a white pom
pom to his hat.

He looks cute with wiggle eyes too.

Quick Bulletin Boards Or Door Decorations

With everything that a teacher has to do in December, one barely has time to slap up a bulletin board or door decoration, so I've dreamed up some quick and easy ideas with awesome results. On party day have a parent take them down and send them home. They make great keepsakes!

Educational Connections for these ideas: My students discuss the vocabulary word **SYMBOL** and we discuss what kinds of things we see in December that are symbols of Christmas. We also discuss the colors of Christmas. Besides reinforcing the fine motor skills of cutting and gluing; I'm also working on spatial directions and placement with them. We review the various **shapes** of these things and as a math extension, they measure the ribbon and wrap with a ruler. We discuss and review that math vocabulary as well: length, width, height etc.



Paper Plate Peppermints: Blow up your student's school picture and mount it in the center of an 8" paper plate that they've striped with a red marker. Cover with clear cellophane that you can buy at The Dollar Store, tie with red and green curling ribbon and have your students curl with a Popsicle stick and you have these sweet treats!

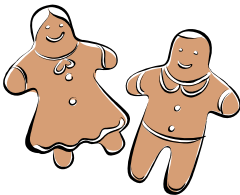
Possible titles: " _____ 's class is worth a mint!" " _____ has a very sweet class!"



Button Ornaments: Offer your students a variety of colored bulbs and have them glue buttons them across the stripe. Make it a math extension by having them follow a pattern and count as they go making a specific set or group, or have them complete a math equation in their heads: 2 buttons + 3 more = 5 buttons. Glue aluminum foil to the top and add their photo. **Possible titles:** " _____ 's class is all decked out and cute as a button!" " _____ 's class is having a ball learning in _____." (Young fives, kindergarten, 1st grade, room 101)



Gift Wrapped: Cut rectangular pieces of tag board and have children wrap them in Christmas paper, add curling ribbon. Blow up their school picture on the copy machine, or take a picture of them wearing a Santa hat and have them glue it to the back of the gift box. When you're done with the bulletin board you can send home with the children as a keepsake card. **Possible titles:** " 's class is all wrapped up in learning." "The greatest gift is LOVE!"



Gingerbread Joy: Run off a copy of the gingerbread man on light brown construction paper. Take a photo of each child or enlarge their school picture. Cut them into circles and have students glue them to the face of their gingerbread man. Have children decorate with crayons, markers, and stickers. Use white puffy paint for the squiggly frosting. Children can use tooth picks to dab this on if you don't think they can handle manipulating an entire bottle. Write their name across the tummy with glitter glue, or sprinkle glitter over Elmer's glue. **Possible titles:** " has a class that's sugar and spice and everything nice!" "We're so smart! We're learning to read words like run, man, and can!"



Tree-mendous Work! Cut out a huge green pine tree from green bulletin board paper and hang it on a wall in the hallway. Keep it simple and make it just a large triangle. Put a brown rectangle trunk on the bottom. Using black or red die-cut letters have a caption that reads: " 's class does Tree-mendous work!" Then all month long you can hang up student work that is extra special right on the tree. If you want it to look like you're decorating the tree as well, have your students glue their school photo to a paper Christmas tree bulb and write their name on it. Then when you hang up their paper, put their ornament in the corner of the paper, so that people can also see a picture of whose work it is and the tree will look like it is decorated with ornaments too!





Diane

Large ornaments.

Directions:

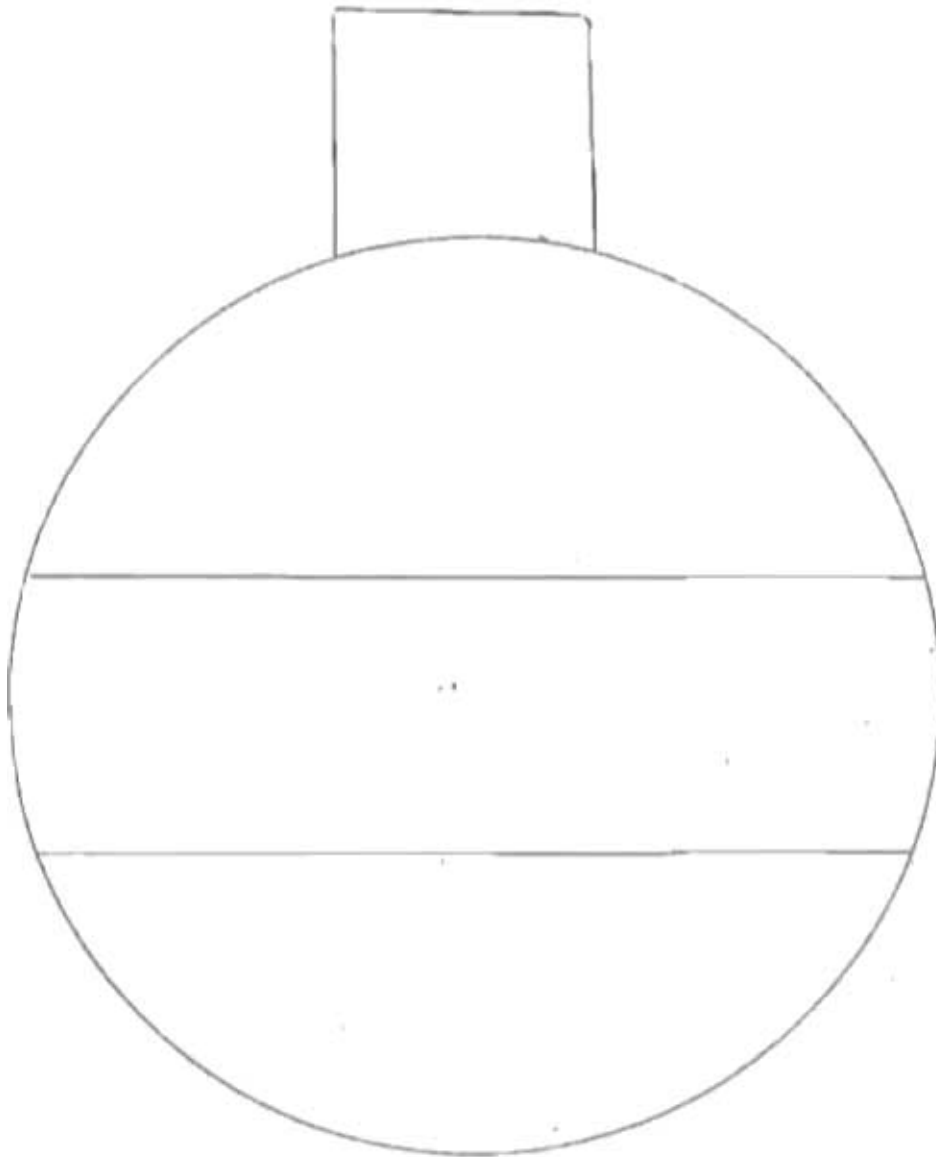
Run off on a variety of colored construction paper.

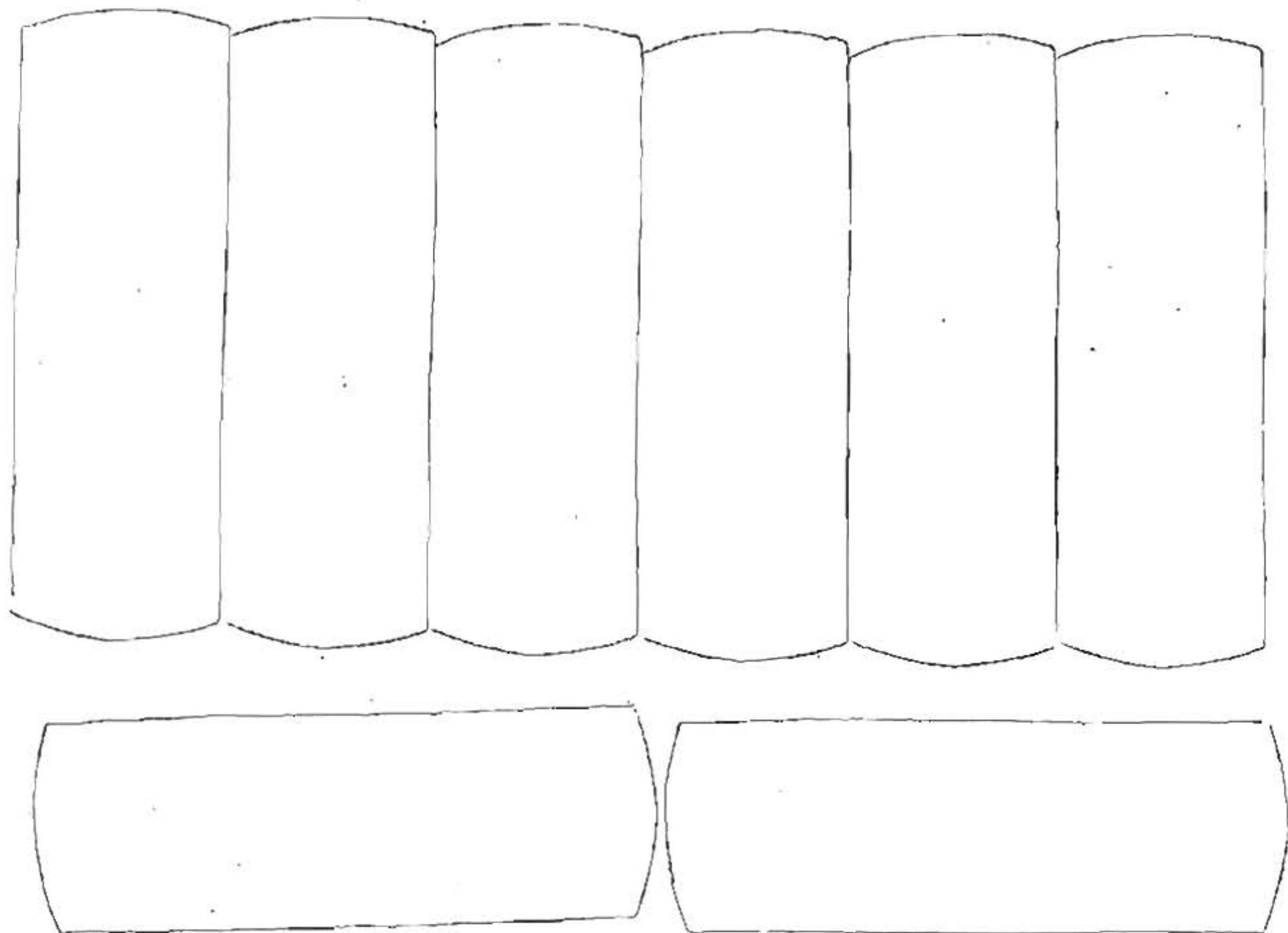
Cut out squares of aluminum foil. Wrap & glue to the top.

Glue student photo to the foil.

Glue stripe to the center.

Glue buttons or other decorations to the stripe.









Gingerbread Ornament

Run off on brown construction paper.

Children decorate.

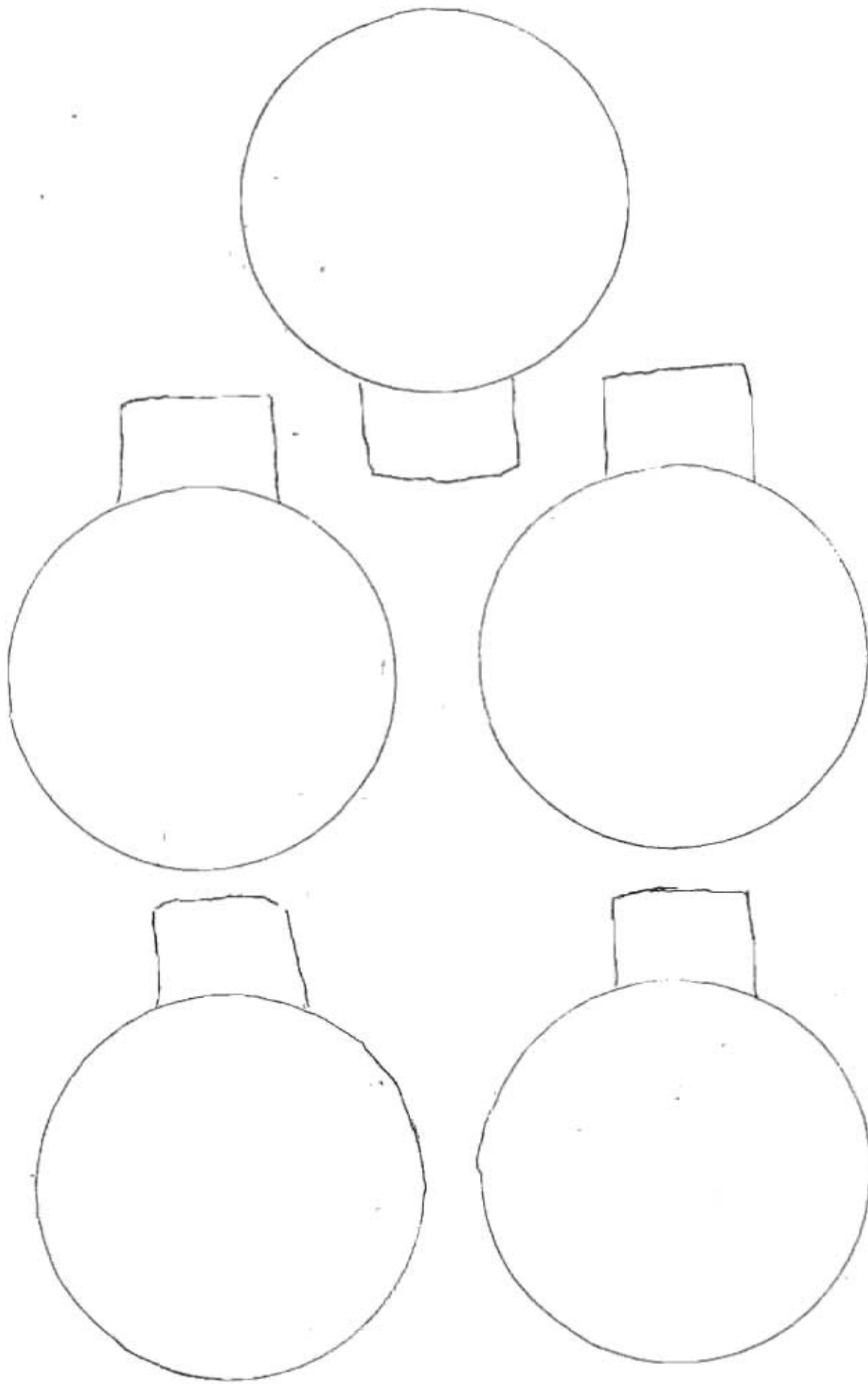
Use white puffy paint for the "frosting squiggles".

Write the child's name in puffy paint.

Glue student's photo to the face.

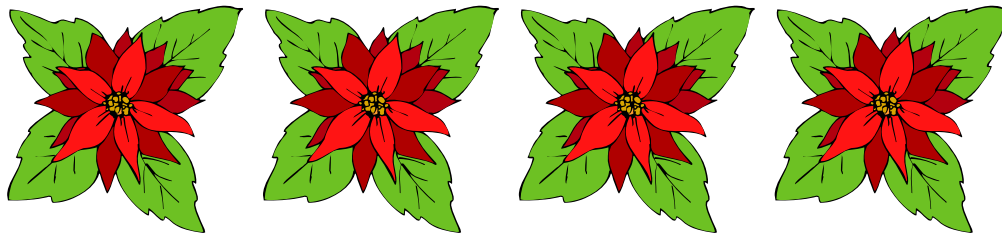






Mini ornaments to decorate Tree-mendous work tree.
Run off on a variety of colored construction paper.
Cut out squares of aluminum foil. Glue to top.
Glue student photo to ball and write student's names underneath.





Poinsettia In A Pot

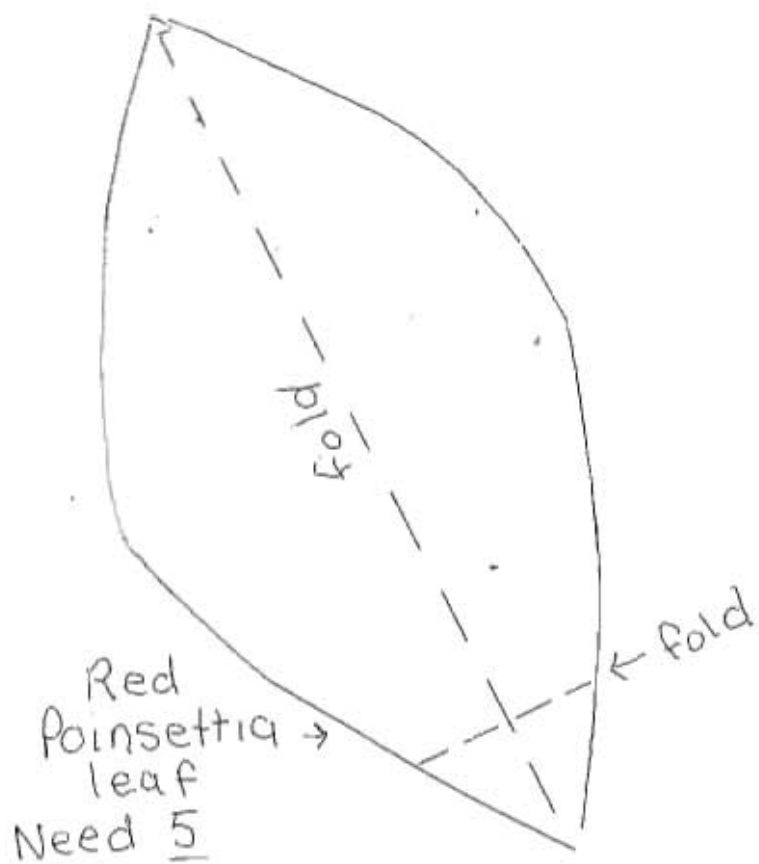
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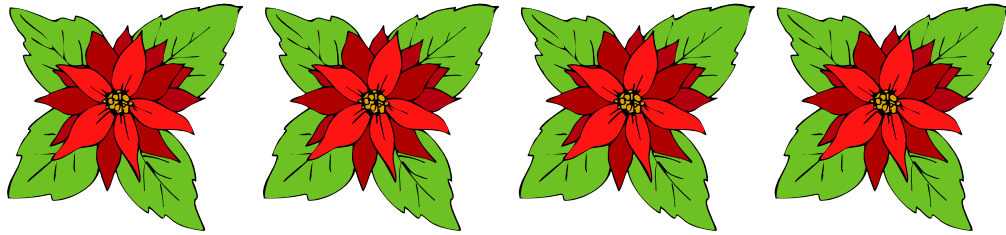
Materials:

- Blue, red, and green construction paper
- Scissors,
- Glue sticks
- Glue dots (You can use Aileen's tacky glue, which is cheaper, but it will take 24 hours to dry and is messier. If you opt to use glue, then add toothpicks to the list so the children can dab a bit of glue on the tooth pick and then put it on the back of the rhinestone, or put dots of the glue on the middle of their poinsettia and then put their rhinestones on the dots.
- Yellow, flat-backed rhinestones
- Gold foil wrapping paper or aluminum foil
- Gold Christmas ribbon or a stick on bow or curling ribbon
- Green, red and black markers.

Directions:

- Make a template master and then run off copies on a Duplo and have children cut out their pieces, or make templates of the pieces and have children trace them and cut out their pieces.
- Children GLUE their gold pot on first.
- Children add red details to their red leaves and green details to their green leaves with the red and green markers.
- Children FOLD their red poinsettia leaves in half and crease them with their finger nail. After they are folded in half then they fold the tips.
- Students put glue on the back of the tips and paste them to the blue paper above the pot. The tips of the leaves should butt together.
- Children put glue on the backs of their 4 green leaves and slide them under the red leaves.
- Using glue dots or tacky glue, students put five yellow flat-backed rhinestones in a circle in the center of their poinsettia.
- Tie a bow, or have students tie a bow if they are older, and staple it to the middle of the pot.
- Children WRITE their name on the bottom of the pot with a black marker.
- Hang the poinsettia pots back to back from the ceiling with paperclips, or hang on the wall in the hall.





A charming story is told of Pepita, a poor Mexican girl who had no gift to present the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve Services one night in Mexico. As Pepita walked slowly to the chapel with her cousin Pedro, her heart was filled with sadness rather than joy.

"I am sure, Pepita, that even the most humble gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eyes," her cousin said trying to console her.

Not knowing what else to do, Pepita knelt by the roadside and gathered a handful of weeds. She fashioned them into a small bouquet. Looking at the ugly bunch of weeds, she felt even sadder and very embarrassed by the humbleness of her offering. She tried not to cry as she entered the chapel.

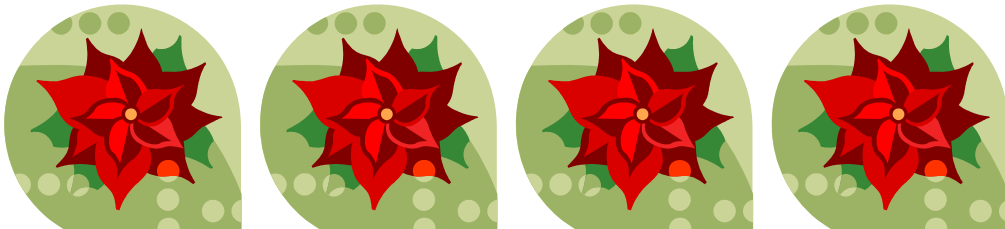
As she approached the alter, she remembered Pedro's kind words: "Even the most humble gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eyes." She felt her spirit lift a little as she knelt to lay the bouquet at the foot of the nativity scene.

Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into blooms of a beautiful brilliant red, and all who saw them were certain that this was a Christmas miracle!

From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the *Flores de Noche Buena*, or Flowers of the Holy Night, for they bloomed every year during the Christmas season.

Today, the common name for this plant is the poinsettia!

Other legends say the girl's name was Maria and the boy was Pablo and he was her brother. They were very poor and were teased by the other children when they laid the weeds around the manger, but as soon as their gift of love touched the manger the green topped weeds turned into bright red petals, and soon the manger was surrounded by beautiful star-like flowers, poinsettias, as we see them today, always blooming at Christmas.





Poinsettia Facts

- Poinsettias are native to Mexico.
- In nature, poinsettias are perennial flowering shrubs that can grow to ten feet tall.
- The showy colored parts of poinsettias that most people think are the flowers are actually colored bracts (modified leaves).
- Poinsettias are priced according to the number of blooms. The more blooms, the more expensive the plant.
- Poinsettias are not poisonous.
- Poinsettias represent over 85 percent of the potted plant sales during the holiday season.
- Ninety percent of all poinsettias are exported from the United States.
- Poinsettias are commercially grown in all 50 states.
- California is the top poinsettia producing state.
- December 12 is [National Poinsettia Day](#).
- The [Paul Ecke Ranch](#) in California grows over 80 percent of poinsettias in the United States for the wholesale market.
- There are over 100 varieties of poinsettias available.
- \$220 million worth of poinsettias are sold during the holiday season.
- Seventy-four percent of Americans still prefer red poinsettias; 8 percent prefer white and 6 percent pink.
- Eighty percent of poinsettias are purchased by women.
- Eighty percent of people who purchase poinsettias are 40 or older.
- Poinsettias are the best selling flowering potted plant in the United States. In 2004 over 61 million plants were sold.
- Poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant even though most are sold in a 6 week period.
- Poinsettias were introduced into the United States in 1825 by [Joel Poinsett](#).

This information came from The University of Illinois Extension
<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/poinsettia/facts.cfm>





Toilet Paper Roll Santa

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Materials:

- Toilet paper rolls
- Black, red, white, flesh-tone construction paper
- Glue sticks
- Scissors,
- Tiny red pom poms
- Wiggle eyes
- Glue dots
- White reinforcement holes
- Tiny buttons
- Red marker
- Pencil
- Stapler

Directions:

Prep:

1. Make a sample to show your students.
2. I set this up as a “monkey-see, monkey-do” whole-group activity.
3. I do a step, showing my students what to do, and then they copy it.
4. Make templates from pattern
5. Pre-cut pieces

The next day...

1. Children rub glue all over their t.p. roll
2. Students stick their red “Santa suit” onto the roll.
3. Press into place and hold for a few minutes so that it doesn’t peel off.
4. You may want to reinforce with a stapler.
5. Glue on black belt towards the bottom of the t.p. roll (See photo.)
6. Stick a reinforcement hole to the middle, add a glue dot and put a tiny button on the hole.
7. Glue the white hat brim to the top of the t.p. roll so that most of it is off of the roll.
8. Glue the red hat to the inside of the white brim.
9. Glue the white pom pom circle to the tip of the hat.
10. Glue the flesh face under the brim.
11. Glue the beard on top of the face.
12. Using glue dots put on the wiggle eyes and nose.
13. Using a pencil sketch the mustache details on.
14. Using a red marker draw a smile under the mustache.
15. Children write their name on the back of their Santa or stick a name label inside.
16. Use the Santa stationery to write a letter to Santa or an “I love you” note to parents. Roll it up and tuck it inside the toilet paper tube and leave it on mom or dad’s pillow, car seat, table setting etc.



From your teacher: _____
Have a great vacation! See you next year!



From your teacher: _____
Have a great vacation! See you next year!

N **Feliz**
Navidad



©TeachWithMe.com

N **Feliz**
Navidad



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From Your Teacher: _____

Have a great vacation! I'll see you next year!



From Your Teacher: _____

Have a great vacation! I'll see you next year!



From your teacher _____



From your teacher _____

Bookmarks or slap bracelets.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

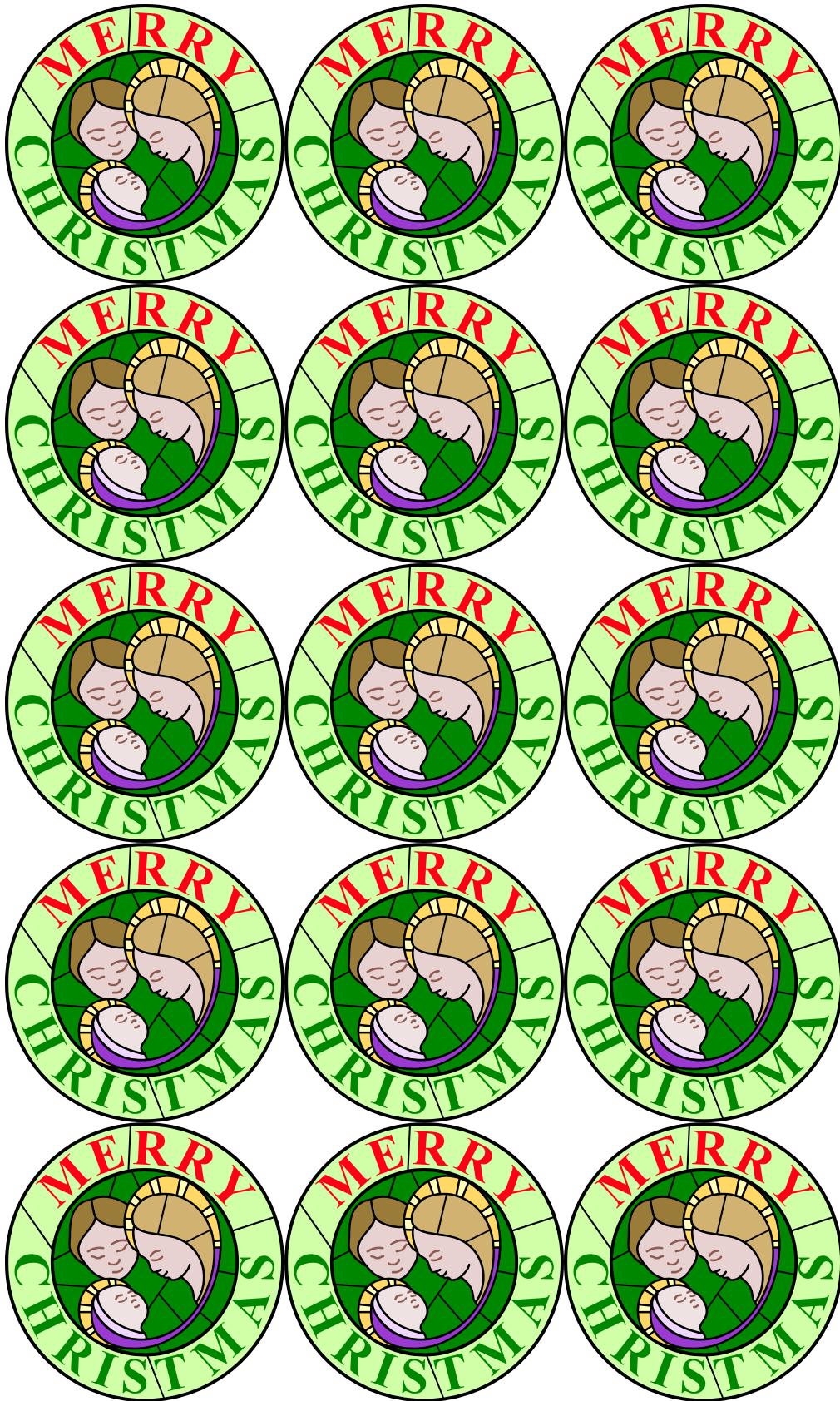
Merry
 *Christmas*

From your teacher _____
Have a great vacation; and a Happy New Year!

Merry
 *Christmas*

From your teacher _____
Have a great vacation; and a Happy New Year!











Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas!

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year!



Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas!

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year!

Toilet Paper Tube Santa

