

The 12 Days of Christmas

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

December 28, 2005

ACTIVITIES

This newsletter topic is different from our standard, which gives weekly activities to do with your children around a theme.... This time I am writing with suggestions for reducing the pressure of materialism at Christmas time and taking the twelve days of Christmas as an opportunity to focus your family's attention on the Christmas story.

Booklist

Festivals Family and Food

The Night Before Christmas

Cat in the Manger

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella

The Last Straw

by Diana Carey

by Clement Moore

by Michael Foreman

illus. by Jan Brett

illus. by Adrienne Adams

by Fredrick Thury

The Holy Bible, King James Version

Christmas Eve December 24

Christmas Eve is a magical time of anticipation. In addition to hanging the stockings, other Christmas Eve traditions include:

- ❖ leaving cookies & milk for Santa
- ❖ leaving your shoes on the front doorstep filled with hay and a carrot or two for his reindeer
- ❖ decorating the tree (some parents set up and decorate the tree at night while the children are sleeping, so it is a true surprise)

Read The Night Before Christmas. A good carol for this day is "O Christmas Tree."

Festivals Family and Food (pages 131-140) is full of recipes, handwork projects, stories, and songs to help you prepare for Christmas time.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Spreading out your celebration of the Christmas holiday over twelve days does not mean that it has to be twelve days of presents. Here are some other suggestions for ways to celebrate the spirit of the holiday season each day:

- ❖ spread out the family visits so you can really spend time with each group of people
- ❖ host a carolling party
- ❖ on one day (or several), don't open any gifts – give a gift or donation to charity
- ❖ "something special" evening with a parent, each child with their own day
- ❖ sing a new carol each morning and have a different collection of Christmas music to listen to
- ❖ read a section of the Christmas story from the Bible
- ❖ put on a Christmas play
- ❖ encourage your church to consider celebrating the 12 days of Christmas too, with a different activity on each day.

We tried the 12 days of Christmas for the first time this year. As a way of making the extended celebration make sense (and to indicate when it is time for it to come to a close) try setting up a scene with Mary and Joseph spending the night in the stable on the night before Christmas. Christmas morning the baby will be in the manger and the star will be hanging above. Then set up the three wise men on their journey to see the Christ child; move them a little closer each day. On the day when they arrive to give their gifts to the baby your children will know that the 12 days of Christmas have ended. This is especially helpful for preschool children. Older children can carve, model, or sew the nativity scene for this purpose. See [The Nature Corner](#) for ideas and patterns.

I suggest carols to sing each day but you can, of course, choose your favorites. The process of choosing carols which reflect the spirit of the Christmas story can go a long way towards helping you to determine your feelings about this holiday and what aspects of it you would like to pass on to your children.

The First Day December 25 (Christmas Day)

Read [Cat in the Manger](#). A good carol for this day is "I Saw Three Ships."

Suggestions for Christmas Day are also found in [Festivals Family and Food](#), on pages 141-150.

The Second Day December 26 (Saint Stephen's Day)

A good carol to sing this morning is "Good King Wenceslas."

If you have older children who wonder about suddenly celebrating Christmas over twelve days, remind them of the carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas." This carol also appears as a picture book illustrated by Jan Brett.

**The Third Day
December 27**

A good carol for this day is "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

**The Fourth Day
December 28**

A good carol for this day is "Joy to the World."

**The Fifth Day
December 29**

A good carol for this day is "Silent Night."

**The Sixth Day
December 30**

A good carol for this day is "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."

**The Seventh Day
December 31 (New Year's Eve)**

Festivals Family and Food contains suggestions for celebrating New Year's Eve on pages 151-153.

A good carol for this day is "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

**The Eighth Day
January 1 (New Year's Day)**

A good carol for this day is "What Child is This?"

**The Ninth Day
January 2**

A good carol for this day is "Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella." This carol also appears as a picture book illustrated by Adrienne Adams.

If you discover other Christmas carols which have appeared in picture book form, please share the title and name of the illustrator with the Group at waldorfcriculum@yahoo.com.

**The Tenth Day
January 3**

A good carol for this day is "Away in a Manger."

**The Eleventh Day
January 4**

A good carol for this day is "O Holy Night."

**The Twelfth Day
January 5**

A good carol for this day is "The Little Drummer Boy."

**Epiphany
January 6**

Epiphany is celebrated as the day when the three wise men reach Jesus.

"We Three Kings" is a good carol to sing on this day.

Read [The Last Straw](#). Bas Bleu carries a stuffed Hoshmakaka toy to accompany this story:

http://www.basbleu.com/stores/1/Hoshmakaka_Toy_P1510.cfm?SearchTerms=the%20last%20straw

[Festivals Family and Food](#) contains suggestions for Epiphany on pages 154-157.

Take some time to decide what you want the Christmas season to mean. Whether it's a time for exchanging presents, spending time with loved ones, a time of humility, a season of giving, or a deeply religious occasion, don't hesitate to establish new traditions which help the spirit of the season come alive for you and your family.

PLANNER

Booklist

- Festivals Family and Food by Diana Carey
- The Night Before Christmas by Clement Moore
- Cat in the Manger by Michael Foreman
- The Twelve Days of Christmas illus. by Jan Brett
- Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella illus. by Adrienne Adams
- Silent Night, Holy Night illus. by Maja Dusikova
- The Nature Corner by M. Leeuwen
- The Last Straw by Fredrick Thury
- The Holy Bible, King James Version

Christmas Eve 12/24

O Christmas Tree

The 12 Days of Christmas:

The First Day 12/25
The Second Day 12/26
The Third Day 12/27
The Fourth Day 12/28
The Fifth Day 12/29
The Sixth Day 12/30
The Seventh Day 12/31
The Eighth Day 01/01
The Ninth Day 01/02
The Tenth Day 01/03
The Eleventh Day 01/04
The Twelfth Day 01/05

I Saw Three Ships
Good King Wenceslas
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Joy to the World
Silent Night
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
O Little Town of Bethlehem
What Child is This?
Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella
Away in a Manger
O Holy Night
The Little Drummer Boy

Epiphany 01/06

We Three Kings

Use the following planner pages to make notes on how you and your family plan to celebrate each day:

**CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24**

**THE FIRST DAY
DECEMBER 25**

THE SECOND DAY
DECEMBER 26

THE THIRD DAY
DECEMBER 27

THE FOURTH DAY
DECEMBER 28

THE FIFTH DAY
DECEMBER 29

**THE SIXTH DAY
DECEMBER 30**

**THE SEVENTH DAY
DECEMBER 31**

THE EIGHTH DAY
JANUARY 1

THE NINTH DAY
JANUARY 2

THE TENTH DAY
JANUARY 3

THE ELEVENTH DAY
JANUARY 4

**THE TWELFTH DAY
JANUARY 5**

EPIPHANY
JANUARY 6