The 12 Days of Christmas

Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter

December 28, 2005
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** 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
- **The Last Straw** 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 waldorfcurriculum@yahoogroups.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 I Saw Three Ships
The Second Day 12/26 Good King Wenceslas
The Third Day 12/27 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
The Fourth Day 12/28 Joy to the World
The Fifth Day 12/29 Silent Night
The Sixth Day 12/30 It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
The Seventh Day 12/31 O Little Town of Bethleham
The Eighth Day 01/01 What Child is This?
The Ninth Day 01/02 Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella
The Tenth Day 01/03 Away in a Manger
The Eleventh Day 01/04 O Holy Night
The Twelfth Day 01/05 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 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