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Kids Holiday Cooking and celebrating

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It is a busy time of year. School plays, piano recitals, Christmas parties, school parties, shopping, and on and on.

How do you get your kids involved in this busy season of gift giving, love and remembering others?

1. Sign up your kids for an angel tree project or something in your area that gives gifts to needy children. Let your child understand how blessed they are by helping others.
2. Start a baking tradition this holiday season. It could be Christmas cookie decorating, making fudge with Grandma, or making a gingerbread house.
3. Have your kids go through their own closets, toy shelves and books. Donate to local charities. This is a good time to clear out the old and unused and get ready for new things that Santa and the grandparents are sure to bring.
4. Make homemade decorations for the Christmas tree. You can string a popcorn garland, make dough ornaments or just paper stars with glitter all give a nice touch to the Christmas tree that your kids will look on proudly.
5. Have a family and friends night where you have a potluck dinner and sing Christmas carols or play Christmas charades.
6. Read a different Christmas story every night. Visit your library if you are in need of a variety of stories. Christmas Eve is always a great night to read the real story of Christmas.
7. Have your kids help wrap presents. You can even have them make their own wrapping paper. Using white paper after they wrap the present let them decorate the present with stickers, markers, glitter, what ever they choose.
8. Have a birthday cake for Jesus. After all it is his birthday we are celebrating.
9. Get your kids involved in the gift giving. Let them make presents or help you put them together. Simple gifts for teachers could be jar mixes or food gift baskets. We have recipes for both of these ideas through our website.
10. Take a plate of cookies, fudge or homemade bread to your neighbors.

Holiday Decorating

Ideas for Tree ornaments

Dough Ornament recipe

4 Cups all-purpose flour

1 Cup salt

1 1/2 Cups cold water

cookie cutters

Shellac

Ribbons for hangers

In mixing bowl add flour and salt together. Slowly add water while stirring with a fork until soft dough forms.

Turn out on lightly floured surface and knead until smooth, adding a small amount of water or flour, if needed. Roll dough on a floured surface to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut with cookie cutters. Place ornaments 1 inch apart on ungreased baking sheet. With a drinking straw, poke holes in the top for hanging. Bake in a preheated 300 degree oven for 30 to 45 minutes. Allow to cool completely. You can paint ornaments or leave as is. Coat with shellac.



Popcorn and Cranberry Garland

Popped popcorn

Cranberries

Needle and thread

Thread your needle with a long strand of thread. Alternate popped popcorn and whole fresh cranberries through the strand of thread. Being careful not to break popcorn. This adds beautiful color to your Christmas tree

Christmas countdown Advent Idea

Print off the Christmas tree on page 11. You can add a sticker for each day counting down to Christmas or print page 12 and cut out the decorations. Add the presents under the tree and ornaments on the tree.

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas

A simple idea to add to the feeling of a white Christmas. Have the kids cut out snowflakes out of white paper and tape to windows.

Making a nativity scene

Get your kids involved with decorating by having them create a nativity scene. Make people and animals out of dough ornaments or color and cut out coloring pages. Make a manger out of a shoe box covered with straw or dried grass. Your kids can come up with their version and really enjoy putting this together.

Holiday Baking

Some simple recipes to bake with your kids this holiday season.



Simple Quick fudge

1 package semi sweet chocolate chips (12 oz.)

1 1/2 Cups Mini Marshmallows

1 can Chocolate Frosting

Melt chocolate chips and marshmallows in large microwave safe bowl. Stir until well blended. Add in chocolate frosting and pour into greased baking dish or dish lined with tin foil. You can add chopped nuts or chopped candies on top if desired. Chill for several hours until hard. Cut into small squares.

Microwave Caramels

1/2 Cup butter

1/2 Cup white corn syrup

1/2 Cup white sugar

1/2 Cup brown sugar

1/2 Cup sweetened condensed milk

In saucepan melt butter. Stir in corn syrup, white sugar, brown sugar and condensed milk. Cook on medium-low stirring constantly. Using a candy thermometer continue cooking until soft ball stage about 238 degrees. You may need an adult's help with this step. Pour into greased 8 inch pan. Let candy set for 20-30 minutes and then cut into bite size pieces.

Quick Turtles

Small pretzel twist

Rolo candies or other chocolate candy

Pecan or walnut half

Lay pretzels on tin foil lined cookie sheet. Place a chocolate on top of each pretzel. Melt in a warm oven 2-3 minutes. Take out of oven and push a nut half onto top of chocolate. You can also melt slightly in the microwave. Then chill.

Christmas Dinner Ham

5-6 pound Ham

1 Cup brown sugar

1/4 Cup orange juice

Place ham in a roasting pan. In a small bowl stir brown sugar and orange juice together. Rub over ham and cover ham with tin foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours depending on size of ham.

★ Find more kids baking ideas at our website including Gingerbread houses, cookie recipes, and candy recipes. ★

Holiday giving

Some quick homemade gift ideas for your kids to be involved in...



Homemade pot holders

Cut out designs or shapes out of an old or new ironing board cover. They make great pot holders and are sensitive to heat.

Simple Spice Potpourri

1 oz. can cinnamon sticks, broken into small pieces

Small bottle of whole cloves

Small bottle of allspice

dried orange peels

Combine all ingredients. Place in decorative baggie. Label with a card that says...

Place 1 heaping Tablespoon and 1/2 cup of water in simmer pot and heat.

Bath Salts

1 Cup Epsom salts

1 Cup kosher or sea salt

2 jars with lids

2 colors of liquid food color

1 pretty 8 oz. jar

A few drops of your favorite perfume or flavored essential oil

In mixing bowl add salts together and stir to combine. Add 1 Cup of salt into each jar.

Add 13-15 drops of food color in each jar. (depending on how dark you would like your color). Pick two colors that will look well blended together. Add a few drops of perfume or flavored oil. Shake jars until salts are well dyed. Pour salt onto paper towel and let dry overnight. Wash jars out and let dry also. Layer salts in jar, alternating colors for a nice sand art look. Attach lid and tie with a ribbon. Label with a card that says use 1-2

Tablespoons for a refreshing bath.

★ Check out our website for Christmas gift ideas including jar mix recipes and food gift baskets ideas. ★

Fleece Scarves

1 yard fleece material

Cut three strips out of your yard material that equal 19 inches x 36 inches. Snip the ends of the scarf to give a fringe look. You can give just like this or add decorative buttons, felt designs or other fun stuff.

Find this project and more kids sewing projects at <http://www.kids-sewing-projects.com>

Holiday Food gifts

Some quick homemade food gift ideas for your kids to be involved in...

Chocolate dipped spoons

Use your favorite sugar cookie dough recipe to make these fun cookies. Roll cookie dough onto floured surface. Using measuring spoons lay on top of cookie dough and cut out outline with a sharp knife. Place on a cookie sheet. Bake and let cool. Dip tops of spoon cookies into melted chocolate and chill until set. These are great by themselves or added to a cocoa or drink mix.

**You can also use white chocolate for dipping spoons. Other ideas are sprinkle candy sprinkles, mini marshmallows or drizzle red or green chocolate after you dip your spoon in chocolate.

Gourmet Pretzels

large pretzel sticks or rods

Dip pretzels in melted chocolate and then sprinkle with candy sprinkles or chopped nuts. Place on waxed paper. Chill and place in decorative candy boxes or candy bags.



Check out our website for Christmas food gift ideas including jar mix recipes and food gift baskets ideas.



Cocoa mix

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup powdered non-dairy coffee creamer
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 3/4 cups nonfat milk powder
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows

Mix all together. Store in a 4 cup container. Attach a label that says...

For hot cocoa

Stir 3-4 Tablespoons mix into one cup hot water to make one serving. Makes 4 cups.

Sugared nuts

- 1 tablespoon slightly beaten large egg whites
- 2 cups pecans halves, whole almonds or walnut halves
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Beat egg white in small bowl. Toast egg whites with nuts. Add sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves to the bowl. Toss to coat. Arrange nuts in cookie sheet laying flat and toast at 300 degrees for 30 minutes.



Holiday traditions

Evaluate what some of your family Holiday traditions are.

These memories are something your kids will be able to look on in the years to come and something they can pass down to their own family.



Make a family photo card

As a family look back through the last year and pick out some highlights of what your family has done. Compile these memories into a Holiday card or pick this time of year to take a nice family photo.

Watch a play about the Nativity or the Nutcracker ballet every year

Make this into a family tradition.

Cookie Decorating Party

Create a tradition of having a cookie decorating party. Have kids invite 4-5 friends (as many as you can manage!) Make cookies ahead of time and let them decorate with different colors of frosting and sprinkles. If the kids are older they may enjoy the actual baking also. This is a great way for your kids to celebrate the holidays with their close friends.

Christmas stories

Starting on the first of December pick a Christmas story or poem to read each night. Your local library will have a great selection this time of year. You can also buy a new Christmas story each year to add to your collection. Keep them in your Christmas boxes and they will be like new each year.

Christmas around the world

Did you know in Bulgaria on Christmas Eve dinner consists of 12 different dishes? Or in Ukraine a few strands of straw is left at the dinner table as a reminder of Jesus' manger. What about in Australia, you know it is summertime so they celebrate Christmas in hot beach weather? Research and talk about Christmas traditions throughout the world with your family. This will help your kids learn about other cultures as well as get a glimpse of this universal holiday.

★
*If your kids leave Santa a note each year, have Santa type up a letter back.
If saved through the years these letters can be a lot of fun to look back on.*



Holiday Fun



Santa letter

Dear Santa,
I've been good this year. I'd like a baby brother for Christmas.
Love, Tom
Whatever your kids might say, sending or leaving a note for Santa can be great fun. It is also a great practice for your kids in writing a letter.

Cookies for Santa

Check out our website for Christmas cookie recipes to leave for Santa. Do you have a special Christmas Eve cookies for Santa plate? Kids can make one or have them decorate a place mat. Then cover place mat with clear contact adhesive paper.

Christmas caroling

Sing carols and take the opportunity to teach your kids new Christmas songs they don't know yet.

12 days of Christmas

Pick a special family, friend, neighbor or anyone who your family would like to share some Holiday spirit with. 12 days before Christmas, starting on December 14, give a small present or baked good.

**Your kids will really get a kick out of this activity if you try to remain anonymous until the last day.

Reindeer Poop

What kid doesn't like this funny treat?

Fill a plastic bag with Junior mints or other small chocolate candies. Decorate with pompoms and pipe cleaners for antlers to resemble a reindeer. Make a label that says Reindeer poop or Reindeer droppings. Santa was in such a hurry all he left were these...

You can do the same idea with mini marshmallows and call it **Snowman Poop**.

Both are something fun kids love to put together for their friends.



★*After the holidays don't forget the Thank you notes...*★

Holiday New Year Celebration

Simple Appetizer recipes

Fruit Dip

14 ounces sweetened condensed milk

1 cup butterscotch chips

¼- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

Apple wedges

Over low heat melt butterscotch chips in condensed milk. Remove from heat and add cinnamon. Serve warm and use apple slices or other fruit for dipping.



Mozzarella Sticks

1 pkg. Mozzarella cheese

egg roll wrappers

salsa or ranch dressing for dipping

Cut mozzarella into 2 inch strips and wrap in egg roll wrappers. Deep fry until brown.

Oriental Chicken Wings

1/2 Cup brown sugar

1/4 Cup soy sauce

1/4 Cup water

1 Tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon ginger

garlic to taste

Mix all ingredients together and marinate chicken wings for several hours. Bake in 350 degree oven for 1 hour turning chicken wings halfway through cooking time.

New Year traditions

Confetti tubes

If your kids are too young to stay up late don't let that stop you from celebrating. Make confetti tubes by placing confetti, either store bought or make your own with a hold puncher and paper, inside a toilet paper tube and wrap it up with decorative paper. Tie the ends with ribbon and place these on your holiday table. Before going to bed go outside and yell Happy New Year. Tear the ribbon of the confetti favors and let your kids have a ball throwing the confetti. (even if it isn't midnight kids will love this activity.)

New Year's goals

List one thing you'd like to do this year or a habit you'd like to overcome. Even young kids can think of at least one idea. Place everyone's goals in your Christmas boxes when you are packing up that way you will find it next year and see how you did.



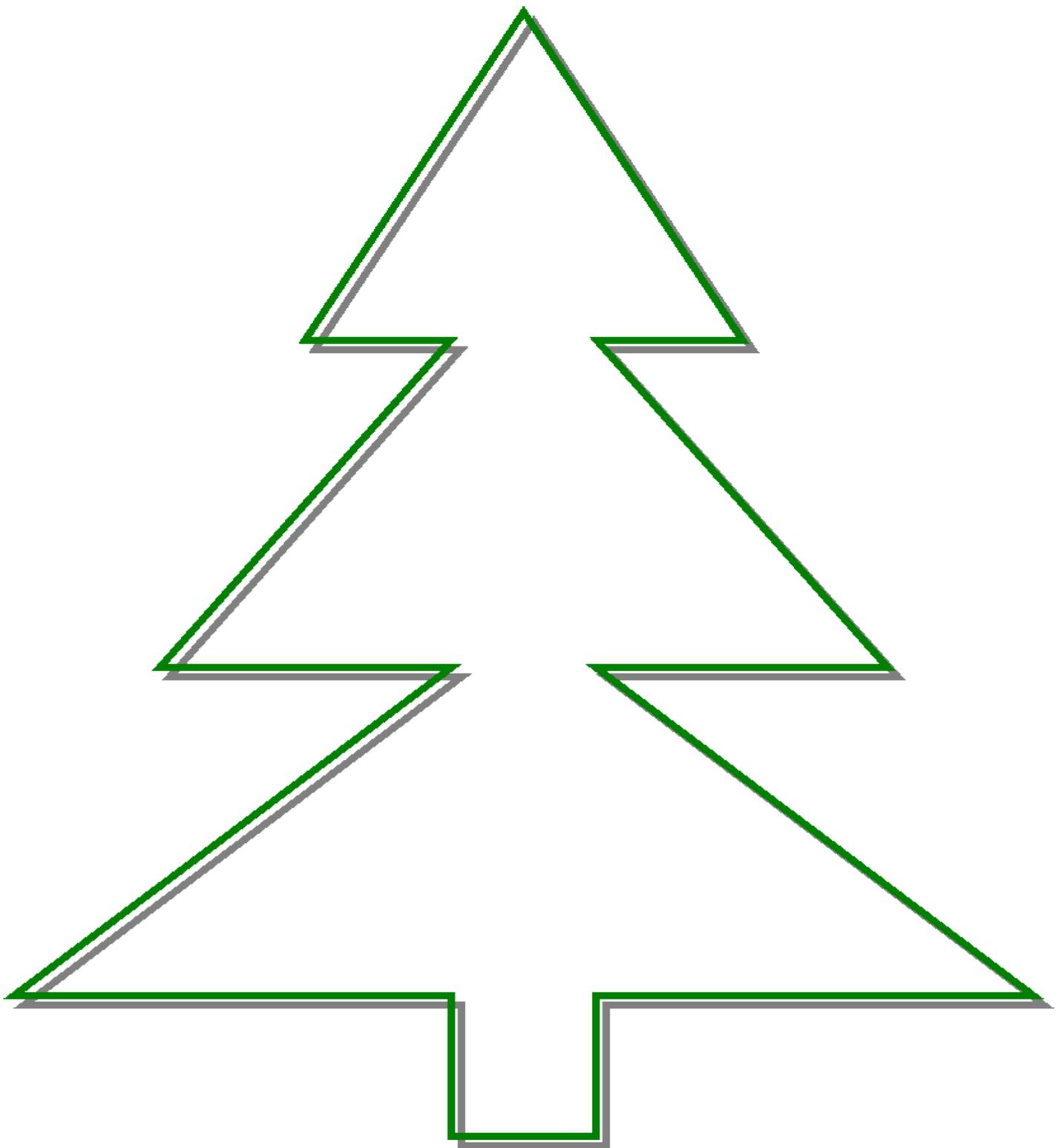
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Cut the tree decorations out and use as your Advent Christmas countdown page.



Use the Christmas tree outline if you'd like to color it in yourself. Or use the green tree if you have a color printer and don't want to color it.

Use stickers or draw your own decorations or use the pictures we provide.

Each day glue something on your picture to count down the days until Christmas. Glue the ornaments on the tree where you'd like, glue the presents under the tree and the stockings hanging beside the tree.

