

Holiday Crafts Build Family Togetherness

by Bronwyn Holman

Devoting time to do something special with your children amid the hustle and bustle of holiday preparations enables all of you to appreciate the togetherness of the moment.

Here are a few simple ideas for making holiday crafts with the young children in your life. These activities provide some valuable one-on-one time that can nurture your relationship with your children while introducing them to important celebrations in other cultures.

Hanukkah

(begins December 11, 2009)

Hanukkah is a celebration of the miracle of light. In 164 B.C., the Maccabees defeated the Greeks to win their religious freedom and reclaimed their temple. In the temple, they found only enough oil to last one day. The miracle is that the oil lasted for 8 days.

Hand-Print Menorah Placemats

Supplies: 1 sheet of white construction paper per placemat, non-toxic blue and yellow finger paint, glitter.

Directions:

1. Place a small amount of blue paint on a disposable plate.
2. Have your child place his palms in the paint, coating each finger and thumb.
3. With thumbs crossed, have him press his hands onto a clean sheet of construction paper. The crossed thumbs with four fingers on each side create the image of a menorah with 9 candles.
4. While your child cleans his hands, place the yellow paint on the plate.
5. Have your child dip a finger in the yellow paint, then place his finger at the top of each candle, to “light” the menorah.
6. Decorate the placemat.
7. Once mats are dry, take them to a copy shop to be laminated or put them between clear sheets of self-adhesive shelf paper.

Christmas

(December 25, 2009)

Christmas is a Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus. For many people, Christmas is also a time to celebrate the gifts of life and the love of family.

Keepsake Tree Ornaments

Supplies: 1 wood curtain ring with a small metal hook eye at the top for each person, paint (red, green, white), paint brushes, glitter, red ribbon, rubber cement, and family pictures.

Directions:

1. Place curtain ring over the picture of a family member, centering the family member's face. Trace around the outside of the ring and cut out the picture.
2. Have your child paint the curtain ring with her personal design, such as to look like a candy cane or like a wreath.
3. Paint the year on the ring.
4. When the paint is dry, place a thin layer of glue on the back of the ring and place the ring on the person's picture.
5. When the glue dries, string red ribbon (1-foot length) through the small metal loop on top of the ring and tie a bow.

Kwanzaa

(begins December 26, 2009)

Kwanzaa was introduced as part of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s to bring the African-American community together through a celebration of unity and pride.

Personal Kinara

The Kinara holds 7 candles which remind people of the 7 principles that form the foundation of Kwanzaa.

Supplies: 1 egg carton (with at least 7 cups), foam core, paint (red, black, yellow, green), paint brushes, craft glue, scissors, 7 candles (1 black, 3 green, 3 red).

Directions:

1. Cut a 4 ½-inch-by-11-inch piece of foam core and place it on a flat surface.
2. Cut 7 individual egg cups off the egg carton and place them with the cut side down (so that they look like domes) in a line on the foam core.
3. Center the domes and trace around each one with a pencil. Remove the domes, place glue on each penciled outline, then adhere each dome to the foam core.
4. Once dry, poke candle holes in the tops of the Kinara.
5. Have your child decorate his Kinara.
6. When dry, help your child place the 7 candles in the Kinara, with 1 black candle in the middle, 3 green candles to the right, and 3 red candles to the left.

Bronwyn Holman is the founder of MiniMusician, LLC.