



Christmas Ideas for Home Schoolers

- * Investigate foreign Christmas traditions, especially those of your own nationality, and adopt them as your Christmas traditions; e.g., the German tradition of leaving plates of Christmas goodies anonymously at friends' homes.
- * Have a Christmas tea with other home-schooling families. Each family brings its favorite Christmas goody and a favorite family Christmas tradition with enough copies for each other family.
- * Make your own **Advent calendar**. Include service-oriented ideas. Let kids help pick activities or keep it a surprise! An easy way is to make a paper chain with a link per day.
- * Make a scrapbook together of Christmas pictures, poems, Christmas stories, snapshots of projects, gifts made, etc.
- * Make a special time-capsule ornament by decorating a small box or other container including the year on the outside. Have a family meeting and look back over the year, making a list of highlights to put inside. In years to come, you can pull out a year or more to read aloud. (Your children may want to make their own ornaments so that it will be easier to pass on as they start their own families.)
- * Begin a family heritage recording by interviewing relatives and family members. Record their memories.
- * Record your family doing a choral reading of the Christmas story and singing carols to give as a gift.
- * Make word games, or assist your child in making them, (crossword puzzles, word searches, bingo, missing letters) on a Christ-centered Christmas theme using words such as *Jesus, Joseph, Mary, wise men, donkey, inn, shepherds*.
- * Read aloud Christmas stories such as O. Henry's *Gift of the Magi* or Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.
- * As a family, watch *It's a Wonderful Life*; discuss what it would be like if Christ hadn't come.
- * Put on a skit, a pantomime, or a puppet show at a nursing home, for grandparents, etc. The theme could be about giving or a person from another culture "looking for the real Christmas" in the flurry of seasonal events.
- * Make card making and giving a family affair: a letter which has paragraphs from each member, cards with a verse written by family members. Use original creative art work, stencils, or other artistic means to decorate the cards or letters. Let your children do as much as they can, perhaps writing the inside message.

*Christmas time provides a wonderful opportunity to teach the Bible principle of
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
Help your children learn to place more emphasis on giving of themselves for the needs of others.
Follow Christ's example.*

- * Artistic projects your child can create include making a mural depicting Jesus' birth or other scene, posters or banners declaring His birth, a collage of pictures on the Christmas theme, a mobile of items from the Nativity scene, and a diorama of the stable where Jesus was born.
- * Help your child glue a manger scene or other picture on cardboard, assisting as necessary to make sure it is thoroughly glued. Dry completely. Cut into puzzle shapes appropriate for the age of your student.
- * If you have access to evergreen, buy a wire frame and learn to make your own wreath. Using floral wire, wrap it around clumps of green, hiding the wire by the next clump as you work your way around the wreath. Or make several to give as gifts. Children can make bows and use a glue-gun to attach decorations to the wreath frame. Holly, glass balls, etc., make nice additions.
- * Make silhouettes, on black or colored paper, of the Nativity scene, shepherds, wise men, or friends/family to place across your windows or decorate the tree.
- * Decorate the tree with ornaments made by each family member that represent what he or she wants to give to Jesus; e.g., my time, my money, my voice, my talents, my heart, energy.
- * Decorate the tree with paper-doll chains your child has cut out and written on them the genealogy of Christ.
- * Plan love gifts for each member of the family that are not material objects; e.g., a coupon book of jobs for mom and dad, a thoughtful act for brother and sister.
- * Use significant clues rather than names on packages (such as favorite colors or hobbies, a birthdate).
- * Choose unique ways to wrap gifts (tea towels for a mom, a quilt-topped pillowcase, decorating boxes to look like a folded shirt/tie, a blouse with a bow tie, a dresser with drawers).
- * Encourage your child, according the ability, to make and give stitchery or other craft items.
- * Bake and give special holiday food items (include recipe).
- * Save gifts of money to be given to Jesus (e.g., a missions project); each person may wrap and place under the tree.
- * Make up small packages of essentials for the homeless (toothbrush, a small bottle of shampoo and other toiletries, a new pair of socks, a fruit, raisins, packaged snack foods, etc.).
- * "Adopt" a family. Find out the ages of the children, needs, interests, and sizes of all family members. Teach your child how to be a true friend.
- * Prepare special meals and deliver in a basket with a cheerful note of encouragement to shut-ins, ill, or others needing help. Let your child help as much as possible.
- * Give up something as a family (e.g., eating out between Thanksgiving and Christmas) and save the money to give to a needy family.
- * Offer to read mail and cards for someone with vision problems.
- * Conduct a "treasure hunt" for small gifts for the children several times during the day of Christmas Eve. This will take the edge off the excitement and keep them occupied while they enjoy focusing on one gift at a time.
- * Revive the lost art of canning by making gifts of food. Canned fruit, jams and jellies, are all welcome gifts, plus giving your children new skills.
- * Find a simple pattern for either knitting or crocheting scarves or mittens that your child can manage to make as gifts. Again, another added skill.
- * Develop a food gift tradition that all your friends will look forward to each year. Some offerings we've seen over the years include cheese balls, challah bread, and lefse.
- * Teach your children to show gratitude and thankfulness and to be gracious not only in giving, but in receiving as well.
- * While it's always the right time to make things right, this season seems to call for it. Make sure your relationships are all "okay." Take special time with each child to make memories. Express your love in some lasting way.



Betchucandoit Snowflakes[©]

Basic Materials: Sharp scissors comfortable for your hand size; inexpensive typing paper; 8 1/2" by 11" (the thinner the better) [we found that newsprint worked the best]; and a pencil.

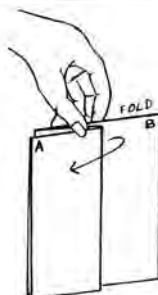
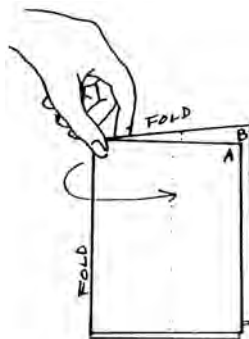
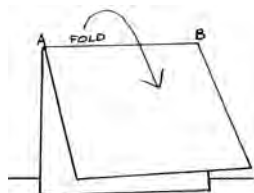
Beyond Basic: Hole punch, paper clips, and fishing line for hanging; poster board for spines; rubber cement for attaching snowflakes to spines; and an open mind.

Process: Now stay with me. Once you learn this, the rest is simple. It is just a practice skill. Try to make your paper look like the illustrations.

Fold typing paper in half and crease the top fold sharply by finger pressing. This first fold is referred to as the A/B line. Always work from the A/B folded edge, or the results may be two half snowflakes instead of a whole one.

Fold into fourths by taking corner A to corner B, and lightly crease.

Turn *back* corner A until it is even with the edge of center fold and crease lightly from top to bottom.



This is a measuring line for folding the paper into thirds.

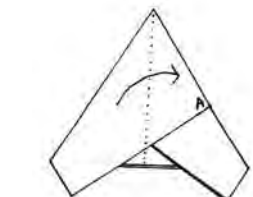
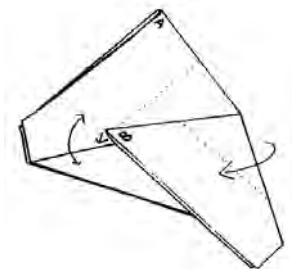
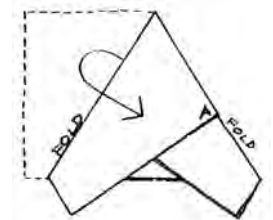
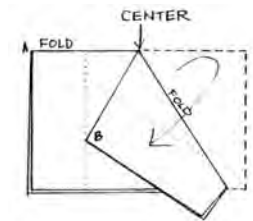
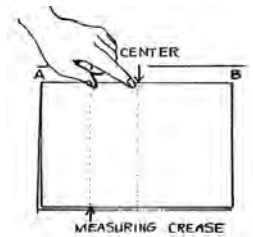
Open paper out to first fold. Hold index finger at center crease mark of A/B line and fold right side of paper until corner B touches the measuring crease, (half way between corner A and center mark). This fold represents one third.

Now fold the left side, from corner A, over the one-third fold, until edges are even and paper looks like this example.

Open and check for accuracy to make sure the folded edges lay evenly in the creased folds. Adjust where necessary, keeping the top point sharp, then finger press to create sharp edges. **If** you unfolded the entire paper now, you would see it has been divided evenly into six sections. Real snowflake crystals are also six-sided.

Look at the illustration and fold on the center dotted line, as if making a paper airplane.

Look inside and find the short piece of paper, as indicated by the arrow. Envision a curved line beginning where this short piece of paper ends.



Cut on dotted line and discard everything except the cone-shaped piece.

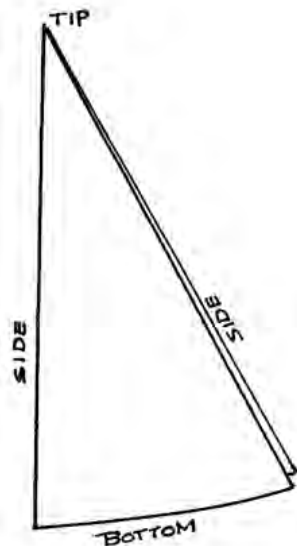


Handy Hint: Cutting over a large grocery bag helps keep paper scraps under control, especially when working with husbands and children.

Anatomy of a Snowflake:

The *tip* of the cone will become the center of the snowflake.

It does not matter on which *side* of the snowflake you begin cutting. What does matter is that you always *exit the same side* you enter, or confetti will be the result instead of a snowflake.

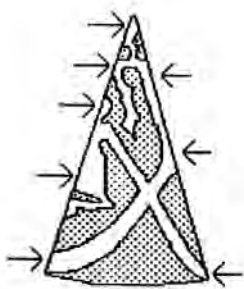


The *bottom* of the snowflake is critical. If not enough material is removed to break up the primary perimeter, the result is a doily instead of a six-sided crystal.

Connectors are parts of the design that hold the snowflake together.

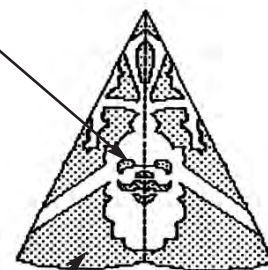
Positive refers to the paper image.

Eye Bars: Trying to poke holes for eyes or other small interior areas, through so many layers of paper, often

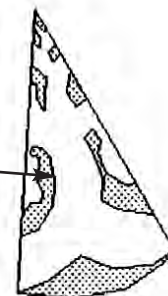


tears the paper or pokes a hole in your finger. Instead, make a single cut from the nearest edge, then cut out the space needed. A small hole punch is also handy but eye bars work just as well.

Negative space refers to that part of the design which was cut away. For example, a donut is positive, the hole in the center is negative. Most designs rely on both positive and negative shapes to create the visual effect. Using a design with a face as an example, the face is positive while the eyes and other features are negative.



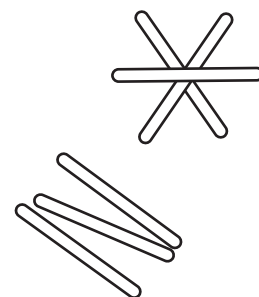
Beefy means not enough paper has been cut away resulting in too much positive and not enough negative space.

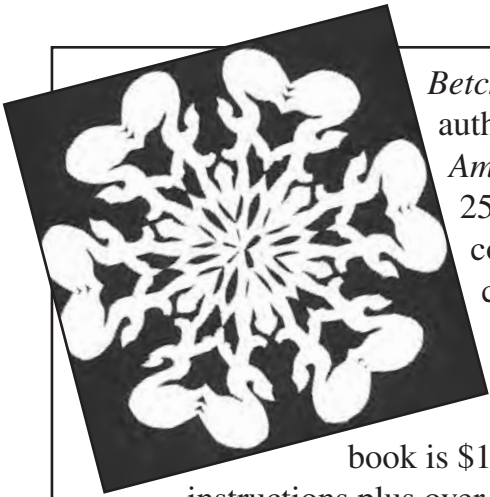


Shredded lettuce means not enough positive space, too much negative.



Spines are narrow strips of heavy paper or poster board, cut about 1/3-inch wide and 8 to 10 inches long. To support free-hanging snowflakes, three spines are glued to the snowflake with rubber cement, crossing at the center to make six equally spaced arms. Spines in contrasting or bright colors show off snowflake designs to good advantage.

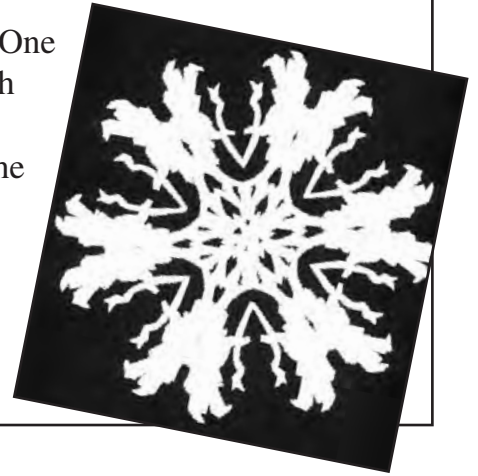




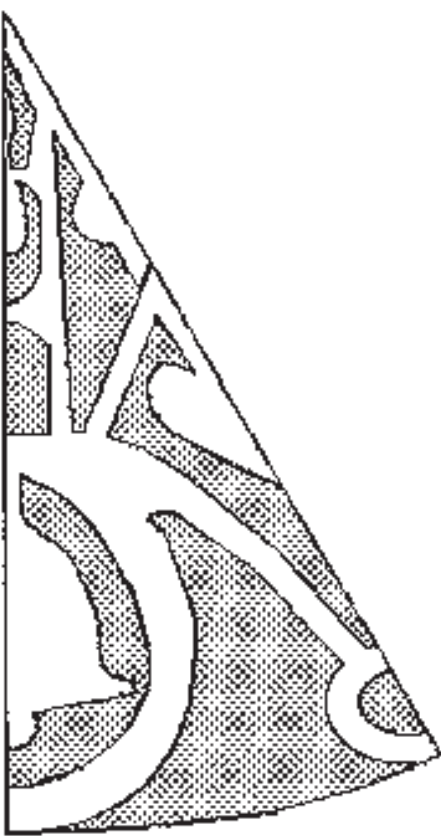
Betchucandoit Snowflakes© were used by permission from the author. POHO (Polly Hobbs) did the illustrations for our *American Tales* reader. She says about snowflake cutting, “After 25 years of teaching young people, one realizes a few things concerning learning experiences and the need for exercise in creative thinking, visualization, and planning ahead.” She agreed to allow us to reprint this excerpt from her books. Books One through Four are available. Each

book is \$10 postpaid and contains the basic instructions plus over 60 patterns. *All proceeds* go to the needy, without deduction for labor, materials, or for printing costs. *You may order the Betchucandoit Snowflakes* books directly from her.

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GO FOR IT: Trace or free hand draw the first design on your folded paper cone and cut out the shaded areas. Carefully unfold by reversing the order of the original folding process.



Bell



Candle



Angel

Holiday Recipes

All of these are appropriate for gift giving.



Kris Dillon's Christmas Cheese Ball

1. Combine in a standing mixer, food processor, or by hand and chill for several hours:
8 oz. **VELVEETA CHEESE**
3 oz. plain **CREAM CHEESE**
3 oz. **CREAM CHEESE WITH CHIVES**
5 oz. jar **OLDE ENGLISH CHEESE** (or Sharp Cheddar)
1 oz. **BLUE CHEESE**
1 large **GARLIC CLOVE** (crushed, minced, or grated)
1/2 tsp. **WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE**
2. Mix 2 Tbsp. each **PAPRIKA** and **CHILI POWDER** in a shallow bowl.
3. Chop 1/4 cup **NUTS** and place in another shallow bowl.
4. Roll ball first in the spice mixture and then in the chopped nuts until thoroughly coated.
5. Wrap in saran wrap.
6. If giving as a gift, wrap in colored cellophane; tie with a ribbon or rafia bow. Also let the recipient know it is to be kept refrigerated and eaten within a couple of weeks.
7. Remove from the refrigerator one hour before serving with Wheat Thins or other sturdy crackers.

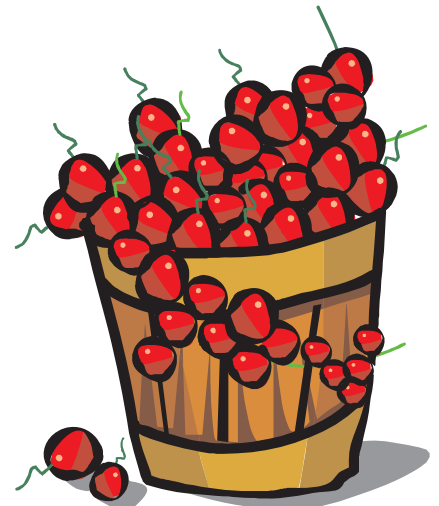
Jackie Purtell's Cream Cheese Rolls

1. Combine in a standing mixer, food processor, or by hand and chill for at least one hour:
3 1/2 cups **FLOUR**
9 oz. plain **CREAM CHEESE**
16 oz. **BUTTER**
2. Meanwhile make filling by beating the egg lightly and adding the other ingredients:
16 oz. **WALNUTS (CHOPPED FINE)**
1 **EGG**
2 Tbsp. **BROWN SUGAR**
1/4 cup **CREAM**
1/8 tsp. **SALT**
3. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
4. Sprinkle a flat surface with powdered sugar and roll out the dough to about 1/8 inch thick.
5. Cut the dough into 3-by-3-inches squares.
6. Put filling in center; joining one pair of opposite corners in the middle over the filling.
7. Bake on an ungreased cookie sheet for 10-15 minutes until lightly brown.
8. Cool and sprinkle with more powdered sugar.

Home-Made Orange, Cranberry, Nut Sauce

Adapted from the Barefoot Contessa's Cranberry Fruit Conserve

1. Combine in a saucepan over low heat for about 5 minutes, or until cranberries "pop":
12 oz. **CRANBERRIES**
1 1/2 cups **SUGAR**
FRESH JUICE FROM ONE ORANGE (zest first to be used below)
FRESH JUICE FROM ONE LEMON (zest first to be used below)
Plus enough **WATER TO MAKE** 1 cup of total liquid
2. Add
1 **GRANNY SMITH APPLE, PEELED, CORED, AND CHOPPED**
ZEST FROM ONE ORANGE
ZEST FROM ONE LEMON
3. Cook for about 15 more minutes,
4. Remove from heat, and add:
3/4 cup **WALNUTS OR PECANS, MEDIUM CHOP**
5. Cool and serve chilled.



Ancient Words of Wisdom

The Spiritual Meaning behind the 12 Days of Christmas

The 12 days of Christmas begin on Christmas day, and extend through Epiphany which represents the day the wisemen came to visit the Christ child. The true love is that of God the Father for his children. If your children would memorize each day's meaning, this would be a veritable catechism of its own! There is no historic proof that the song was used as such, but there's no reason why it can't be.

Day One—the partridge in the pear tree:
Christ on the cross

Day Two—two turtle doves: the Old and
New Testaments

Day Three—three french hens: three
cardinal virtues; faith, hope, and love

Day Four—four colly birds (blackbirds):
the four gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke,
and John

Day Five—five golden rings: the five
books of Moses; Genesis, Exodus,
Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

Day Six—six geese a laying: the six days of
creation

Day Seven—seven swans a swimming: the
seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; prophecy,
ministry, exhortation, teaching, giving,
leading, and compassion.

Day Eight—eight maids a milking: the
eight beatitudes from the Sermon on the
Mount; poor in spirit, those who mourn,
the meek, those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness, the merciful, the pure in
heart, the peacemakers, those who are
persecuted because of righteousness.

Day Nine—nine ladies dancing: the fruit
of the spirit; love, peace, joy, patience,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness, and self control.

Day Ten—ten lords a leaping: the Ten
Commandments.

Day Eleven—eleven pipers: the eleven
faithful disciples.

Day Twelve—twelve drummers
drumming; the twelve points of the
Apostles' Creed



A HYMN ON THE NATIVITY OF MY SAVIOUR

I sing the birth was born to-night,
The author both of life and light;
The angels so did sound it.
And like the ravished shepherds said,
Who saw the light, and were afraid,
Yet searched, and true they found it.

The Son of God th' eternal king,
That did us all salvation bring,
And freed the soul from danger;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word, which heaven and earth did make,
Was now laid in a manger.

The Father's wisdom willed it so,
The Son's obedience knew no No,
Both wills were in one stature;
And as that wisdom had decreed,
The Word was now made flesh indeed,
And took on Him our nature.

What comfort by Him do we win,
Who made himself the price of sin,
To make us heirs of glory!
To see this babe all innocence;
A martyr born in our defence;
Can man forget the story?
—Ben Jonson (1573–1637)

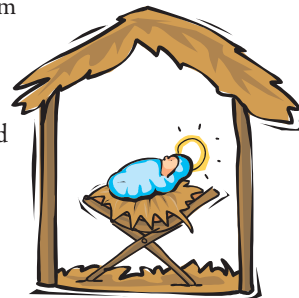
A Christmas Carol

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breast full of milk
And a manger full of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.



What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man,
I would do my part—
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.
Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

O, like a tiny cradle,
Could thy heart become.
God would on earth again
Be born an infant son.

Angelus Silesius
(1624–1677)

Carols from Other Lands

SPAIN: O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

Venid, adoremos, con alegre canto;
venid al pueblito de Belén.
Hoy ha nacido el Rey del los ángeles.
Refrain: Venid y adoremos,
venid y admiremos,
venid y adoremos a Cristo Jesús.

Cantadle loores, coros celestiales;
resuene el eco angelical.
Gloria cantemos al Dios del cielo.
Refrain

Señor, nos gozamos en tu nacimiento;
oh Cristo, a ti la gloria será
Ya en la crne, Verbo del Padre.
Refrain

GERMANY: SILENT NIGHT

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
alles schlaft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute heilige Paar.
Holder Knab im lockigten Haar.
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh',
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh'

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht,
Lieb' aus deinem gottlichen Mund,
Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund.
Jesus in deiner Geburt,
Jesus in deiner Geburt.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Hirten erst kundgemacht.
Durch der Engel Halleluja,
tont es laut bei fern und nah,
Jesus der Retter ist da,
Jesus der Retter ist da.

LATIN: O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

Adeste fideles, Laeti triumphantes;
Venite, venite in Bethlehem;
Natum videte, Regem Angelorum:
Refrain: Venite adoremus,
Venite adoremus,
Venite adoremus Dominum!

Cantet nunc hymnos Chorus angelorum,
Cantet nunc aula caelestium:
Gloria, gloria, In excelsis Deo!
Refrain

Ergo qui natus Die hodierna,
Jesu tibi sit gloria;
Patris aeterni Verbum caro factum!
Refrain

FRANCE: HE IS BORN, THE HOLY CHILD

Melody: "Bring a Torch, Jeannette,
Isabella"

Il est né le divin enfant,
Jouez hautbois, résonnez musette.
Il est né le divin enfant,
Chantons tous son avènement.
Depuis plus de quatre mille ans
Nous le promettaient les prophètes,
Depuis plus de quatre mille ans
Nous attendions cet heureux temps.
Une étable est son logement,
Un peu de paille est sa couchette,
Une étable est son logement,
Pour un dieu quel abaissement.
O Jésus, ô roi tout puissant,
Tout petit enfant que vous êtes,
O Jésus, ô roi tout puissant,
Régnez sur nous entièrement.

Advent Candle Wreath

Buy or make a wreath using four candles—often three purple and one rose candle are used, but feel free to make this your own. Some like to add a fifth candle for Christmas day (this is usually white and goes in the middle). On the **first Sunday** of Advent (this year 2010 it will be November 28th) one candle is lit to represent the hope of Jesus' coming; each Sunday after, you light the previous candle(s) plus one. On the second Sunday two candles are lit, the **second** representing Bethlehem, the city of Jesus' birth or love; the **third** candle stands for the shepherds or joy, and the **fourth** the angels proclamation of Christ's birth or peace.



Familiar Christmas Carols

EASIER

Away in a Manger
Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly
Go Tell It on the Mountain
Little Drummer Boy
O Christmas Tree
O Come, All Ye Faithful
Silent Night! Holy Night!
We Wish You a Merry Christmas

MODERATE

Angels, From the Realms of Glory
Angels We Have Heard on High

Do You Hear What I Hear?
God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen
Hark, the Herald Angels Sing
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
It Came upon the Midnight Clear
Joy to the World! the Lord Is Come
O Little Town of Bethlehem
Once in Royal David's City
Still, Still, Still
The Birthday of a King
The First Noël

We Three Kings of Orient Are
What Child Is This?
While Shepherds Watched

MORE DIFFICULT

Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella
Good Christian Men, Rejoice
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
Mary's Boy Child
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
O Holy Night
Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow
Sweet Little Jesus Boy