

Christmas Gifts



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Dishcloth & Towel Kitchen Angel

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Materials:

- Kitchen towel
- 2 dishcloths
- If you want to make them look like a Christmas angel have the towel be red or green and the dishcloths be one white and the other one green or red, so that you'd have 3 colors for your angel, otherwise, have 1 white dishcloth and one that matches the towel. (Stripes and a checked pattern work great.)
- Complimentary colored ribbon. You can buy bolts 2 for a dollar at Michael's Crafts, Hobby Lobby and JoAnn Fabric's & Crafts.
- A roll of 1/8th size ribbon for neck and to tie on wings.
- A roll of picot 1/4 ribbon for hands and sash.

Directions:

1. Open towel and place it flat on a table.
2. Fold the right and left sides in so that they over lap. (Towel will now be 6 inches wide.)
3. Fold the top of the top of the towel over (towards you) so that it comes 3/4ths of the way down so that it will look like an apron on the angel. You will later pull this portion apart so it will go back to this shape. (This will now be 9 inches long)
4. For the time being, fold the right and left sides of this apron part under again so that you can make the angel's head. (This is about 2 inches wide.)
5. The head is about 2 inches high. Tie the head with a piece of ribbon that you will knot very tightly, then tie into a bow.
6. Fold the matching dishcloth over 2 times until it looks like a long rectangle. These are the arms.
7. Slide them under the apron and up to the head.
8. Match the two ends together so that they look like they are praying or holding a bouquet of flowers and tie in a knot and then into a double bow.
9. Spread out the apron and the arms should stay in place.
10. Make a sash around her waist with another piece of ribbon and tie the bow in the back.
11. Fold the white dishcloth into a rectangle and then into a square.
12. Pinch the square together so that it looks like a pair of wings.
13. Using the same color ribbon that you did to tie around the angel's head, tie the wings around her neck so that they are very tight and knot the ribbon
14. Run off poem to give to either a parent or helper angel.



Something special just for you!

Here's an angel for your kitchen wall
or you can tuck her in a drawer, for she's not that tall.

When you're tired of her just hangin' around
simply snip the 2 ribbons that keep her bound.

This is a no-sew angel you see
neatly folded and carefully tied is she.

When you easily take her apart
she turns into 3 gifts given with love from my heart.

Two dish cloths and a towel for your hands
are unveiled, when you snip the ribbon bands.
I thought it was a cute way to give a gift to you.

To thank you for all the nice things you do.

It was made with lots of TLC,
for you're a wonderful parent to me.
Keep the ribbons and check out how it's done,
then someday you can make another one.

She's easy and fun to make
and only a few moments folding will it take.

Spritz her with your favorite perfume
then her lovely fragrance will help freshen a room.

I hope you'll enjoy making an angel too
to pass on to a friend who's an angel to you.
This little angel's hands are clasped in prayer
like mine are for you, because I care.

They hold a bouquet of terrycloth flowers too.
She's a special gift because I love you!



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When you're tired of her just hangin' around
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When you easily take her apart
she turns into 3 gifts given with love from my heart.

Two dish cloths and a towel for your hands
are unveiled, when you snip the ribbon bands.
I thought it was a cute way to give a gift to you.

To thank you for all the nice things you do.

It was made with lots of TLC,
for you're a wonderful grandparent to me.
Keep the ribbons and check out how it's done,
then someday you can make another one.

She's easy and fun to make
and only a few moments folding will it take.

Spritz her with your favorite perfume
then her lovely fragrance will help freshen a room.

I hope you'll enjoy making an angel too
to pass on to a friend who's an angel to you.
This little angel's hands are clasped in prayer
like mine are for you, because I care.

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neatly folded and carefully tied is she.

When you easily take her apart
she turns into 3 gifts given with love from my heart.

Two dish cloths and a towel for your hands
are unveiled, when you snip the ribbon bands.
I thought it was a cute way to give a gift to you.

To thank you for all the nice things you do.

It was made with lots of TLC,
for you're a wonderful helper to me.
Keep the ribbons and check out how it's done,
then someday you can make another one.

She's easy and fun to make
and only a few moments folding will it take.

Spritz her with your favorite perfume
then her lovely fragrance will help freshen a room.

I hope you'll enjoy making an angel too
to pass on to a friend who's an angel to you.
This little angel's hands are clasped in prayer
like mine are for you, because I care.

They hold a bouquet of terrycloth flowers too.

She's a special gift because I appreciate you!
Thanks for being an angel to our students and me!





I made this pretty wreath for you.
I made it by mixing yellow and blue.
Yellow + Blue as you have seen,
makes a lovely Christmas green.
The red berries, I'll give you a hint,
are made from someone's finger print!
This wreath is a circle it has no end.
It's like my love, that I now send.

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A Finger-Painted Keepsake Wreath

Yellow + Blue Makes Green

Materials:

- Tag board
- Yellow, blue, green paint
- Paint shirts
- Scissors
- Red construction paper
- Glue sticks
- Children's' school photo
- Masters

Directions:

Prep:

- Make a template of the circle.
- Trace and cut out tag board wreaths.
- Write children's names on the non-shiny back.
- Cover tables with paper.
- Lay out paint shirts
- Put wreaths on tables name side up.
- Make a template of the heart.
- Trace and cut out red hearts (2 for each child to make a bow.)
- Run off, and cut out school photo.

The next day...

1. Call children to their seats via their name plate.
2. They have already put on a paint shirt. (I have these in a laundry basket in the hallway, so when then arrive, they immediately put one on.)
3. They flip over their plate.
4. Put a quarter-size dollop of yellow paint on their plate. Remind them not to touch the paint 'til they get their drop of blue.
5. Give everyone yellow, before you do blue.
6. Put a dime-size dollop of blue paint on their plate. They may start to twirl and swirl as soon as they get the blue paint.
7. Some may need a bit more paint to fill up the entire circle. I use real green as when they mix these two colors, although it changes to green,

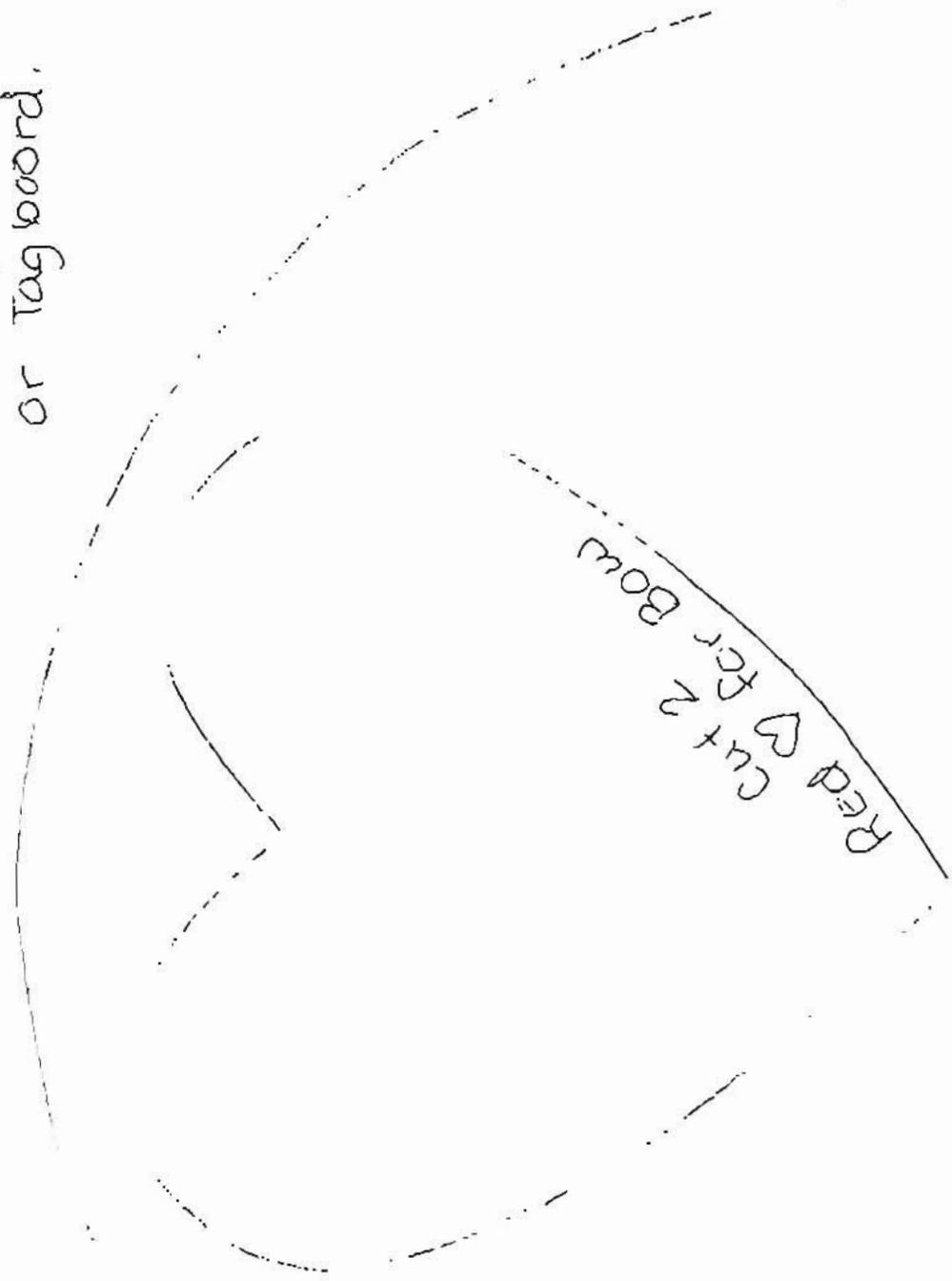
it's not really a pretty Christmas green, so I give them a tad of real green to swirl in as soon as they're done mixing the two primary colors. As they swirl I have them say the equation out loud: Yellow + Blue = Green! The children really enjoy the "magic" of secondary colors!

8. As they finish I send them "hands up!" to the bathroom and place all the circles on a sheet of long paper to dry in the corner.
9. Some start to curl, but they flatten out later.
10. I have an activity like *Pinch and Poke* or *Tetrominoes* for them to do on their tummies, while I'm cleaning up the tables.
11. Then I set up a booklet for them to transition to when I'm done with table clean-up.
12. In the afternoon, I put paper back down on the table, and they once again don a paint shirt.
13. I have their wreaths, circle poems, hearts, pix, and a glue stick sitting on the tables.
14. They glue their circle poem to the center of the wreath. They glue their two red hearts together, then glue their picture to the middle, then glue their bow to the top of their wreath.
15. Then I put paper plates (3 to a table) with a dollop of red paint on them on the tables.
16. They dip their pointer finger in, and make a group/set of 3 berries, then a space and another set, going around their wreath.
17. We set them aside to dry.
18. They wipe their finger on their shirt and I pass around a wet wipe. Children who are messier use the bathroom and we move on to a game or another afternoon activity.
19. These can be wrapped, or simply tucked into their Take Home Folders.
20. They make for a great b. board as well. I've put them on a black background. They look great used as a border with something else in the middle too.
21. I find that December is such a short month, that I don't decorate the hallway or classroom too much.

Finger Painted Wreath

@TeachWithMe.Com 2008

1/2 wreath circle
cut out of cardstock
or tagboard.



Trace other 1/2 to make a circle.

I made this pretty wreath for you.
I made it by mixing yellow and blue.
Yellow + Blue as you have seen,
makes a lovely Christmas green.
The red berries... I'll give you a hint,
are made from someone's finger print!
This wreath is a circle, it has no end.
It's like my love, that I now send.

I made this pretty wreath for you.
I made it by mixing yellow and blue.
Yellow + Blue as you have seen,
makes a lovely Christmas green.
The red berries... I'll give you a hint,
are made from someone's finger print!
This wreath is a circle, it has no end.
It's like my love, that I now send.

Run Off
On White
Copy Paper,
Enough for 2,



There's Only LOVE Inside Magnet

©TeachWithMe.com

Materials:

- Wrapping paper
- Curling ribbon
- Scotch tape
- Student's school pix
- Magnet strip
- Copy of poem
- Glue sticks

Directions:

Prep: These little wrapped boxes were being circulated way back in the 70's when I was in school. I thought they were sweet so I revamped the poem and thought they would make a cute magnet for my students to give to their parents. Wrapping is a wonderful fine motor skill too.

- Cut pieces of tag board to any size that you want. I chose 3x2
- Cut rectangles of wrapping paper larger than your tag board
- Cut lengths of curling ribbon.
- Cut strips of magnet into squares.
- Make copies of your student's photo and cut them into ovals or leave as squares.

The next day....

1. Students wrap their piece of tag board in wrapping paper and tie it with a nice bow and then curl the ends.
2. Children peel and stick their magnet strip on the back.
3. Students glue the end of their poem to the back of their gift.
4. Children glue their photo to the package.

This is a very special gift, which you can never see.
The reason it's so special, is it's just for you from me.
Whenever you are lonely, or sometimes feeling blue,
You only have to hold this gift, and know I'm hugging you.
You must never unwrap it, please leave the ribbon tied,
Just hold this gift close to your heart, for it's filled with **LOVE** inside!

This is a very special gift, which you can never see.
The reason it's so special, is it's just for you from me.
Whenever you are lonely, or sometimes feeling blue,
You only have to hold this gift, and know I'm hugging you.
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You only have to hold this gift, and know I'm hugging you.
You must never unwrap it, please leave the ribbon tied,
Just hold this gift close to your heart, for it's filled with **LOVE** inside!



I was going to give you a dozen roses,
but instead I decided on 10 reindeer noses!
Even better than this little gift,
something that's sure to give you a lift,
is that I can count them 1-10
then start over and do it again!
I hope you like your little treat
I gave them to you 'cause I think you're sweet!
They can flavor your coffee or your tea.
When you drink it, I hope you'll think of me!

Love, _____



Reindeer Nose Counting

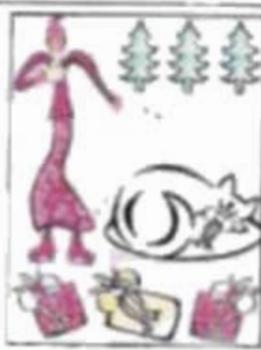
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Materials:

- A bag of red hots
- Several plastic spoons
- Tiny Ziploc baggies

Directions:

1. Dump the red hots into a bowl.
2. Tell children that they may eat one.
3. Advise them that they should NOT touch the red hots with their hands, just the spoon.
4. They count 10 red hots into their little baggie and zip it shut.
5. Read the poem to the children and have them sign it and fold it.
6. Staple their baggie to their poem.
7. Put the red hots, and poem with their chocolate spoon in a larger baggie.
8. Attach a “Sweet Treats” tag on the baggie.
9. Add a curling ribbon bow.



SWEET TREATS
to treat
sweet you!
Love,



SWEET TREATS
to treat
sweet you!
Love,



SWEET TREATS
to treat
sweet you!
Love,



SWEET TREATS
to treat
sweet you!
Love,



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Love,



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Love,



SWEET TREATS
to treat
sweet you!
Love,



SWEET TREATS
to treat
sweet you!
Love,



Chocolate Spoons

©TeachWithMe.com

Materials:

- 2 packages Nestle™ Toll House semi-Sweet Milk Chocolate Morsels
- 2 tablespoons vegetable shortening
- 24 plastic spoons
- red and green curling ribbon
- wax paper
- scissors
- small sandwich bags

Directions:

1. Microwave morsels and shortening in medium, uncovered, microwave-safe bowl on medium-high power for 1 minute then stir.
2. Morsels may retain some of their shape. If necessary, microwave at additional 10-15 second intervals, stirring just until melted.
3. I have also used a new electric potpourri pot on its lowest setting, so that the chocolate stays liquid while all of my children go through the dipping process. I only use this pot for my chocolate making activities.
4. Call each child up to dip their spoon into the chocolate. Have them twist and swirl. I have my students dip and bring out of the chocolate “bath” and hold for a count of 10 or skip count to 100 by 10’s and then dip two more times. They lay their spoon on the wax paper. You can write their name with black marker on the paper, but it doesn’t really matter who gets what spoon as long as everyone gets a turn to help.
5. Remind children to not dunk their spoon in too far, just the spoon part.
6. When everyone is done, take the spoons to the cafeteria refrigerator to get hard.
7. Once again, call children over to put their spoon into a small sandwich bag and then tie with red and green curling ribbons.
8. They put this spoon and their red hot reindeer noses, along with the chocolate spoon explanation, in a Ziploc baggie and take it to their gift bag to be taken home at another point in time.
9. It’s hard for little ones to be working with chocolate and not get a taste, so I bring in Hershey kisses that day and give everyone a “kiss” when we’re finished with our projects.





Tube Sock Heating Pad For Dad

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Materials:

- Large 20 pound bag of rice from Sam's Club. It's been running about \$7 You can always ask each child to bring in a bag of rice to fill their own sock with if you want to.
- 6 bags of dry simmering potpourri. The best smelling is sold at Hobby Lobby. It sells for \$2.50 a bag. I wait for them to have it 50% off during December at various times or go online and print off one of their coupons. They usually have quite a few bags left after Christmas and I really stock up when it's 75% off.
- Red or Green 1/4th ribbon. You can buy it by the roll at Michael's crafts, Hobby Lobby, Wal-Mart and JoAnn Fabrics and Crafts.
- 2 Plastic drinking cups.
- 1 adult-size plain white tube sock. If you can get a children's size that would be perfect, but I find them nearly impossible to find. I have seen them at flea markets sold in packs of 6 and 12. You could buy them that way and then have parents reimburse your.
- Clean waste basket
- Heavy-duty trash bag.

Directions:

1. Put the trash bag in the waste basket.
2. Dump the rice in the waste basket.
3. Dump the potpourri in the waste basket.
4. Stir with a wooden spoon to mix it up.
5. Students really enjoy doing this and it makes your room smell delicious.
6. Cut the bottom out of one of the plastic cups so you can use it as a funnel.
7. Insert the cup in the top of the sock.
8. Call each student up and have them pour 3 cups of rice-potpourri mixture into their sock. This will not fill it all the way full, but you want dad to be able to wrap the sock around his neck a bit too.
9. Tie the sock off at about 11-12 inches.
10. I have my students wrap it right away in tissue paper. We write: To: Kelli's daddy on the tissue and then put it in her brown shopping bag that's filled with all of her presents that she's been working on. They will be taken home on party day; the day before school lets out for Christmas vacation. We also attach a little tag so dad knows what it is with directions of how to use it.
11. Depending on the size of your class you will probably have some left, you can make extra's for the principal, secretaries etc.
12. I keep the bag in the basket with my spoon and when the potpourri goes on sale I toss the bags right in this basket to store for next year.



*This is a special heating pad.
That I made because I love my dad.
If you have a pain or ache.
Put it in the microwave to bake.
It only takes a minute or two,
Then you'll be feeling good as new!
Love,*

Directions: This sock is filled with rice and potpourri. Do NOT get it wet. Do not freeze. Place it in the microwave for 2 to 3 minutes. Place it around your neck, on your feet, back, shoulders, tummy, or whatever muscles need soothing. Your heat-sock can be used 100's of times and was made with lots of TLC which is always the best medicine!



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Put it in the microwave to bake.
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Dear Families

We are making a Christmas present for daddy. We need an adult *plain white* TUBE sock, with **no heel**. You may send in this new pair of socks, or two dollars and I will purchase them for you.

If you'd like me to purchase a pair, please put the **\$2.00** in a baggie or an envelope with your child's name on it, marked SOCKS. ***Please send in the money by*** _____.

If you'd rather go buy your own, please send in a pair of tube socks with your child by _____ as we will be making this gift on that day. **Description: NEW, Plain-White-NO heel adult size** tube socks.

If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call. _____
Thanks in advance for your cooperation

Educationally Yours,



Dear Families

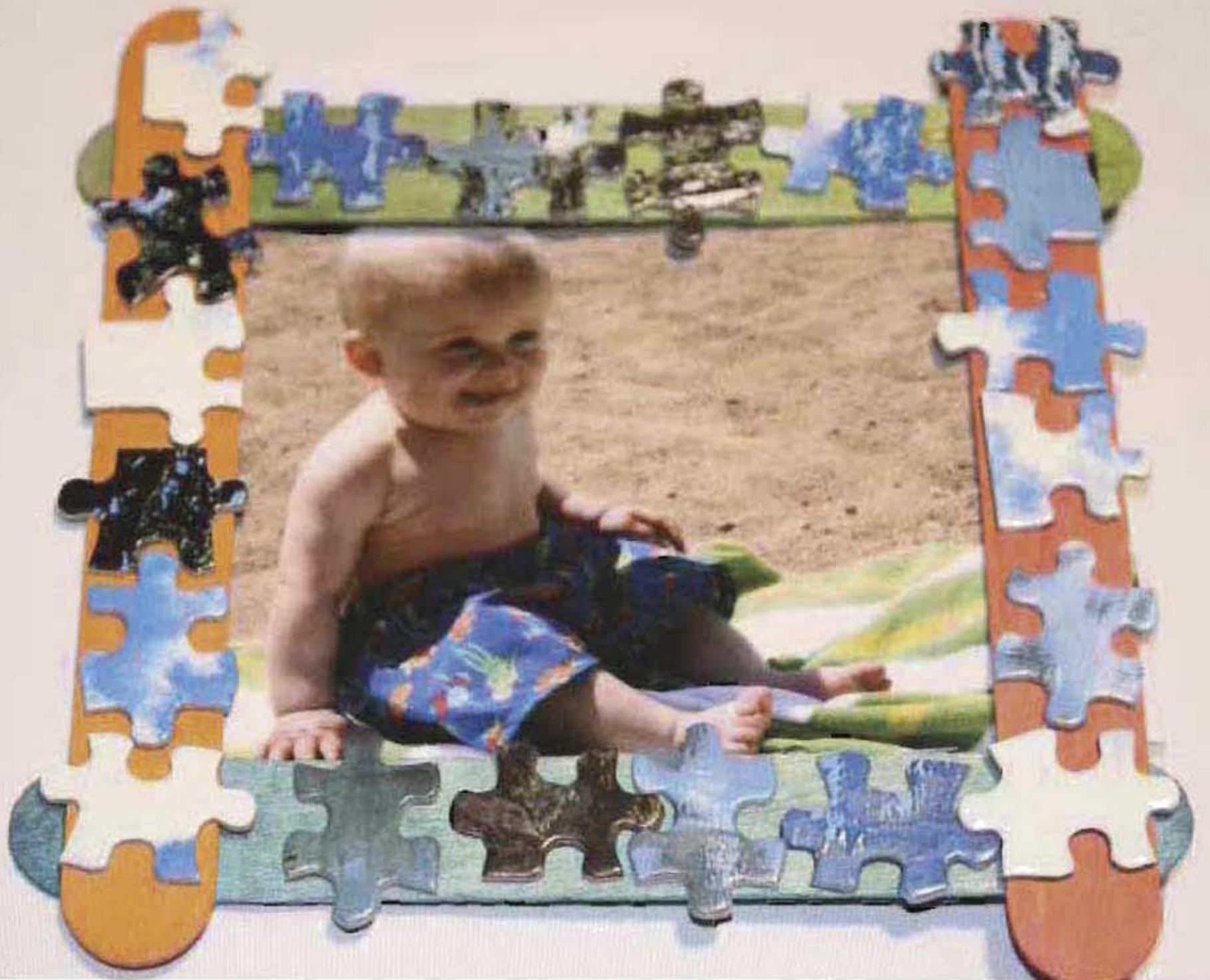
We are making a Christmas present for daddy. We need an adult *plain white* TUBE sock, with **no heel**. You may send in this new pair of socks, or two dollars and I will purchase them for you.

If you'd like me to purchase a pair, please put the **\$2.00** in a baggie or an envelope with your child's name on it, marked SOCKS. ***Please send in the money by*** _____.

If you'd rather go buy your own, please send in a pair of tube socks with your child by _____ as we will be making this gift on that day. **Description: NEW, Plain-White-NO heel adult size** tube socks.

If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call. _____
Thanks in advance for your cooperation

Educationally Yours,





Puzzle Piece Photo Frame

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Materials:

- 4 large colored popsicle sticks
- student photo
- Elmer's glue
- Small puzzle pieces
- Scratch paper.
- Markers

Directions:

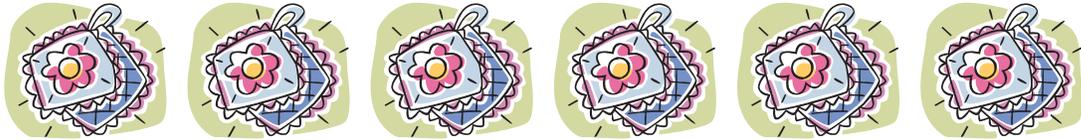
Prep:

- Pre-glue the frames. Make sure that you have the hole small enough so that the picture will fit in it.
 - After the frames are dry, glue the photo to the back of it.
1. Put the frames on a sheet of scratch paper and call students to the work station via their photo.
 2. Squirt a ribbon of glue down the Popsicle stick so that children can place a puzzle piece onto the frame.
 3. Set aside to dry
 4. Children can write an "I love you." message on the back of the frame with a marker.
 5. Wrap in tissue paper.





Mom 1999

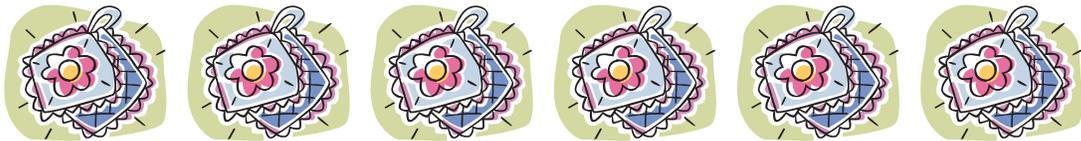


May this potholder protect you from anything hot you touch,
and always remind you of how you're loved so very much!

I love you lots!

Merry Christmas from your handy little helper ...





May this potholder protect you from anything hot you touch,
and always remind you of how you're loved so very much!

I love you lots!

Merry Christmas from your handy little helper ...



Background:

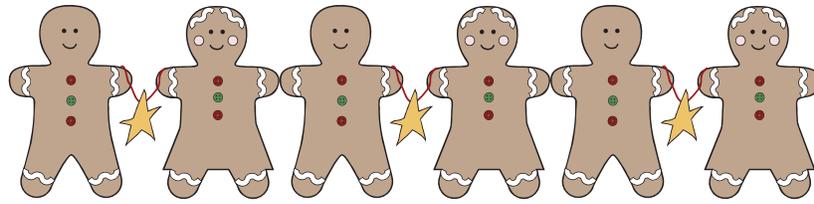
- One of my favorite gifts from my daughter Kelli is when she was in kindergarten; she gave me a red potholder with her tiny red handprint on it. I cherish it. Bless that teacher for making the time to do that and even sewing them!
- Because of that, and how much I love it, I make potholders with my own students every year for Christmas. The Dollar Store usually has 2 for a dollar so it's really not that big of an investment. If it is too costly for you, you can always send a note home that you'd like your students to do chores around the house to earn a \$1.00 to put towards the purchase of craft materials for your class for the month of December when you need extra things for gift making, or you can ask them to bring in a new potholder. That way it even matches their mom's kitchen. It's not a surprise tho'.
- I truly believe that when a child works around the house it builds self-esteem and self-confidence and that when they buy something with their own money from their own efforts it means more.
- Plus when they make a gift and then give it, that too is so precious. They really do get excited about the entire process in my classroom. December is such a fun month because all of our centers are gift-making centers that revolve around our report card standards, but in this extra-special way!

Materials:

- Pot holders
- Permanent paint in a complimentary color to the potholder
- Wash tub
- Foam paint brush
- Marker
- Tissue paper to wrap present
- Copy of master to make as a card to tuck in with potholder.

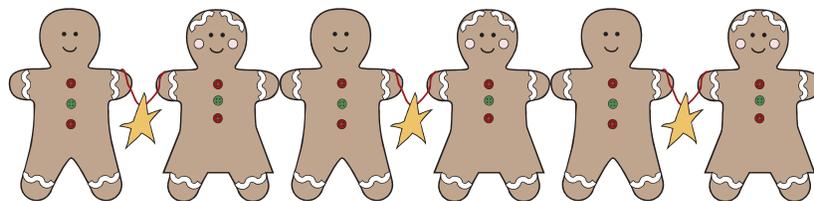
Directions:

1. I do these while my students are involved in "Free-Play-Center-Time"
2. Write name and date on the pot holder with permanent marker
3. Paint child's hand
4. Press on potholder
5. Set aside to dry.
6. When they are dry, have child sign note, fold, put on top of potholder.
7. Child helps wrap present and writes: **To:** Mommy, **Love:** Their Name on the outside.
8. I have a big brown grocery bag with each child's name on it in the corner of our room. Each time they make a gift they put their present in that.
9. The day before party day, everyone takes their gift bag home with a note that says *Do Not Open 'Til Christmas.* ☺



CHRISTMAS
COOKIE
COOK BOOK
BY

CLASS





RECIPE

RECIPE NAME: _____

INGREDIENTS:

DIRECTIONS:

HISTORY:



Dear Families,

We are making a **Classroom Cookie Cook Book** as one of our Christmas gifts and need your help. Attached you will find your child's recipe page. I am copying these pages on the Xerox machine so please write neatly in **black ink**.

Please put your child's name on the top line. i.e. **Kelli's RECIPE**, then the name of the recipe, ingredients, and directions. The history portion is for you to write a little bit about where you got the recipe, why it's one of your favorites, how long you've been making it, whatever you'd like to tell us about your recipe. The cookie recipe does **NOT** have to be a Christmas cookie.

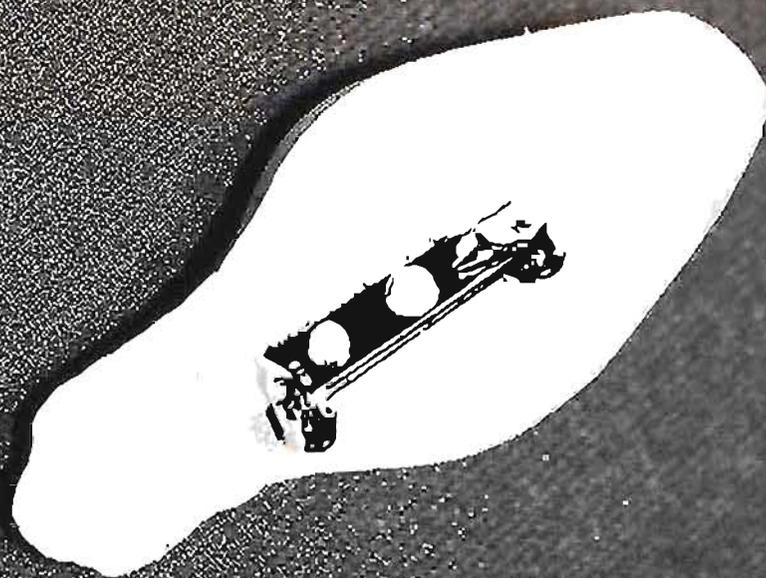
Recipes are due _____ . Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Educationally Yours,











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Plaster Pins & Magnets

Background:

- When I do a workshop I tell my attendees that I want their new "mantra" to be "What can I do with this?" When you go to a garage sale, find a bargain, have someone ask you "Do you want this?" Before you say no, or pass something up, ask yourself: "What can I do with this?" You'd be surprised how the creative juices start flowing. And don't tell me you can't draw a straight line, or I'll hand you a piece of paper!
- Perhaps I ask myself that question too often because I've outgrown the basement and I'm due to expand on my newly acquired storage unit that seemed to look huge when it was empty.
- Well, chocolate cookie molds were on sale, I'm not a baker, but boy were they darling and only 10¢ I just had to think of something I could do with these... I wondered if plaster would dry in there and come out. Ah the possibilities if it would!
- So for 10¢ what did I have to lose? I have sold so many pins and magnets I can not begin to count. The little Christmas lightbulbs alone I have made over 1,000 because I make them every year for my students and all my room mommy helpers, and for the church to sell and give away yada yada yada.
- Sooo...if you are looking for something inexpensive, fun, that you can make a jillion at a time, this is it!
- Most molds have at least 12 slots to fill, some 24 and YES!!! Plaster will dry and pop out of them.

Directions:

- Buy the plaster in the big jar at a hobby store.
- Follow the directions. I like to make mine a bit soupy so it doesn't dry too fast, but not too soupy because your pins will be brittle.
- Fill up your molds to the top with a plastic spoon.
- Tap the molds on the table to release air bubbles.
- Let dry for 15 minutes.
- Tip mold upside down onto a paper towel and gravity should do the trick, if not, gently twist the mold like you would an ice cube tray and they should release.
- Refill and continue for however many you need.
- Do not put plaster in an oven or micro wave. Been there, done that; it disastrous affects.
- I have put the plaster pins on a cookie sheet and warm in the oven when I wanted to dry them faster because I needed to paint them the next day, but that's about it.
- When you wash your molds do so in luke WARM water. I warped mine when I washed them in hot.
- Let dry for 48 hours so you are sure that all the moisture is out so the paint won't peel (Been there, done that too! ☹)
- Sand the edges and back with sand paper.
- Paint however you want. Use a GLOSS paint and you won't have to varnish.)
- Add a magnet or pin back with E6000 glue. Hot glue will not adhere that well and will eventually fall off.
- I used to sell the finished pins and magnets for .98¢ in my gift shop and couldn't keep them in stock.
- Great as party favors or as a Girl Scout project, or anytime you need lots of something!
- Little ones can do them, because even tho they are sloppy painters, a solid red heart pin still looks great no matter how you paint!
- Enjoy.





Merry
Christmas!



Toilet Paper Tube Keepsake Angel.

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Materials:

- 2 coffee filters
- Aluminum foil
- Student photo
- Red construction paper
- Green copy paper
- Toilet paper rolls
- Gold Christmas ribbon 1 ½ wide ribbon
- Glue dots
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Stapler
- White or gold pipe cleaners for the halo.
- Popsicle sticks to tape the wings on
- Scotch tape
- Pencil
- Elmer's glue

Directions:

Prep:

- Cut sheets of aluminum foil to fit around t.p. tubes
- Pre-cut hearts
- Run off "Merry Christmas" on green copy paper and cut out.
- Pre-cut gold ribbon
- Run off student photo's on copy machine and cut out.

The next day...

- Students rub glue all over their t.p. tube and paste their piece of aluminum foil on folding the ends over the top and bottom edges.

- Children pinch one of their coffee filters together to make their wings.
- Give them a piece of scotch tape to hold them together.
- Students glue their photo to a piece of tag board and trim it.
- Children glue their photo to the inside of the top of their aluminum foil tube so that it faces out.
- Help students tape their wings to a popsicle stick and then tape them to the inside of their t.p. tube shoving it up against the back of their photo.
- Trace the bottom of the t.p. holder onto the coffee filter with a pencil.
- Cut out that circle.
- Gently slide the angel into the circle.
- Find out where you want your “skirt” to be, and then put a ring of glue on the “waist” of the aluminum foil.
- Shove the skirt on top of the glue and make sure that it sticks to the glue.
- Place the gold “sash” over the glue and skirt. Adhere it to the back with several glue dots.
- Using glue dots point the hands in the front. Fasten the “arms” to the back with another glue dot.
- Place a red heart in her hands and staple it.
- Glue the green “Merry Christmas” to the heart.



**Merry
Christmas!**



Quick And Easy Gifts For Your Students/Children To Make:

With Tips On How To Go About It

December's quite a whirl wind month and it's easy to be swept along in the Christmas excitement of children. One can almost feel the energy in the air; it's invigorating if you let it!

So that I'm not overwhelmed with a zillion things to do, I incorporate the "making of gifts" as center activities instead of "extra" activities. There's also enough expense on the home front so I try to keep things on a low-budget scale in the classroom. I do this in several ways:

- I shop for bargains after the holidays and during Christmas in July. Garage sales and flea markets are also a plethora of "good stuff". I Stock up on the things that I'll need for the upcoming season at a fraction of the cost, and then store it for next year. So that I don't forget, I make a list of things that I'm out of as I pack up my December units and then hang that list inside my kitchen cupboard. I also make a list of what I do have.
- Because I change things up each year and do so many different things, I jot down what worked and what I'll be doing again. I take a photo of finished projects and bulletin boards so that I know how the finished projects look and file a sample along with each of the masters.
- I've also found that parents are more than willing to help contribute ingredients for things, or send in an "extra" for another child that didn't bring something, so don't be afraid to ask and send a letter home. This took me years to learn, until kind room mom's prompted and assured me that it was OK to do so. To alleviate this "last minute" asking, you can always let parents know way in advance via a list of necessities in your student handbook, monthly calendar, newsletter, or "sign up to donate things" that you display at open house and conferences. One parent also shared with me that because she works and leads a very hectic life with 5 children; she'd just as soon send in several dollars and have me pick up whatever her child needs. When I discussed this with other parents it was pretty unanimous that all of them were happy to oblige when it came to sending in T-shirts, socks, a potholder or whatever. They'd much rather send in a few dollars than run around town trying to find something on a list and risk that it wasn't correct.
- I've long since given up having everyone bring in a magazine, can, jar, Kleenex box, toilet paper, or paper towel roll on the due date. I simply have boxes in my basement and save them all year.

- Finally, the crafts I do use pretty standard supplies and I have most of them in my classroom. I also have a **“Could Use-Please Donate:”** Section in my newsletter and I list things that we run low on such as wiggle eyes, pipe cleaners, etc. Several of my teacher friends post a turkey with thankful feathers, or a Christmas tree with thankful balls with things their classroom needs for December outside their door during November conferences. They say this is extremely helpful to get them through a busy craft month.

Keepsake Potholder Christmas Gift For Mom: Ever since my daughter Kelli lovingly presented me with her handmade one years ago, I vowed that this would be a standard “have-to-do” on my make-it/take-it craft list. It’s one of my all-time favorite gifts that she ever made me and it’s launched hundred’s of cute little handprints into other mommy’s hearts.

Christmas Cookie Cookbook: Wrap the potholder along with a class-made cook book and a cute paper gingerbread ornament with their little darling’s face on it (See December bulletin board ideas-[Gingerbread men.](#)) and you have a “Wow!” gift that any mom will love. If you'd like to teach a [Gingerbread Unit](#), or do more [Gingerbread Art & Activities](#) click on the links for all sorts of wonderful ideas.

Plaster Pins: Did you know that you can use chocolate molds to make plaster pins? They pop out perfectly and can easily be painted by the youngest child and still look quite fantastic. There’s a huge variety out there and they start at only a dollar! Children can make these as another gift for mommy, or something for grandma as most grandparents will be popping over for the holidays. The one in the photo is painted with metallic lavender paint. The metallic paints are wonderful to use because they not only have a shimmery luster, they also have a gloss finish.

Christmas Gift For Dads: A heat-filled "Soothing Sock": It’s easy to make a present for mommy, so often times daddies are left out. Not in my class; and this is a proven winner. Fill a tube sock with rice and cinnamon-clove Christmas potpourri, attach a note and you’re set. What could be easier than that? Click on the link to view/print directions and pattern for how to make a "soothing sock" filled with rice for dad.

Bun Warmers or Trivet Christmas Gift: These too are wonderful keepsakes. You can put a handprint on them, or use any kind of rubber stamp. Children put the paint on with a sponge brush and then they pat, not brush the paint on the stamp; one hard press and you have a very professional looking picture. So that it doesn’t scrape off, I take the tiles outside and spray them with clear-gloss varnish.

I choose a Christmas tree and the children decorate it with different colored balls using a Q-tip. If you heat the tile in the microwave for 30-seconds it will get hot. Tuck it in your basket of rolls under the napkin to keep them warm, or use your tile as a trivet. This too is an inexpensive gift as you can pick discounted tiles up for as little as 29¢ Watch for

them at garage sales at new homes. Small tiles (4x4) are perfect for little hands, but I got an entire box full of 5x8 tiles for only \$1.00 and we simply used a bigger tree stamp. You could also use more than one stamp on the tile too.

Gingerbread Banner Christmas Gift: This is the same paint-stamping concept as above. Go to a wallpaper store and ask them if you could have one of their discontinued fabric-looking wallpaper books. Then tear the neutral pages out and cut the bottom edges off using pinking shears. These stores also have fabric swatch books that make perfect banners. Most stores will give them to teachers for free if you ask, and tell them that you're a teacher. I've only had to pay \$1 or \$2 in one store and it was well worth it to get such perfect backgrounds for my banner projects.

These too look so neat and professional because "paint stamping" is very easy for even the youngest child to do. I punch a hole in the top of this banner and use a pipe cleaner twisted into a circular shape so parents can hang it on a doorknob. I've also glued a Popsicle stick to the top and knotted yarn to either end for hanging.

Puzzle Frame: When you lose puzzle pieces from puzzles in your class, don't dismay: keep them for crafts! You can also pick up 100-piece puzzles at The Dollar Store, or at garage sales for as little as a quarter. Simply glue them to a Popsicle stick frame and you have a darling keepsake for any member of the family. If you don't want to take pictures of your students, send a note home asking parents to send in a family photo for this project. Make sure to tell them that it will be used in a craft and they will not be getting it back in the same form they sent it.

Secondary-Color Study Wreath: Even though we are doing crafts and making gifts, all of these in some way or another are linked to my report card standards. We are counting, measuring, reviewing shapes, comparing, writing, etc. If you ever need clarification on that, just drop me an e-mail and I'll send you the specifics. The wreath is a mini science study of colors. Your students will get so excited when yellow and blue change right before their eyes. Mine squeal: "Mrs. Henderson come quick! It's green. It's green!" It's a bit messy, but they have so much fun, and works as a wonderful math equation of yellow + blue = green. Just by doing this simple and fun project they remember that little bit of science because it was so "hands-on" (pardon the pun)!

Don't Open It Magnet: Is your fridge covered with magnets? Mine too! A warm feeling seems to flow through you when you glance at a child's photo or work of art as you fly through your busy day. That's exactly what I want this little magnet to do, "So don't open it...there's nothing but love inside this wrapped piece of tag board as you'll find out by reading the poem.

Glass Pin Christmas Gift: If you didn't want to mess with the plaster above, and still wanted to make a pin, you could make a flat-backed clear glass stone pin. These too are easy and inexpensive. Most craft stores sell these flat "marbles" that are used in floral

arrangements or put in vases for wedding centerpieces. They usually sell for \$1.99 a bag at **Hobby Lobby**, but this department and product are always on sale for 50% off, so watch for sales. Brush Elmer's glue or spray adhesive to the back of the stone and press on your cut out picture, add a piece of tag board so that the glue from the pin doesn't bleed through, and then glue a pin to the back and you are done. You can use a child's school photo, pictures from wrapping paper, etc. I designed labels with 3 Winnie the Pooh pictures in a row and printed them off. I cut the labels into 1/3's so that each child had a Pooh head to glue on their glass pin. Before hand they stuck the sticker on a circular piece of tag board and then glued it to the back of the glass, and then glued on a pin.

"There's an Angel In The Kitchen" Towel: I've been making these for over 20 years! I designed them a very long time ago as thank you gifts for people who were angels in my life, and later sold them in my Victorian gift shop, Hastings House. They were always a huge hit. They make the perfect gift for those special volunteers who make your life easier by helping out in your classroom, but are easy enough to make if you want to do this as a class gift for your little ones to make. Simply send the letter home so that your students bring in the towel and 2 dishcloths; you provide the ribbon and poem.

Chocolate Spoons: This was another "hot seller" in my store. They came in a zillion different flavors. My daughter's favorites were Irish Cream, and Raspberry Amaretto. It only seemed natural that I would whip up a batch for my Y5's to help "dunk" , wrap and take home as a sweet treat for their loved ones. I do this on our Reindeer Theme Day when my students are counting red-hot Rudolph noses! We tuck a package of those in with our chocolate spoon. This is really simple, lots of fun for little ones, and a pleasurable gift for anyone on the list!

Angel Toilet Paper Roll Christmas Note Holder: I save toilet paper rolls all year so it's not a big deal to whip these little angels together with my students. Gather a bit of aluminum foil, some scraps of construction paper and ribbon, 2 coffee filters, and a child's photograph + a pair of scissors and a glue stick and you're ready to make this cute keepsake. Besides being a table decoration you can hot glue a spring clothespin to the back and she becomes a note or recipe card holder.

