



**E-book Code:
REAU8005**



For Years 4 - 7

Christmas Around the World

**Cross curriculum activities
researching global Christmas customs
and traditions.**

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© Ready-Ed Publications - 2004. (Revised Edition)

Published by Ready-Ed Publications (2004) P.O. Box 276 Greenwood, W.A. 6024

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ISBN 1 86397 268 4

Teachers' Notes

"Christmas Around the World" is an activity book for 8 -12 year olds that explores how different countries celebrate Christmas. The book provides children with a variety of research, art, craft and cooking activities designed to give children the opportunity to examine the Christmas traditions and customs of other countries and cultures.

Some of the research activities incorporate the use of the Internet as a research tool and a comprehensive list of Online References relating to Christmas is included.

Using the Book

Some suggestion for making the best use of the activities.

Bookmark all the Internet sites before you begin this unit of work. If you have more than one computer available the sites for each country can be bookmarked on different computers and the children can rotate around the computers.

The activities are ideal for group work with each group looking at one country. The group can choose an art or craft activity and a recipe relating to the country from the book. At the end of the unit of work a presentation day and a "cooking and tasting" day can be planned. On the presentation day, the children can display their craft and give a talk on what they have learnt about how their country celebrates Christmas. On the "cooking and tasting" day, children from the each group could be responsible for providing the ingredients for the recipes and the tasting of the food could replace the traditional class Christmas party.

Sometimes Internet websites disappear. If you can't connect with the site immediately, try again at a later time. The site might have only disappeared temporarily or moved to another location.

If a site does disappear, the Online Reference page provides a comprehensive list of Christmas sites that can be used for the research activities. The list is only a fraction of the Christmas websites on the Internet and if the children can use the search engines they will be able to locate many more that could assist in their research.

Please note: Due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, at times websites will disappear or undergo modifications. While every effort has been made to select stable and potentially long-term sites the publishers advise that they will not be responsible if any Internet websites used in this book change or cannot be located. Check this URL for updates to websites in this book:

www.readyed.com.au/christmas/

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Universal Christmas Traditions

Go to Site 1 www.absolutelycrackers.com/historynew.html

Go to Site 2 www.museevirtuel.ca/Exhibitions/Noel/angl/basnoel.htm

The Christmas stocking and the Christmas cracker seem to be part of the Christmas tradition in countries all over the world. Use the Internet sites to find out about how and why these Christmas favourites came about.

Christmas Stockings

1. Who was the first author to talk about Christmas stockings in his stories?
In what century did this happen?

2. Who was the illustrator of this story?
.....

3. What was used to place gifts in before Christmas stockings became popular?
Where is it likely that this tradition originated from?
.....

4. Explain why mandarin oranges have a special meaning to some people in Canada.
.....



Sample

Christmas Crackers

1. Who invented the cracker and in what year?

2. What was the inventor's occupation?

3. From which country did the inventor get the idea for the cracker?

What was its original name?

4. Explain how the cracker makes a small explosive sound when pulled.

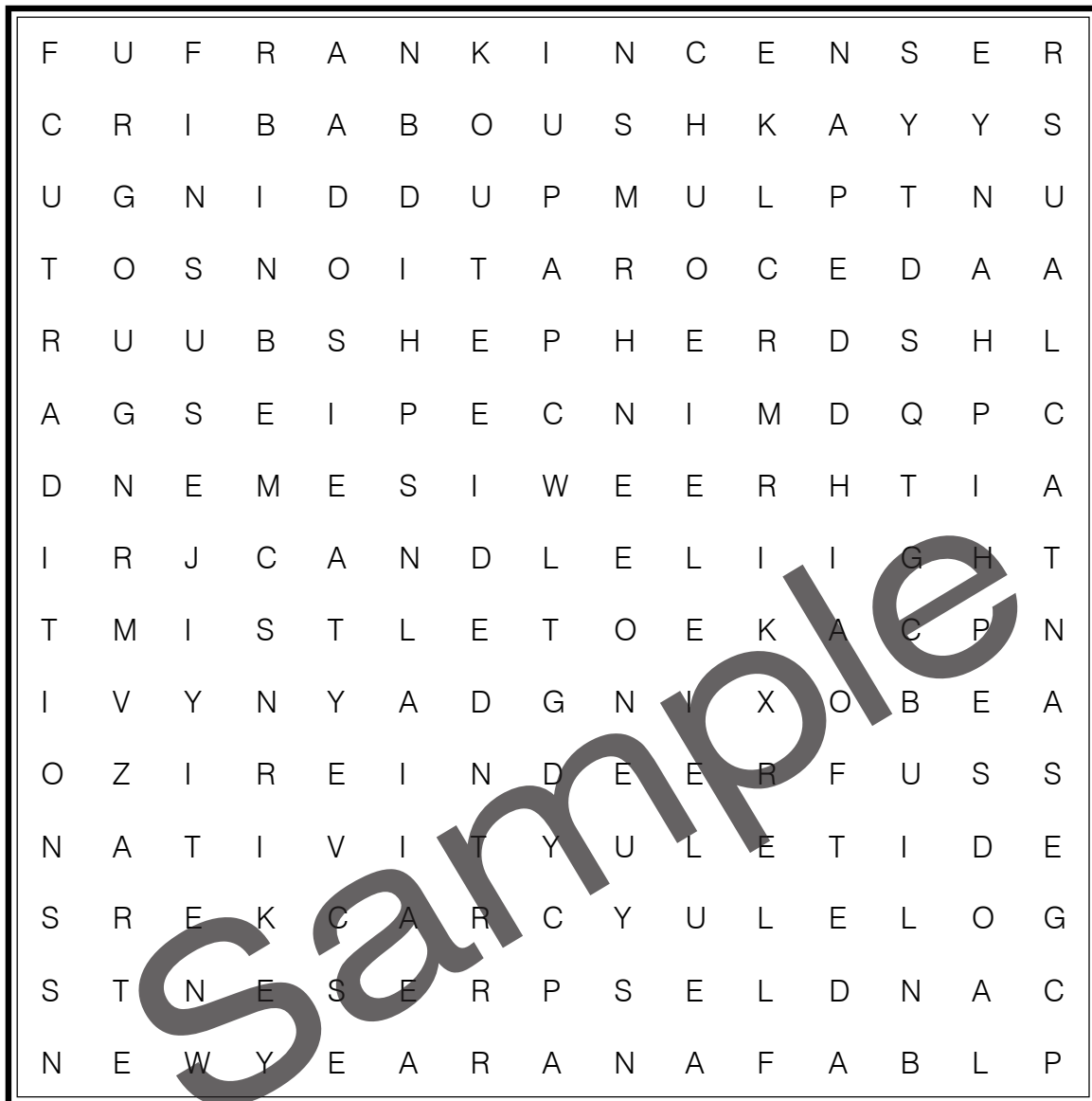
.....

5. List some of the many items that have been placed inside crackers since their invention.

.....

.....

Giant Christmas Word Puzzle



Find the Christmas related words in the puzzle.



- Baboushka
- Boxing Day
- Cake
- Candlelight
- Candles
- Crackers
- Crib
- Decorations
- Epiphany
- Frankincense
- Ivy
- Jesus
- Mince pies
- Nativity
- Mistletoe
- New Year
- Plum pudding
- Presents
- Reindeer
- Saint Nicholas
- Santa Claus
- Shepherds
- Three Wise Men
- Traditions
- Tree
- Yule log
- Yuletide

Holiday Traditions in Spain

Go to www.readyed.com.au/christmas/spain.htm

1. An unusual tradition in Spain is "Hogueras". Explain what this tradition involves.

.....
.....

2. List the Spanish traditions which are similar to that of most countries.

.....
.....

3. What is "La Misa Del Gallo"?

4. Describe what would be served at a traditional Spanish Christmas dinner.

.....
.....

5. What is a truffle?

6. What might be served as dessert?

The Legend of the Three Wise Men

Fill in the missing words.

The legend tells of three travelling throughout the country
on their way to To welcome them,

fill their shoes with on

For their efforts, their shoes are filled with on the following morning.

The most popular of the three wise men is

1. On what date is the Epiphany?

2. Why do you think the Three Wise Men were travelling to Bethlehem?

.....

3. Why do the children fill their shoes with straw?

4. Why do you think Balthazar is considered to be the most popular of the Three Wise Men?

.....

The Nativity Scene

The *nacimiento* or nativity scene can be found in nearly every Spanish home and church at Christmas time. Here are some ideas on how to create some simple and effective nativity scenes.

Cone Figure Nativity Scene

Materials

To make the manger

The manger can be made in several ways. The simplest way is to use a shoe box or any other suitable sized box and decorate it with paint and crayons to resemble a manger. To make the manger look authentic, ice-cream sticks could be used to cover the outside of the boxes before they are painted.

Other ideas are

A manger can be constructed using strong glue, ice-cream sticks, cardboard and wood. (This would be ideal as a *Design, Make and Appraise* activity.)

To make the figures

To make the Three Wise Men, Joseph, Mary, the shepherds and baby Jesus, use the stencils on the following page. You can draw your own cone figures to add to the nativity scene. Colour in each figure and glue the cone together to make a standing figure.

To make the animals

The animals can be toy animals or made with pipe-cleaners wound around with wool, as shown.

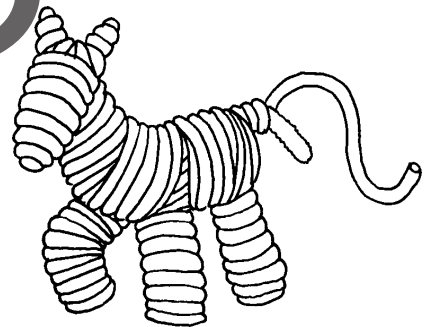
To make the crib

The crib can be made from a match box or any other small box.

To set up the nativity scene

Spread hay around the floor of the manger and in the crib.

Put baby Jesus in the crib and place the other figures in and around the manger.

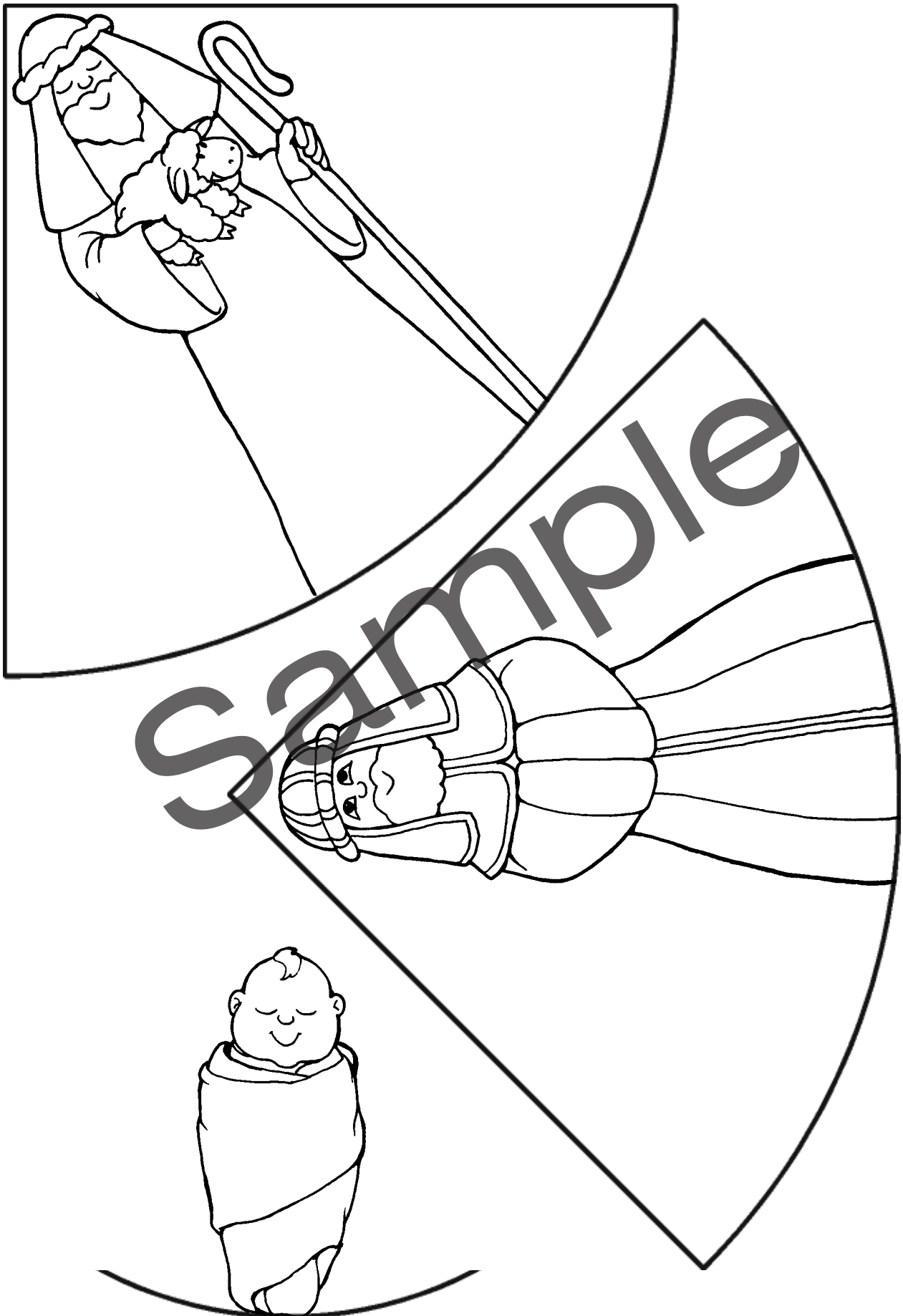


Other suggestions

- ❖ This is an ideal group activity with different group members being responsible for completing different parts of the nativity scene.



Nativity Scene Stencils



Christmas Down Under

Go to Site www.azmetro.com/nzchris.html

Click on Christmas Down Under to answer these.

1. What is the main difference between Christmas in New Zealand and Australia compared to other parts of the world?

.....

2. What are some of the traditions that have come from countries in the northern hemisphere?

.....

.....

3. What adaptations to the hot weather have some Australians and New Zealanders made when celebrating Christmas dinner or lunch?

.....

.....

Click on Carols by Candlelight to answer these.

4. When did Carols by Candlelight begin and whose idea was it?

.....

5. Where was the first Carols by Candlelight held?

6. Why are candles for Carols by Candlelight sold to the public?

.....

.....

Click on Pohutakawa-Metrosideros excelsa.

7. Describe a pohutakawa.

.....

.....

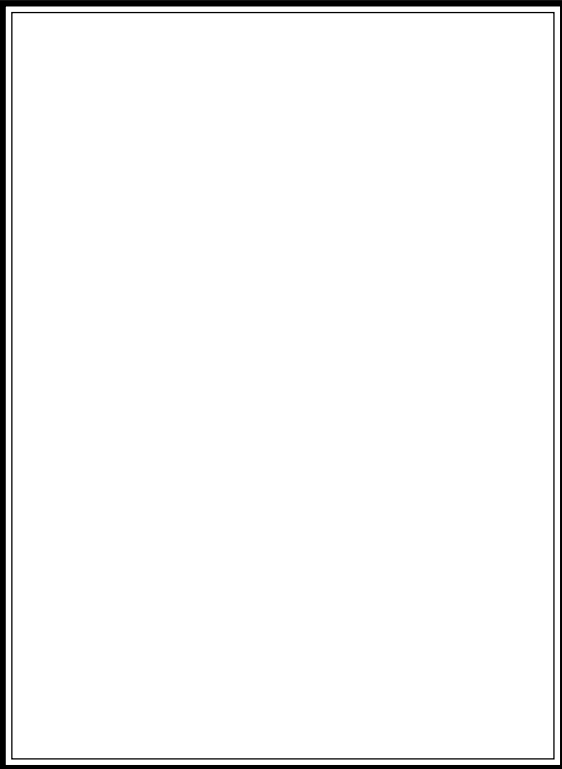
8. Do an illustration of a pohutakawa.

9. Why is this tree struggling to survive?

.....

.....

.....



Sample

Family Traditions

Go to Site www.azmetro.com/nzchris.html

Click on Family Traditions.

- Read the different accounts of the traditions of different families in New Zealand and Australia.

1. What are some of the unusual things that people do at Christmas time?

.....

.....

.....

2. What is the most interesting family tradition that you read about at this website?

.....

.....

.....

- Write an account of your family's Christmas day. Include information about what you eat, the activities you do, who you visit, how and when you exchange gifts and any unusual family traditions you have.

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What tradition do you like most about Christmas?

.....

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