

December 6

## Hanukkah

**Background Information:** Hanukkah is celebrated around the world for eight days and nights. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees or Israelites over the Greek-Syrian ruler, Antiochus about 2200 years ago. A Menorah is a special nine-branched candelabrum, also known in Hebrew as a Hanukkah. Each night of Hanukkah, an additional candle is placed in the Menorah from right to left, and then lit from left to right. On the last night, all the candles are lit. A dreidel, or sivion is a four-sided top that has a Hebrew letter on each side. During Hanukkah, families eat latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiot (jelly donuts), or other foods that are fried in oil, to celebrate and commemorate the miracle of the Festival of Lights. (Funology)

## Menorah

### What you will need

- 9 popsicle sticks for each Menorah
- Orange, yellow, and gold tissue paper
- Silver/gray paint
- Glue
- Glitter
- Paper plate
- Giant craft sticks (1 for each Menorah)



What you will do:

Divide youth into teams of 3-4

**Distribute supplies and materials**

1. Have youth cut the paper plate in half
2. Have youth paint  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the paper plate on the outside with silver paint along with the giant craft stick and 9 popsicle sticks
3. While paint is wet youth should sprinkle glitter on to the small popsicle sticks
4. After the paint has dried, youth should glue on the flames to the end of each of the 9 candles
5. Youth should place single rows of glue on the front of the  $\frac{1}{2}$  paper plate (see example) and then put glitter on the glue
6. Finally, youth should glue the giant craft stick to the bottom and the 9 candles across the top

## Christmas December 13

**Background Information:** There are many ways to celebrate Christmas and people in different countries blend their cultural traditions with more universal Christmas celebrations. It is common for many households to have decorated Christmas trees, either real or fake. Many homes are also decorated to fit the Christmas theme prior to and on Christmas Day. Many workplaces hold Christmas parties in the weeks leading to Christmas Day.

Many people have a day off work and spend time with their families and loved ones on Christmas Day. Festive activities include exchanging Christmas presents, joining in Christmas feasts, and listening to Christmas-themed music or movies. For some cultures, Christmas is an exclusive family affair that sees relatives travel from different geographic regions to unite at this time of the year. Other people may choose to openly invite friends to a Christmas buffet or potluck lunch or dinner.

Christmas Day is a special day for children who receive gifts that they have been longing for. Many children believe in Santa Claus, or Father Christmas, a figure who is believed to provide Christmas presents to children. Some children write "letters to Santa" a few weeks before Christmas Day, asking for a gift that they desire most. Christmas cards are also exchanged among adults and children prior to Christmas Day.

Many churches have special Christmas Day services, some of which include choirs, joyous singing, and meet-and-greet opportunities after the church services. Many churches are beautifully decorated and may include a crèche or miniature Nativity scene. Some large-scale Christmas church services are televised for those who do cannot attend a church service. (Time and Date)

## Rudolph Muchies

### What you will need:

- Red peanut M and Ms
- Pretzel twists
- Mini chocolate donuts
- White frosting (for eyes)





**What you will do:**

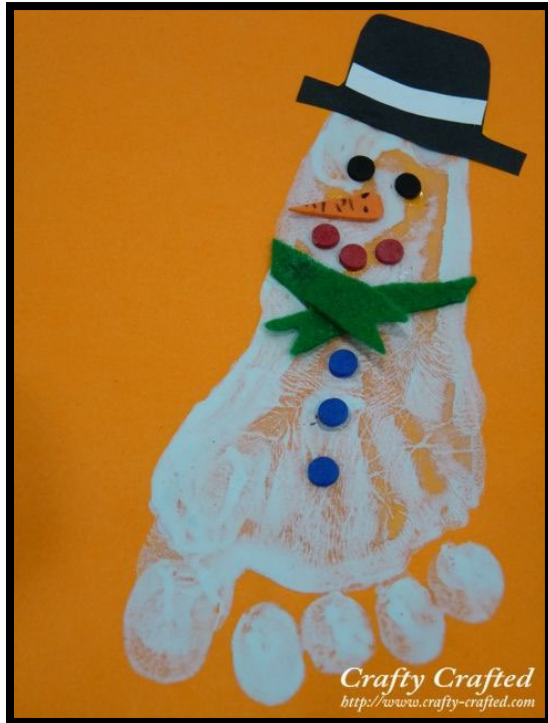
1. Divide youth into teams of 3-4
2. Distribute the supplies to each team (it is suggested that each youth get 2-3 treats
3. Youth will assemble the Rudolph donuts
4. Eat and enjoy!

December 20

## Footprint Snowman

### What you will need:

- Background paper
- White paint
- Two aluminum trays for paint and water to wash the foot off
- Paper towels
- Newspaper
- Red, green blue, black and orange felt
- Scissors
- Glue



### What you will do:

1. Divide youth into teams of 3-4
2. Distribute the supplies to each group
3. Have youth write his/her name on the back of the background paper

4. One group at a time, have youth come and step into the white paint and then onto the background paper (if they need to get some of the paint off have them blot the footprint on newsprint first before they step onto the background paper)
5. After making the footprint, youth should rinse his/her foot in the water and then dry on a paper towel
6. When footprint is dry, youth should cut out the appropriate shapes from felt and glue onto the footprint to make the snowman

December 27

## Kwanzaa

**Background Information:** Kwanzaa is a 7-day celebration that begins on December 26 and ends on January 1. Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday but it does celebrate and honor African culture. Kwanzaa is mainly celebrated in the United States and each year about 18 million people participate. Kwanzaa celebrations include African dances, drums, storytelling and poetry. The colors of Kwanzaa are black, red, and green. Black represents the color of the people, green represents the fertile land of Africa, and red represents blood shed in the struggle for freedom. Kwanzaa supports unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. Each night a candle is lit to remind the celebrants of one of the values.

### Kwanzaa Pasta Necklace

#### What you will need:

- Ziti noodles
- Red, green, and black tempera paint
- Paintbrushes
- Clear acrylic spray (optional)
- Shoelaces, ribbon, yarn, or thin elastic cord



#### What you will do:

1. Paint ziti noodles with red, green, and black tempera paint.
2. Allow to dry.
3. Spray with clear acrylic spray if you like. (Alternatively, you could use spray paint or dye the noodles using the Pasta Dye recipe.)
4. Give your child a shoelace (or a piece of ribbon, yarn, or thin elastic cord) with a piece of masking tape wrapped around one end.
5. Show him how to thread it through the noodles to make a colorful Kwanzaa necklace.