

ALL ABOARD



CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON WITH

THE POLAR EXPRESS



CLARION
BOOKS

THROW A POLAR EXPRESS PARTY!

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN TIPS AND IDEAS FOR PLANNING THE PERFECT *Polar Express*

GET YOUR TICKETS READY: PREPARING FOR YOUR EVENT

YOUR *Polar Express* PARTY IS YOUR OWN, AND THE ACTIVITIES AND GAMES YOU WANT TO INCORPORATE SHOULD BE UNIQUE TO YOU! FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT, THE BEST PRACTICE IS TO INCLUDE A READ-ALoud OF *The Polar Express*, SOME INTERACTIVE GAMES FOR FAMILIES (BOTH AS ICEBREAKERS AND DURING LULLS), AND SNACK TREATS OR PARTY FAVORS FOR FUN TAKEAWAYS.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, YOU'LL WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE TO KEEP ATTENDING FAMILIES AND KIDS ENGAGED, WHILE KEEPING THE EVENT LAYOUT NICE AND EASY FOR YOU.

STRUCTURE YOUR PARTY:

- ✱ **STEP 1: SPREAD THE WORD:** ONCE YOU'VE SET THE DATE FOR YOUR PARTY, START BUILDING EXCITEMENT BY PASSING OUT INVITATIONS TO LET YOUR GUESTS KNOW WHEN AND WHERE THE FUN WILL BE! INVITATIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS KIT.
- ✱ **STEP 2: SET THE STAGE FOR FUN:** IN HOSTING A *Polar Express* PARTY, IT'S RECOMMENDED TO INCLUDE A READ-ALoud OF THE BOOK AS THE CENTERPIECE FOR YOUR GUESTS. BUT DON'T FORGET THE GAMES! PREPARE A SERIES OF ICEBREAKER ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES AND KIDS TO PARTICIPATE IN TO SET THE TONE FOR THE EVENT. WE RECOMMEND OPENING YOUR PARTY WITH ACTIVITIES LIKE THE ONES ENCLOSED IN THIS KIT (PREFERABLY CONNECTED TO THE BOOK) TO ENGAGE YOUR GUESTS AND GET THEM EXCITED!
- ✱ **STEP 3: PROVIDE THE RIGHT TOOLS:** IN ADDITION TO FUN AND GAMES, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PLAN AHEAD FOR ANY DOWNTIME AT THE EVENT. ALSO ENCLOSED IN THIS KIT IS A SERIES OF REPRODUCIBLE ACTIVITY SHEETS TO COPY AND PASS OUT, TO KEEP KIDS ENGAGED, AS ATTENTIONS MAY WANDER DURING THE FESTIVITIES.
- ✱ **STEP 4: SET THE PERFECT READ-ALoud ATMOSPHERE:** WE'VE ENCLOSED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOOK INSIDE THIS KIT TO MAKE THE READ-ALoud EXPERIENCE AN ENGAGING ONE.
- ✱ **STEP 5: HAVE FUN!** AS ANY EVENT PLANNER KNOWS, ATTENTION SPANS MAY BE SHORT AND CHALLENGES MAY ARISE! HAVE FUN WITH THE MATERIALS IN THIS KIT, AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE FLEXIBLE.

ORDER AND MAKE THOSE DECORATIONS:

YOU DON'T NEED TO SPEND A LOT OF MONEY ON STORE-BOUGHT DECORATIONS WHEN YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN FOR THE PARTY! ENCLOSED IN THIS KIT ARE DECORATING TEMPLATES FOR WINTER GARLAND AND FUN NORTH POLE SIGNS FOR GUESTS TO ADD SOME DECORATING FLAIR TO THE PARTY. HERE ARE SOME ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR PRE-PARTY DECORATIONS THAT ARE SIMPLE AND FUN.

- ✱ **HOMEMADE WREATHS** PURCHASE PLASTIC PLATES (AVAILABLE AT ANY GROCERY OR PARTY SUPPLY STORE), AND CUT A HOLE IN EACH PLATE IN THE CENTER. THEN, USING PAINT (IN EITHER TRADITIONAL GREEN OR YOUR OWN UNIQUE COLOR CHOICE!) COVER OVER THE ENTIRE PLATE (BOTH SIDES). ONCE THE PAINT DRIES, TIE A SIMPLE RIBBON AT THE TOP, AND VOILA! YOUR OWN HOMEMADE WREATH. NO PAINT? ANOTHER CREATIVE OPTION IS TO PICK UP BOWS AT YOUR LOCAL CHRISTMAS TREE SHOP AND, USING HOT GLUE (OR STAPLES), AFFIX ALL OVER THE PLATE FOR A UNIQUE APPROACH TO A CHRISTMAS WREATH.

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THROW A POLAR EXPRESS PARTY!

CONTINUED

- ✱ **CANDY CANE BOUQUETS** ADD A DELICIOUSLY DECORATIVE TOUCH TO YOUR *Polar Express* PARTY WITH HOMEMADE BOUQUETS MADE OF CANDY CANES! GATHER A PACKAGE OF CANDY CANES TOGETHER IN A PLASTIC BOWL OR VASE, AND TIE A RED RIBBON AROUND THE INSTANT BOUQUET FOR TABLE TOPS OR THE ENTRY WAY FOR THE EVENT.
- ✱ **PINT-SIZE SNOWMEN** PICK UP A SET OF BABY FOOD JARS (OR ANY SMALL JAR AVAILABLE), AND, USING ACRYLIC OR ANY WHITE PAINT AVAILABLE, COVER THE ENTIRE OUTSIDE, HEAD TO TOE. THEN USE BLACK PAINT ON THE FRONT OF THE JAR TO CREATE EYES AND A MOUTH! DON'T FORGET ORANGE PAINT FOR A CARROT NOSE! PERFECT TO DECORATE YOUR SPACE OR AS PARTY FAVORS FOR GUESTS.

DON'T FORGET THE SNACKS!

IF YOUR PARTY ALLOWS FOR FOOD AND DRINKS FOR YOUR GUESTS, HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE AND QUICK IDEAS FOR TO ADD A LITTLE EXTRA FUN TO YOUR *Polar Express* PARTY! ADDITIONAL RECIPE AND SNACK IDEAS ARE AVAILABLE FURTHER INSIDE THE KIT.

- ✱ **SNACK-SIZE SANTAS** MAKE MINI-SANTAS OUT OF STRAWBERRIES! PURCHASE A PACK OF STRAWBERRIES AND CUT THE TOPS AND BOTTOMS OFF OF EACH PIECE (SAVE THE BOTTOMS!) PLACE THE STRAWBERRIES ON A SHEET SO THEY'RE BOTTOM-UP. PLACE A DOLLOP OF WHIPPED CREAM ON TOP OF EACH STRAWBERRY, AND THEN PLACE THE CUT BOTTOMS BACK ON EACH ONE. NOW PLACE A DROP OF WHIPPED CREAM ON THE TOP OF EACH STRAWBERRY BOTTOM, AND VOILA! INSTANT SNACK-SIZED SANTAS.
- ✱ **POPCORN SNOWMEN** TAKE A SET OF PLASTIC CUPS AND, USING A MAGIC MARKER, DECORATE EACH CUP TO ADD A SNOWMAN FACE ON THE FRONT (USING A RED MARKER TO ADD A SCARF OR HAT). FILL THE CUPS WITH POPCORN FOR YOUR GUESTS.
- ✱ **HOLIDAY HOT CHOCOLATE** A STAPLE OF THE *Polar Express* PARTY EXPERIENCE IS A WARM CUP OF HOT CHOCOLATE. ADD A LITTLE EXTRA HOLIDAY ZEST TO A TRADITIONAL HOT CHOCOLATE DRINK FOR YOUR GUESTS BY ADDING ¼ TEASPOON OF PEPPERMINT EXTRACT OR CINNAMON TO YOUR GUESTS' BEVERAGES, OR EVEN DIPPING A FUN-SIZED PEPPERMINT STICK INTO EACH CUP FOR SOME ADDED FLAVOR.

POLISH THAT TRAIN: SETTING UP YOUR SPACE

AFTER THE PREPARATIONS ARE SET, IT'S TIME TO SET THE SPACE AND KICK OFF YOUR PARTY! ON THE DAY OF YOUR *Polar Express* EVENT, AS DECORATIONS ARE PUT UP, MAKE SURE TO FOLLOW THE TIPS BELOW TO LINE UP YOUR SPACE FOR MAXIMUM FUN.

- ✱ **MAKE INTRODUCTIONS EASY:** NAME TAGS ARE ENCLOSED IN THIS KIT TO PLACE AT THE FRONT OF YOUR EVENT FOR ARRIVING GUESTS. IN ADDITION TO BEING USEFUL, THESE TAGS WILL SERVE AS AN INITIAL ICEBREAKER TO HELP ATTENDEES INTRODUCE THEMSELVES AS THEY GET SETTLED.
- ✱ **HELP GUESTS FOCUS WITH ACTIVITIES:** MAKE COPIES OF THE ENCLOSED REPRODUCIBLE ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR PARENTS TO OFFER CHILDREN WHILE WAITING FOR THE FESTIVITIES TO START.
- ✱ **MAKE READING THE FOCUS:** THE MOST MAGICAL PART OF *The Polar Express* IS READING IT OUT LOUD. SET UP AND CLEARLY LABEL A READ-ALOUD STAGE. ENCOURAGE GUESTS TO GATHER AROUND THE STAGE BEFORE THE PROGRAM BEGINS SO THEY'LL BE READY TO LISTEN AND ENJOY!

THROW A POLAR EXPRESS PARTY!

CONTINUED

REINDEER GAMES: FUN ICEBREAKER ACTIVITIES FOR GUESTS

BELOW ARE SOME FUN ICEBREAKER AND CIRCLE-TIME ACTIVITIES FOR YOU AND YOUR GUESTS TO SET THE STAGE FOR YOUR PARTY. USE AT THE START TO INTRODUCE GUESTS TOGETHER, OR ANYTIME THROUGHOUT TO KEEP THINGS MOVING!

❖ **HOLIDAY TRIVIA:** SPLIT YOUR PARTY GUESTS INTO TEAMS OF THREE. USING THE QUESTIONS PROVIDED IN THE PAGE MARKED “HOLIDAY TRIVIA,” ASK EACH TEAM A QUESTION, GOING AROUND UNTIL YOU RUN OUT OF QUESTIONS, ASSIGNING A POINT FOR EACH CORRECT ANSWER. KEEP A TALLY OF THE POINTS AND ADD THEM UP AT THE END. THE WINNING TEAM WINS A PRIZE—A COPY OF THE BOOK OR A PACKAGE OF HOLIDAY CANDY!

❖ **WINTER/HOLIDAY FACTS ABOUT ME:** ASK ALL YOUR GUESTS TO STAND IN A CIRCLE WITH ONE PERSON IN THE MIDDLE. THE PERSON IN THE MIDDLE WILL MAKE A WINTER/HOLIDAY-RELATED STATEMENT SUCH AS “I LOVE SNOW DAYS!” THOSE IN AGREEMENT MUST MOVE FROM THEIR SPOT IN THE CIRCLE TO ANOTHER OPEN SPOT. THE PERSON IN THE MIDDLE SHOULD TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO FIND A SPOT IN THE CIRCLE TOO. ONE PERSON SHOULD BE LEFT IN THE MIDDLE, AND THE PERSON IN THE MIDDLE SHOULD NOW MAKE A STATEMENT TO CONTINUE THE GAME!

❖ **GUESS WHICH HOLIDAY BOOKS:** BEFORE YOUR PARTY, WRAP UP A FEW CLASSIC HOLIDAY BOOKS AND CHOOSE THREE CLUES FROM THE BOOK TO WRITE ON TOP OF THE WRAPPING PAPER. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU WRAPPED UP *The Night Before Christmas*, YOU COULD WRITE: 1) CHRISTMAS EVE, 2) SUGAR PLUMS, AND 3) SANTA CLAUS. GIVE EACH GUEST A PIECE OF PAPER TO WRITE HIS OR HER GUESSES ON. THE GUESTS WHO GUESS THE MOST TITLES CORRECTLY WIN A PRIZE—ANY ONE OF THE WRAPPED BOOKS OR CANDY CANES!

❖ **WHO AM I? HOLIDAY EDITION:** ON A SET OF INDEX CARDS WRITE DOWN CLASSIC CHRISTMAS CHARACTERS FROM BOOKS OR MOVIES (ONE CHARACTER/CARD). THEN PASS OUT THE CARDS AND TELL YOUR GUESTS NOT TO LOOK AT WHAT’S WRITTEN DOWN ON THEIR CARD. GO AROUND THE CIRCLE AND HAVE EACH GUEST HOLD THEIR CARD UP FOR EVERYONE ELSE TO SEE AS THEY ASK A YES OR NO QUESTION ABOUT THE NAME ON THEIR CARD. GO AROUND UNTIL SOMEONE FIGURES OUT WHAT CHARACTER THEY ARE!

❖ **CREATE YOUR OWN HOLIDAY ADVENTURE:** PASS OUT THE ENCLOSED WORKSHEET MARKED “CREATE YOUR OWN HOLIDAY ADVENTURE.” GIVE GUESTS TIME TO FILL IN THE BLANKS, AND THEN GO AROUND THE CIRCLE AND READ THEM ALOUD!

ALL ABOARD! FINAL TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUR EVENT

- ❖ REMEMBER THAT 15–20 MINUTES IS THE LIMIT THAT MOST YOUNG CHILDREN CAN SIT FOR ANY READ-ALoud SESSION. KEEP GAMES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES MOVING TO ENGAGE CHILDREN, AND KEEP THE READ-ALoud PORTION SHORT AND SWEET.
- ❖ ARRANGE THE CHILDREN ON THE FLOOR AROUND YOU SO THAT THEY ALL FEEL CONNECTED TO THE BOOK AND CAN SEE CLEARLY.
- ❖ DURING THE READ-ALoud SESSION, ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO RESPOND AND PARTICIPATE AS YOU READ THE STORY TO MAKE IT MORE ENGAGING FOR THE AUDIENCE.
- ❖ SNACK TIME IS FUN TIME, BUT USE IT WISELY. PROVIDE SNACKS THAT ARE HEALTHY, EASY TO HANDLE, AND NOT DISTRACTING DURING SET EVENTS.
- ❖ MOST IMPORTANT, HAVE PLENTY OF COPIES OF *The Polar Express* ON HAND FOR GUESTS TO READ AND EXPLORE DURING THE EVENT!



ALL ABOARD!

JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL *Polar Express* STORY TIME PARTY!

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

PLACE: _____

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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HI, MY NAME IS

MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY BOOK IS



HI, MY NAME IS

MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY BOOK IS



HI, MY NAME IS

MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY BOOK IS



HI, MY NAME IS

MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY BOOK IS



HI, MY NAME IS

MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY BOOK IS



HI, MY NAME IS

MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY BOOK IS

POLAR EXPRESS DECORATIONS

WINTER GARLAND!

ADD SOME HOLIDAY STYLE TO YOUR PARTY SPACE BY DECORATING WITH

NORTH STAR GARLAND

TO CONSTRUCT A NORTH STAR GARLAND, YOU WILL NEED:

- ✱ CONSTRUCTION PAPER OR WRAPPING PAPER
- ✱ SCISSORS
- ✱ HOLE PUNCH
- ✱ YARN

TAKE CONSTRUCTION PAPER OR YOUR FAVORITE WRAPPING HOLIDAY WRAPPING PAPER AND CUT OUT SEVERAL STARS.

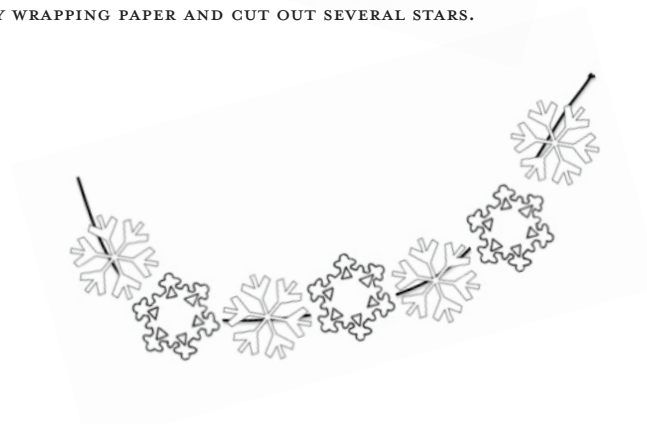


WINTER WONDERLAND GARLAND

TO CONSTRUCT A WINTER WONDERLAND GARLAND, YOU WILL NEED:

- ✱ WHITE PAPER
- ✱ SCISSORS
- ✱ YARN

FOLD PAPER INTO A TRIANGLE AND THEN FOLD THE TRIANGLE IN HALF. FOLD THE TRIANGLE A THIRD TIME AND THEN CUT SHAPES INTO THE FOLDED PAPER. WHEN YOU'RE DONE, OPEN YOUR SNOWFLAKE AND STRING IT ONTO THE YARN.



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POLAR EXPRESS DECORATIONS

WELCOME TO THE NORTH POLE!

NORTH POLE SIGN

FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS TO TURN YOUR PARTY SPACE INTO YOUR VERY OWN CHRISTMAS HEADQUARTERS!

TO CONSTRUCT A NORTH POLE SIGN, YOU WILL NEED:

- ✱ RED AND WHITE CONSTRUCTION PAPER
- ✱ RED RIBBON OR YARN
- ✱ HOLE PUNCH
- ✱ RULER
- ✱ SCISSORS
- ✱ GLUE STICK
- ✱ MARKERS OR CRAYONS



1. CHOOSE A COLOR TO BE YOUR BASE COLOR AND ONE TO BE YOUR TOP COLOR.
2. MEASURE 2-INCH LINES AROUND ALL FOUR SIDES OF YOUR TOP COLOR.
3. CUT ALONG THESE LINES.
4. USING YOUR GLUE STICK, GLUE THE TOP COLOR TO THE CENTER OF YOUR BASE.
5. WRITE YOUR NORTH POLE GREETING ON THE TOP COLOR.
6. USE THE SAME COLOR MARKER OR CRAYON AS YOUR TOP COLOR TO DRAW STRIPES ALONG THE EXPOSED BASE COLOR.
7. PUNCH A HOLE IN THE TOP RIGHT AND LEFT CORNERS.
8. LOOP YARN THROUGH HOLES AND SECURE WITH A KNOT OR A BOW.

OUT OF TIME TO CRAFT DECORATIONS FOR YOUR PARTY? STOP BY YOUR LOCAL DOLLAR STORE OR PARTY STORE AND PICK UP RED AND GREEN STREAMERS TO HANG UP AROUND YOUR STORE. ADD A TOUCH OF SPARKLE WITH SOME

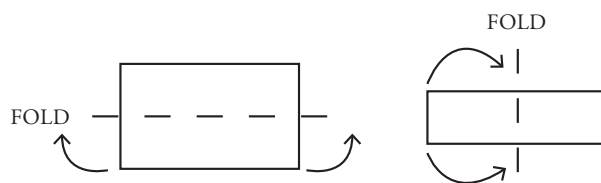
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A POLAR EXPRESS CHRISTMAS CARD

USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO MAKE A HOLIDAY
CARD FOR GUESTS TO TAKE HOME! PRINT THIS
PAGE ON WHITE PAPER USING A COLOR PRINTER.
FOLD ALONG THE DOTTED LINE AND CUT AS
INDICATED TO CREATE YOUR CARD.



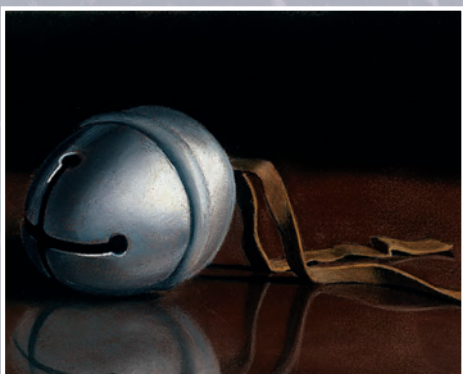
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BY CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG

The Polar Express



WISHING YOU
ALL THE JOYS OF THE
HOLIDAY SEASON.



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SPOT THE BELL!

A BELL WAS THE FIRST GIFT OF CHRISTMAS!

HOW MANY BELLS CAN YOU SPOT IN THE IMAGE BELOW?



NUMBER OF BELLS _____

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MATCH THE STORY

CAN YOU MATCH EACH ILLUSTRATION BELOW TO THE PART OF THE STORY IT

1

THE TRAIN WAS FILLED WITH
OTHER CHILDREN, ALL IN THEIR PAJAMAS
AND NIGHTGOWNS. WE SANG CHRISTMAS
CAROLS AND ATE CANDIES WITH NOUGAT



2

“LOOK,” SHOUTED ONE OF
THE CHILDREN, “THE ELVES.”



3

ON CHRISTMAS MORNING MY LITTLE SISTER
SARAH AND I OPENED OUR PRESENTS. WHEN
IT LOOKED AS IF EVERYTHING HAD BEEN
UNWRAPPED, SARAH FOUND ONE
LAST SMALL BOX BEHIND THE TREE.



4

WE TRAVELED THROUGH COLD,
DARK FORESTS, WHERE LEAN WOLVES
ROAMED
AND WHITE-TAILED RABBITS HID FROM



FILL IN THE BLANK

CAN YOU COMPLETE THESE WINTER WORDS AND PHRASES BELOW?

1. M _ R _ Y C H _ I S T M _ _

2. S A _ _ A C L _ U S

3. S N _ W F _ _ K E

4. F _ O S _ Y T H E _ N _ W M _ N

5. R _ _ N D E _ R

6. _ L E I _ H R I D _

7. C _ _ I S _ M _ _ T _ _ E

8. P _ E S _ N _

9. H _ L I D _ Y

10. J I _ G _ E B E _ _ S

WORD SEARCH

CAN YOU FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS FROM THE WORD VAULT BELOW?

POLAR
EXPRESS
TRAIN
CONDUCTOR
STEAM
SANTA

BELL
CHRISTMAS
SLEIGH
NORTH
POLE
SNOWFLAKES

COCOA
PAJAMAS
FROZEN
GIFT
ELVES
WOLVES

BELIEVE
MIDNIGHT
BATHROBE
RING
ICE

S	J	N	A	S	J	Y	R	M	M	K	P	C	G	X
M	W	D	H	N	P	A	J	A	M	A	S	O	I	M
A	N	E	G	O	B	N	E	T	L	S	I	C	E	Q
B	K	B	N	W	T	T	V	X	S	O	C	O	R	Q
N	F	O	I	F	S	Y	L	E	E	O	P	A	B	F
N	W	R	A	L	W	O	R	M	N	F	G	K	E	E
T	S	H	R	A	T	P	B	D	S	E	V	L	O	W
F	H	T	T	K	X	H	U	E	F	E	V	X	F	G
I	X	A	N	E	N	C	G	R	L	E	L	G	E	S
G	W	B	P	S	T	O	O	I	S	I	N	O	A	L
A	R	M	N	O	K	Z	R	I	N	I	E	J	P	E
V	V	G	R	G	E	G	L	T	R	D	T	V	B	I
L	O	S	M	N	J	D	B	L	H	Y	I	R	E	G
S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	F	E	L	M	D	H
S	A	N	T	A	L	L	E	B	V	G	Q	P	W	J

THE FIRST GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

IF YOU WERE CHOSEN TO RECEIVE THE FIRST GIFT OF CHRISTMAS,

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HOLIDAY POETRY

AN ACROSTIC POEM IS WHEN THE FIRST LETTER OF EACH LINE SPELLS OUT A WORD.

CREATE YOUR OWN ACROSTIC POEM FROM THE LETTERS IN POLAR EXPRESS!

P

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P

R

E

S

S

FINISH THE STORY

WHAT WOULD YOU DO AT THE NORTH POLE?

FILL IN THE LINES WITH YOUR OWN TRIP TO THE NORTH POLE.

"ALL ABOARD," THE CONDUCTOR CRIED OUT. I RAN UP TO HIM.

"WELL," HE SAID, "ARE YOU COMING?"

"WHERE?" I ASKED.

"WHY, TO THE NORTH POLE, OF COURSE," WAS HIS ANSWER. "THIS IS THE POLAR EXPRESS," I TOOK HIS OUTSTRETCHED HAND AND HE PULLED ME ABOARD.

CREATE YOUR OWN HOLIDAY ADVENTURE!

CREATE A HILARIOUS HOLIDAY STORY TO SHARE WITH FRIENDS!

USE THE KEY NOTED HERE TO HELP YOU CHOOSE A WORD TO FILL IN
THE BLANKS WITH. READ YOUR SILLY STORIES ALOUD WHEN YOU'RE DONE!

ON (1)_____, MANY YEARS AGO, I LAY QUIETLY IN MY (2)_____. I DID NOT RUS-
TLE THE SHEETS. I WAS LISTENING FOR A SOUND—A SOUND (3)_____ HAD TOLD ME I'D NEVER
HEAR—THE RINGING BELLS OF (4) _____'S SLEIGH.

"THERE IS NO (5)_____,," MY FRIEND HAD INSISTED, BUT I KNEW HE WAS WRONG.

LATE THAT NIGHT I DID HEAR SOUNDS, THOUGH NOT OF RINGING BELLS. FROM OUTSIDE
CAME THE SOUNDS OF (6)_____ AND (7)_____. I LOOKED THROUGH MY WINDOW AND SAW
A (8)_____ STANDING PERFECTLY STILL IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE.

IT WAS WRAPPED IN AN APRON OF STEAM. SNOWFLAKES FELL LIGHTLY AROUND IT. A
(9)_____ STOOD AT THE OPEN DOOR OF ONE OF THE CARS. HE TOOK A (10)_____
POCKET WATCH FROM HIS VEST, THEN LOOKED UP AT MY WINDOW. I PUT ON SLIPPERS AND A ROBE.
I TIPTOED DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT THE DOOR.

"ALL ABOARD," THE CONDUCTOR CRIED OUT. I RAN UP TO HIM.

"WELL," HE SAID, "ARE YOU COMING?"

"WHERE?" I ASKED.

"WHY, TO (11)_____ OF COURSE," WAS HIS ANSWER. "THIS IS THE (12)_____ EX-
PRESS." I TOOK HIS OUTSTRETCHED HAND AND HE PULLED ME ABOARD.

HOLIDAY KEY

1.	HOLIDAY	5.	SAME FAMOUS PERSON	9.	PERSON
2.	NOUN	6.	SILLY SOUND	10.	ADJECTIVE
3.	PERSON'S NAME	7.	DIFFERENT SILLY SOUND	11.	PLACE
4.	FAMOUS PERSON	8.	NOUN	12.	SAME PLACE

A TRAIN TRACK READING LOG

Chugga-Chugga READ!

HELP THE POLAR EXPRESS REACH THE NORTH POLE — ADVANCE ALONG THE TRAIN TRACKS
BY READING OR BEING READ TO FOR TWENTY OR MORE MINUTES EVERY DAY!

TITLE:	_____
AUTHOR:	_____
TITLE:	_____
AUTHOR:	_____
TITLE:	_____
AUTHOR:	_____
TITLE:	_____
AUTHOR:	_____
TITLE:	_____
AUTHOR:	_____
TITLE:	_____
AUTHOR:	_____

TREATS FROM THE NORTH POLE KITCHEN

RUDOLPH'S FAVORITE MINT CHOCOLATE COOKIES:

- 2 ¼ CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
- 1 TEASPOON BAKING SODA
- 1 TEASPOON SALT
- 1 CUP (2 STICKS) BUTTER, SOFTENED
- ¾ CUP GRANULATED SUGAR
- ¾ CUP PACKED BROWN SUGAR
- 1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
- 2 LARGE EGGS
- 2 CUPS (12-OZ. PKG.) CHOCOLATE CHIPS
- 1 CUP MINT CHIPS

PREHEAT OVEN TO 375° F

COMBINE FLOUR, BAKING SODA, AND SALT IN SMALL BOWL. BEAT BUTTER, GRANULATED SUGAR, BROWN SUGAR, AND VANILLA EXTRACT IN LARGE MIXER BOWL UNTIL CREAMY. ADD EGGS, ONE AT A TIME, BEATING WELL AFTER EACH ADDITION. GRADUALLY BEAT IN FLOUR MIXTURE. STIR IN MORSELS AND NUTS. DROP BY ROUNDED TABLESPOON ONTO UNGREASED BAKING SHEETS.

BAKE FOR 9 TO 11 MINUTES OR UNTIL GOLDEN BROWN. COOL ON BAKING SHEETS FOR 2 MINUTES; REMOVE TO WIRE RACKS TO COOL COMPLETELY.

SIMPLE MINTY COOKIE CRUMB SNOWBALLS:

- 36 CRUSHED CHOCOLATE SANDWICH COOKIES
- 1 CAN OF FROSTING
- CRUSHED CANDY CANES

MIX FROSTING, COOKIE CRUMBS, AND CRUSHED CANDY CANES UNTIL BLENDED.

SHAPE INTO 48 (1-INCH) BALLS. FREEZE 10 MIN. DIP IN MELTED CHOCOLATE; PLACE ON WAXED PAPER-COVERED RIMMED BAKING SHEET. SPRINKLE WITH EXTRA CRUSHED CANDY CANE.

REFRIGERATE 1 HOUR OR UNTIL FIRM.

COZY COCOA:

- 1 CUP SUGAR
- 1 CUP COCOA POWDER
- 1 CUP CHOCOLATE CHIPS
- 1 TSP SALT
- 1 CUP HOT WATER
- ½ GALLON MILK

POUR HOT WATER, SUGAR, COCOA POWDER AND SALT INTO A LARGE POT. WHISK OVER MEDIUM HEAT.

WHEN EVERYTHING IS COMBINED, ADD CHOCOLATE CHIPS AND WHISK MIXTURE UNTIL CHOCOLATE CHIPS ARE MELTED.

ADD MILK AND VANILLA AND WHISK AGAIN. SERVE WITH MARSHMALLOWS OR WHIPPED CREAM!

TREATS FROM THE NORTH POLE KITCHEN

CONTINUED

SNOWFLAKE COOKIE:

- ¼ CUP ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR, PLUS EXTRA FOR ROLLING
- 1 TUBE (16.5 OUNCES) REFRIGERATED SUGAR COOKIE DOUGH
- ¼ CUP UNSWEETENED COCOA POWDER
- 1 BOX (16 OUNCES) CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR
- 3 TABLESPOONS POWDERED EGG WHITES
- 6 TABLESPOONS WARM WATER
- FOOD COLORING (OPTIONAL)

MAKE AS DIRECTED, KNEADING IN THE COCOA POWDER WITH THE FLOUR UNTIL WELL BLENDED.

COMBINE ALL THE INGREDIENTS IN A MEDIUM BOWL. BEAT WITH AN ELECTRIC MIXER ON LOW SPEED UNTIL BLENDED. INCREASE THE SPEED TO HIGH AND BEAT UNTIL SMOOTH AND THICK (THE

- ½ RECIPE QUICK CHOCOLATE COOKIE DOUGH
- 1 3½-INCH SNOWFLAKE COOKIE CUTTER

PREHEAT OVEN TO 350° F. LINE TWO COOKIE SHEETS WITH PARCHMENT PAPER. KNEAD THE FLOUR INTO THE DOUGH UNTIL SMOOTH. DIVIDE THE DOUGH IN HALF. ROLL OUT EACH PIECE ON A LIGHTLY FLOURED SURFACE TO A SCANT ¼-INCH THICKNESS. **CUT** OUT THE SHAPES, USING TEMPLATES OR A COOKIE CUTTER AND CUTTING AS CLOSE TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE. TRANSFER THE SHAPES TO THE COOKIE SHEETS, SPACING ABOUT 1 INCH APART.

BAKE UNTIL GOLDEN AND FIRM TO THE TOUCH, 7 TO 12 MINUTES DEPENDING ON THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE COOKIES. TRANSFER TO A WIRE RACK AND COOL COMPLETELY.

SPOON THE ROYAL FROSTING INTO A ZIPLOCK BAG. PRESS OUT THE EXCESS AIR AND SEAL THE BAG. SNIP A SMALL (¼-INCH) CORNER FROM THE BAGS. PIPE DECORATIVE SWIRLS, LINES, OR DOTS OF FROSTING ON TOP OF EACH COOKIE. WHILE THE FROSTING IS STILL WET, SPRINKLE THE TOP OF THE COOKIE WITH THE SUGAR TO COVER. SHAKE OFF ANY EXCESS SUGAR.



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TREATS FROM THE NORTH POLE KITCHEN

CONTINUED

GINGERBREAD BOY COOKIE:

- 1/2 CUP ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR, PLUS EXTRA FOR ROLLING
- 1 TUBE (16.5 OUNCES) REFRIGERATED SUGAR COOKIE DOUGH
- 1 TEASPOON APPLE PIE SPICE

- 1 BOX (16 OUNCES) CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR
- 3 TABLESPOONS POWDERED EGG WHITES
- 6 TABLESPOONS WARM WATER
- FOOD COLORING (OPTIONAL)

MAKE AS DIRECTED, KNEADING IN THE APPLE PIE SPICE WITH THE FLOUR UNTIL WELL BLENDED.

COMBINE ALL THE INGREDIENTS IN A MEDIUM BOWL. BEAT WITH AN ELECTRIC MIXER ON LOW SPEED UNTIL BLENDED. INCREASE THE SPEED TO HIGH AND BEAT UNTIL SMOOTH AND THICK (THE

- 1/2 RECIPE QUICK SPICE COOKIE DOUGH
- 1 3 1/2-INCH GINGERBREAD-BOY COOKIE CUTTER

- 1/2 RECIPE ROYAL FROSTING
- WHITE FOOD COLORING

PREHEAT OVEN TO 375° F. LINE TWO COOKIE SHEETS WITH PARCHMENT PAPER. KNEAD THE FLOUR INTO THE DOUGH UNTIL SMOOTH. DIVIDE THE DOUGH IN HALF. ROLL OUT EACH PIECE ON A LIGHTLY FLOURED SURFACE TO A SCANT 1/4-INCH THICKNESS. CUT OUT THE SHAPES, USING TEMPLATES OR A COOKIE CUTTER AND CUTTING AS CLOSE TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE. TRANSFER THE SHAPES TO THE COOKIE SHEETS, SPACING ABOUT 1 INCH APART.

BAKE UNTIL GOLDEN AND FIRM TO THE TOUCH, 7 TO 12 MINUTES. TRANSFER TO A WIRE RACK AND COOL COMPLETELY. TINT 3 TABLESPOONS OF THE ROYAL FROSTING RED AND 3 TABLESPOONS WHITE USING THE FOOD COLORING. SPOON EACH COLOR PLUS THE REMAINING FROSTING INTO SEPARATE ZIPLOCK BAGS. PRESS OUT THE EXCESS AIR AND SEAL THE BAGS. SNIP A SMALL (1/4-INCH) CORNER FROM THE BAGS. PIPE WAVY LINES OF WHITE FROSTING ON THE ARMS AND LEGS OF EACH COOKIE AND ATTACH THE RED AND GREEN CANDY AS BUTTONS WITH DOTS OF WHITE FROSTING. PIPE WHITE EYES AND A WHITE MOUTH WITH THE TINTED FROSTINGS.



RESOURCE PAGE

HOLIDAY TRIVIA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

FROM THE POLAR EXPRESS

1. WHAT DAY IN DECEMBER DOES CHRISTMAS FALL ON?
2. WHERE DOES SANTA LIVE?
3. NAME ONE OF SANTA'S REINDEER.
4. WHAT KIND OF NOSE DOES FROSTY THE SNOWMAN HAVE?
5. WHAT COLOR ARE TRADITIONAL CANDY CANES?
6. WHAT IS ANOTHER NAME SANTA CLAUS GOES BY?
7. WHAT DOES SANTA LIKE TO SNACK ON WHILE HE'S DELIVERING GIFTS?
8. NAME TWO CHRISTMAS SONGS.
9. HOW MANY GOLDEN RINGS ARE THERE IN "THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS"?
10. HOW DOES FROSTY GREET THE CHILDREN WHEN THE MAGIC HAT BRINGS HIM TO LIFE?
11. WHAT ARE THE TWO MOST POPULAR CHRISTMAS COLORS?
12. SING A LINE FROM JINGLE BELLS.
13. WHAT WAS THE FIRST GIFT OF CHRISTMAS IN *The Polar Express*?
14. HOW MANY TIMES DOES SANTA CHECK HIS LIST?
15. WHEN DOES SANTA DELIVER HIS GIFTS TO THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD?
16. WHO HELPS SANTA IN HIS WORKSHOP?
17. WHAT ARE TWO POPULAR TREE TOPPERS?
18. WHAT DOES THE MAIN CHARACTER OF *The Polar Express* NEVER STOP HEARING?
19. TRUE OR FALSE? SANTA GETS AROUND BY DRIVING A FLYING CAR.
20. WHAT HOLIDAY COMES ONE WEEK AFTER CHRISTMAS?

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE POLAR EXPRESS

CELEBRATE OVER 30 YEARS OF *The Polar Express*
WITH THESE FUN FACTS ABOUT THE BOOK!

- ✱ ACCORDING TO CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG, THE BOOK STARTED WITH AN IMAGE OF A TRAIN STANDING ALONE IN THE WOODS.
- ✱ THE PERE MARQUETTE 1225 TRAIN, NOW IN OWOSSO, MICHIGAN, WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE STORY. AS A CHILD, CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG PLAYED ON THE ENGINE WHEN IT WAS ON DISPLAY, AND TO HIM, THE NUMBER 1225 MEANT 12/25, CHRISTMAS DAY!
- ✱ THE REAL 1225 TRAIN INSPIRED THE ANIMATED TRAIN, AND THEY RECORDED THE 1225'S DIFFERENT LOCOMOTIVE SOUNDS TO USE IN THE MOVIE.
- ✱ CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG SAID THAT *The Polar Express* WAS THE EASIEST OF HIS PICTURE BOOK MANUSCRIPTS TO WRITE. HE CREATED ONLY ONE DRAFT AND HAD TO MAKE ONLY A FEW CHANGES TO THE TEXT.
- ✱ *The Polar Express* IS DONE WITH OIL PASTELS, AND TO GET THE NIGHT LIGHTING JUST RIGHT, HE MIXED COLOR COMPLEMENTS (REDS WITH GREENS, ORANGES WITH BLUES) TO BRING OUT THE HUES OF COLORS IN LOW LIGHT.
- ✱ THE MOOD AND PALETTE FOR *The Polar Express* WERE INSPIRED BY THE PAINTINGS OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN ARTIST CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH. HE WAS A LANDSCAPE ARTIST WHO CREATED PANORAMIC VIEWS WITH SINGLE SMALL FIGURES IN THE COMPOSITION. CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG WANTED TO USE THE TERTIARY COLORS, THE BROWNS AND THE VIOLETS, TO GET THE SOMBER ATMOSPHERE HE SAW IN FRIEDRICH'S WORK.
- ✱ IN NORTH CONWAY, NEW HAMPSHIRE, THEY REENACT THE POLAR EXPRESS RIDE WITH AN OLD STEAM ENGINE THAT MAKES A TRIP TO A NEARBY SKI LODGE. THE PASSENGERS (WHICH INCLUDE MANY KIDS IN THEIR PAJAMAS AND BATHROBES) DISEMBARK THERE, WHERE ABOUT A HUNDRED CITIZENS OF NORTH CONWAY, DRESSED AS ELVES AND CARRYING LANTERNS, GREET THEM. AT THE LODGE, THERE'S A PRESENTATION OF THE STORY, SANTA APPEARS, AND AS THEY LEAVE, ALL THE CHILDREN ARE GIVEN A SMALL SLEIGH BELL TO TAKE HOME!
- ✱ VAN ALLSBURG HAS AN ARTISTIC CONNECTION TO ANOTHER CHRISTMAS CLASSIC—IN 2014 HE DESIGNED THE SETS FOR THE MICHIGAN BALLET'S PERFORMANCE OF *The Nutcracker*.
- ✱ THE SETTING OF THE BOOK IS BASED ON VAN ALLSBURG'S CHILDHOOD HOME IN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

MAKE YOUR OWN SANTA HAT

USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO HELP GUESTS CREATE SANTA HATS

YOU WILL NEED:

- ✱ COTTON BALLS
- ✱ RED AND WHITE CONSTRUCTION PAPER
- ✱ GLUE
- ✱ TAPE
- ✱ SCISSORS

1. TAPE TWO PIECES OF CONSTRUCTION PAPER TOGETHER TO MAKE ONE REALLY LONG PIECE.
2. CUT OUT A LARGE HALF CIRCLE—THE LARGEST HALF CIRCLE YOU CAN!
3. ROLL THE HALF CIRCLE INTO A CONE AND GLUE THE EDGES TOGETHER.
4. GLUE A STRIP OF WHITE PAPER ALONG THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HAT.
5. WRITE YOUR NORTH POLE GREETING ON THE TOP COLOR.
6. GLUE A COTTON BALL TO THE TOP OF YOUR HAT.



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Write Santa a Letter

What would you ask Santa for this holiday season? Do your best to write or draw your request in the space below.

Dear Santa,

Sincerely,

The First Gift of Christmas

If Santa chose you to receive the first gift of Christmas, what would you ask for? Draw a picture or write about what you would choose below.

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Coloring Sheet



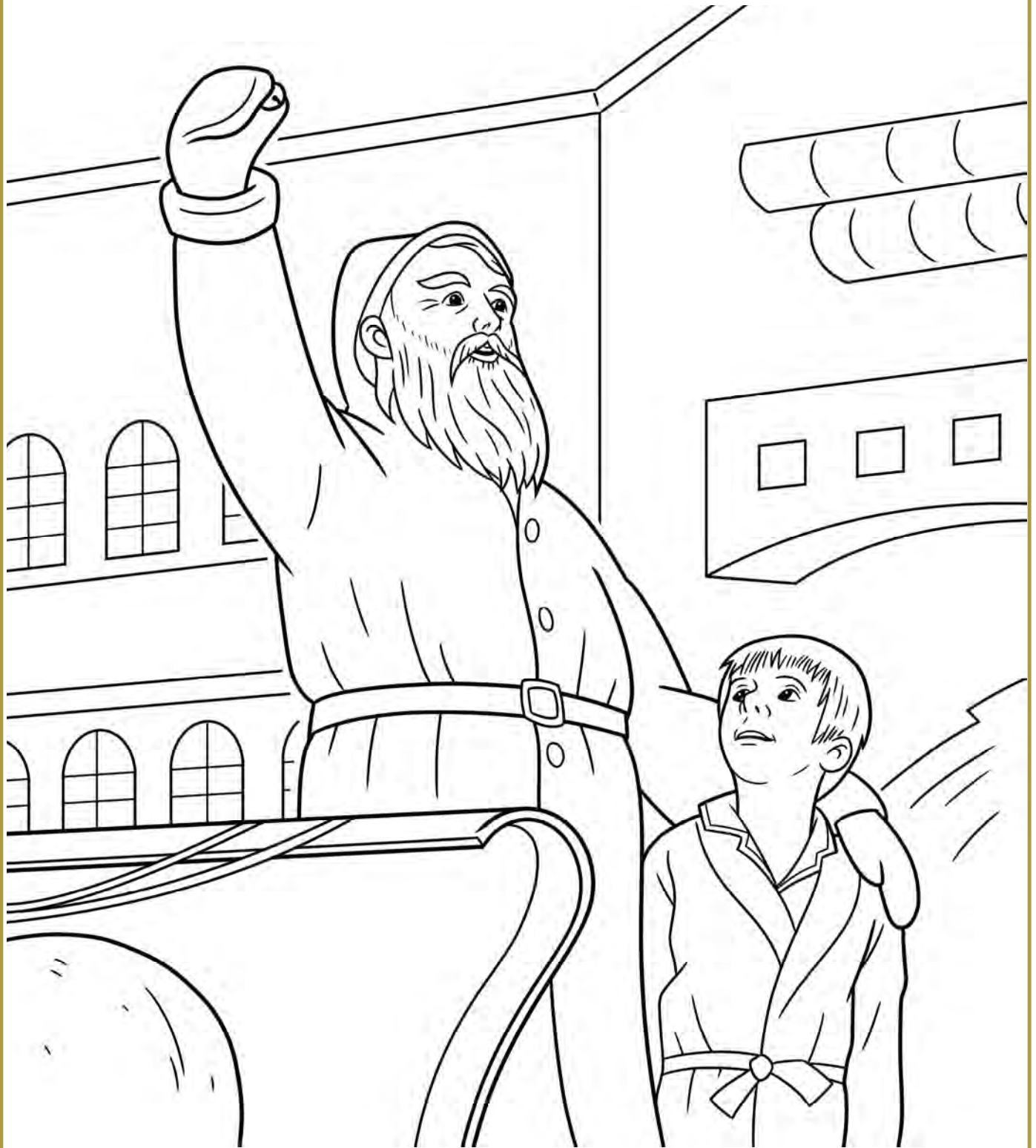
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Polar Express Maze

Help the Polar Express find its way through the towns and forests, over the mountains and hills, and across the Great Polar Ice Cap to the North Pole!



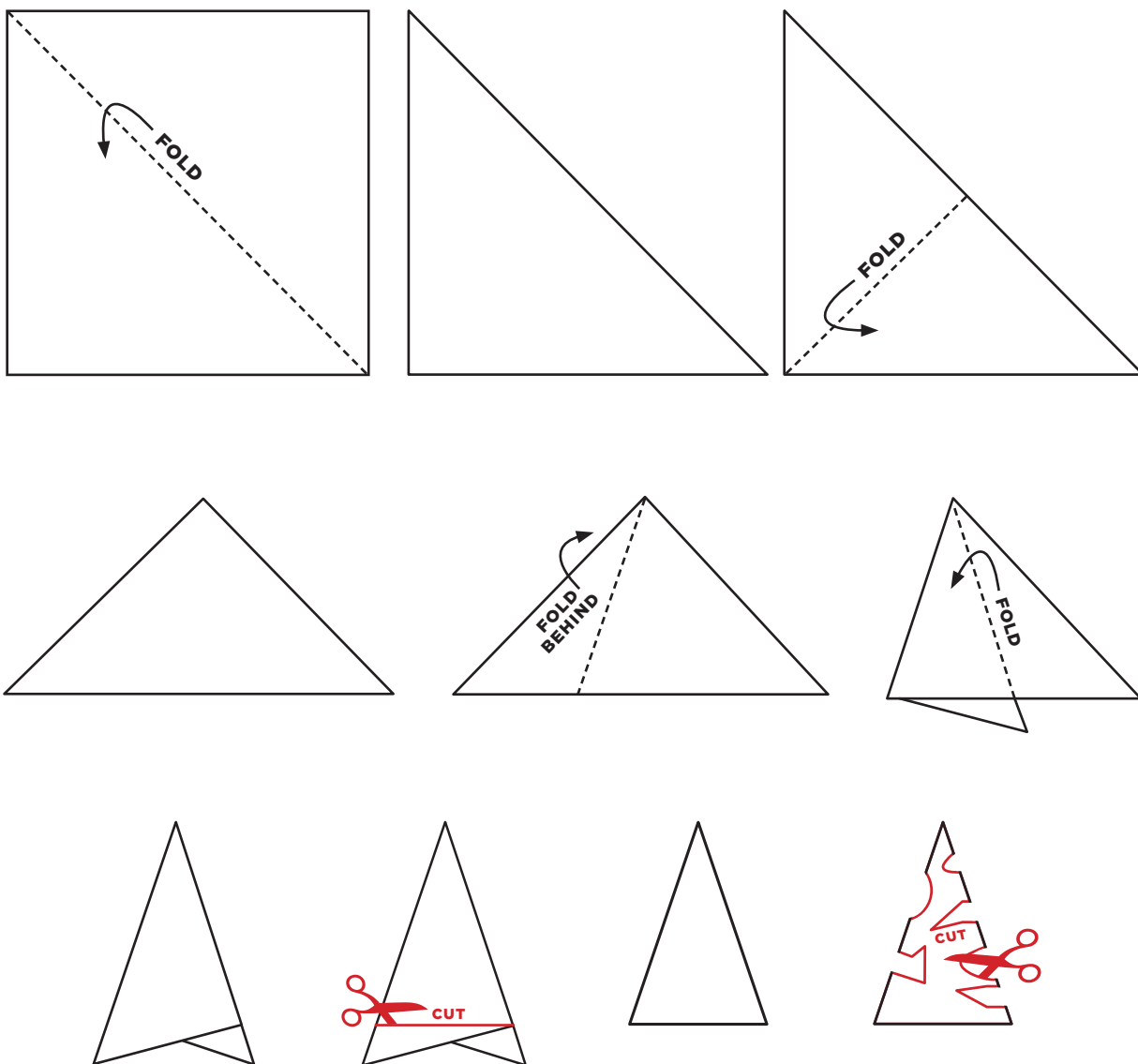
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Snowflake Cutouts

Create your own decorations at home with these fun cutouts!



Cut a design into the folded paper. Experiment with cutting different shapes in different sizes. Unfold the paper and see your unique creation. Display snowflakes in your window, or string them together into a banner. Remember, no two snowflakes are alike, so make as many as you can!

ANSWER KEY

CONTINUED

FILL IN THE BLANK ANSWER KEY:

1. MERRY CHRISTMAS
2. SANTA CLAUS
3. SNOW FLAKE
4. FROSTY THE SNOWMAN
5. REINDEER
6. SLEIGH RIDE
7. TREE
8. PRESENT
9. HOLIDAY
10. JINGLE BELLS

HOLIDAY TRIVIA ANSWER KEY:

1. 25TH
2. THE NORTH POLE
3. DASHER, DANCER, PRANCER, VIXEN, COMET, CUPID, DONNER, BLITZEN, OR RUDOLPH
4. A BUTTON NOSE
5. RED AND WHITE
6. KRIS KRINGLE, FATHER CHRISTMAS, ST. NICK, ETC...
7. MILK AND COOKIES

8. ANY CHRISTMAS SONGS WILL WORK
9. FIVE
10. HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
11. RED AND GREEN
12. ANY LINE WILL WORK
13. A BELL
14. TWICE
15. CHRISTMAS EVE
16. ELVES
17. STARS AND ANGELS
18. THE SOUND OF THE BELL

SPOT THE BELLS ANSWER KEY:



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ANSWER KEY

CONTINUED

1

THE TRAIN WAS FILLED WITH
OTHER CHILDREN, ALL IN THEIR PAJAMAS
AND NIGHTGOWNS. WE SANG CHRISTMAS
CAROLS AND ATE CANDIES WITH NOUGAT



2

"LOOK," SHOUTED ONE OF
THE CHILDREN, "THE ELVES."



3

ON CHRISTMAS MORNING MY LITTLE SISTER
SARAH AND I OPENED OUR PRESENTS. WHEN
IT LOOKED AS IF EVERYTHING HAD BEEN
UNWRAPPED, SARAH FOUND ONE
LAST SMALL BOX BEHIND THE TREE.



4

WE TRAVELED THROUGH COLD,
DARK FORESTS, WHERE LEAN WOLVES
ROAMED
AND WHITE-TAILED RABBITS HID FROM



ANSWER KEY

CONTINUED

POLAR
EXPRESS
TRAIN
CONDUCTOR
STEAM
SANTA

BELL
CHRISTMAS
SLEIGH
NORTH
POLE
SNOWFLAKES

COCOA
PAJAMAS
FROZEN
GIFT
ELVES
WOLVES

BELIEVE
MIDNIGHT
BATHROBE
RING
ICE

