

Let's face it...Christmas is a busy time of year. You do not need one more thing getting in the way of celebrating Jesus so...

Christmas Comes to America has been specifically designed to be a nice, light unit study that will help you embrace the Christmas season and stay focused on Him.

Christmas Comes to America also introduces you to the origins of many traditions we have come to associate with the classic American Christmas, and how they came to us by way of the early settlers.

It is broken up into four weeks:

Week 1 - The Dutch

Week 2 - The English

Week 3 - The Germans

Week 4 - An American Christmas

The following is a sample of what you will be doing in Week 2.
Red lettering is added here for further explanation.

Week 2 Library/Video Choices

Focus: The English

J DIC A Christmas Carol/ Charles Dickens*

J 741.26 E Ed Emberley's Big Red Drawing Book*

J 743.89 A Draw 50 Holiday Decorations/ Lee A. James*

J 781.91 M Make Your Own Musical Instruments/ Margaret McLean*

J 782.2817 H Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (photos of beautiful works of art from The National Gallery, London)

394.268 C Christmas in Britain

Videos:

JVC 394.2 M or JDVD 971.45 M Muppet Christmas Carol

JVC 791.45 C A Christmas Carol (1984 starring George C. Scott)

Each Once-a-Week Unit Study provides a weekly library list that includes a variety of books for that week's focus.

As you can see, I have alphabetically and numerically arranged each call letter in order for you to quickly and easily gather your library books.

I include books of different reading levels, have chosen books of superior quality, and have carefully screened books for objectionable material.

Your children are not meant to read all of the books listed. They pick and choose books to read throughout the week which most interest them. Reading is the only activity they will continue daily throughout the week.

Only books noted with an asterisk (or an equivalent of same subject matter) are necessary in order to complete a specific assignment.

What if you cannot find the exact book? No problem. Just pick another from that same library section and focus.

In addition to books, your list will also include documentaries/movies for you to pick up at the library or get from Netflix.

Christmas Comes to America

Week 2

Focus: The English

Merry Christmas!

Your children will learn how to say Merry Christmas in Dutch and German in week 1 and 3.

This Week's Gift Giver: Father Christmas/St. Nicholas

They will also learn the name of the Dutch and German Christmas gift givers.

Supplies:

Globe
Blank note cards or postcards (from a craft store)
Crayons or colored pencils
Sheet music for caroling
Large paper cups
Emergency candles



Each Once-a-Week Unit Study provides you with a supply list for that week's assignments. Most will be items you already have in your home. Others will be inexpensive items you can pick up at a discount, craft, or hardware store.

Daily Activities:



Independent Reading: Week 2 Library Choices

Family Read-Aloud: Read A Christmas Carol/ Continue reading about a tradition each day

Each week will include a library list from which your children pick and choose books that pertain to that week's focus. This week's main focus will be on an English Christmas.

Your weekly family read-aloud introduces your children to great literature. It will usually be a Caldecott/Newbery Award winner or a timeless classic as with this week's English classic, A Christmas Carol.

Your daily Christmas read-aloud will also include reading about the origin of one Christmas tradition each day from one of the books suggested in Week 1.

Once-a-Week Activities:



Family Devotional:

Read Jeremiah 23: 5 and Luke 1: 26 - 38.



Throughout the course of Christmas Comes to America you will read Old Testament prophecies that foretold of the coming Messiah hundreds of years before his arrival. You follow those up with the New Testament fulfillments of those prophecies.



Geography:

Locate Great Britain on your globe.



History/Music/Fun:



We get many Christmas traditions and customs from the English, as you will discover in your reading throughout the holiday season. But, they have also gifted us with many beautiful carols (i.e. “Joy to the World” and “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”), many of which come from old English hymns.

Caroling, from the old English word of “wassailing,” however, goes back at least as far as the middle ages. Once a year the peasants were allowed to go to the door of the lords and as a form of acceptable, recipient, charitable giving (as opposed to begging), would “sing for their supper” so to speak.

The words “Here we come a-wassailing... we are not daily beggars that beg from door to door, but we are friendly neighbors whom you have seen before” demonstrate a friendly and pleasant occasion. The peasants would sing in exchange for food and drink from the lords. The rest of the song continues in the same, light manner with the peasants wishing the lords “Love and joy come to you and you your wassail too: and God bless you and send you a Happy New Year.”

Later in England, and even early New England, it became a not-so-pleasant situation, however. At that time, wassailing was fraught with intoxicated, rowdy bands of young men who would break into innocent people's homes demanding food and drink (hence the carol with the demanding words "We all want some figgy pudding and a cup of good cheer...we won't go until we get some so bring it right here") and in "trick-or-treat" fashion would vandalize the property of any homeowner who did not comply.

Fortunately, we no longer have rowdy "wassailers," but happy, pleasant carolers who go from door to door, many bearing a small gift to present to the homeowners in addition to their pretty carols.

Why not plan a Caroling Party in your neighborhood? Invite friends and family. Have each of them bring a nice holiday appetizer and dessert for you to all enjoy together when you get back from caroling.

Provide your guests with sheets of music, and a candle poked through a paper cup. Plan to give a gift (i.e. cookies, "a candy cane with a note attached explaining the legend of the candy cane, or a scripture telling of Christ's birth) to the homeowner. You can serve your guests some nice, warm wassail when you get back home.

Use good technique, phrasing, tone, rhythm, and dynamics while caroling. Examine the score of a Christmas music composition noting the signs and terms. If you are unsure of what some of them mean, ask a musician you know to explain them to you (BSA Req. 1)

Music is a big part of Christmas so you will enjoy a variety of music/music appreciation assignments throughout the course of Christmas Comes to America.

Boy Scouts and American Heritage Girls receive the added benefit of earning merit badge requirements while completing those assignments.

While completing Christmas Comes to America with the rest of their family, Boy Scouts will earn their Music merit badge. American Heritage Girls will earn the majority of their Music Appreciation badge.

Boys Scouts will easily identify those assignments by the above fleur-de-lis icon. American Heritage Girls will be able to identify assignments that fulfill their requirements by an AHG hexagon icon. The requirements fulfilled will be noted in parentheses at the end of the assignment.

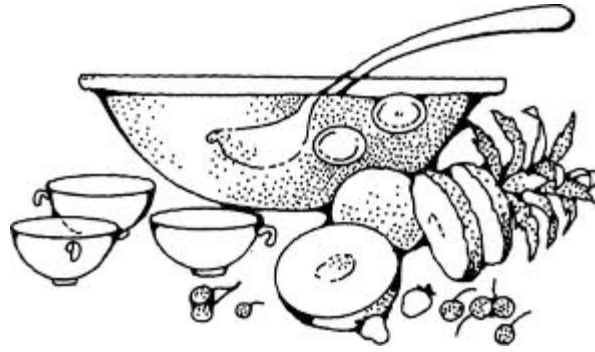


Life Skills:

Make Wassail with the following recipe (makes 1½ gal):

Ingredients:

- 1 gallon apple cider
- 1 qt. orange juice
- 1 large can pineapple juice
- 24 whole cloves
- 1 c granulated sugar
- 4 sticks cinnamon



Directions:

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan. Simmer at least 10 minutes.

Remove spices.

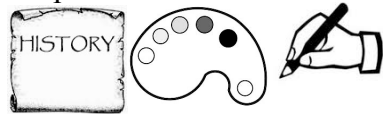
Pour into a crock-pot, if you like, to keep warm while you are out caroling.

Optional garnish - You can slice an orange, stud the edges with the cloves, and float them in the Wassail. That way you only have to remove the cinnamon stick when ready to serve leaving the orange slices as a pretty garnish.



Look up music in an encyclopedia. Name the five major groups of instruments and find out how they produce sound (BSA Req. 2/AHG Req. 2T).

Using the book *Make Your Own Musical Instruments*, have fun playing and making a simple traditional instrument (BSA Req. 4/AHG 1T).



History/Art/Language:

The first Christmas cards were printed in 1843 by Charles Goodall and Sons of London. One thousand, just like the one pictured below, were made. That was quite a project at the time, since each one of them had to be colored by hand!



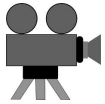
The first American Christmas cards were created by Louis Prang, German born, and Boston lithographer in 1875.

While listening to some Christmas music and with the help of Ed Emberley's Big Red Drawing Book and/or Draw 50 Holiday Decorations (or design your own), you can make your own Christmas cards!

Each of the above books will be listed on this week's library list.

- Choose a design.
- Try practicing on a blank sheet of paper first.
- When you feel comfortable with your design, pencil it lightly onto your note or postcard stock. Color it in with crayons or colored pencils.
- Write a note wishing them a Merry Christmas on the inside. Properly address the outside of the envelopes.

Remember, the supplies you need for this activity will be in this week's supply list.



Family Movie Night:

Watch a Christmas classic.

Some classics are listed in the beginning of Christmas Comes to America. You are welcome to choose one of those or another that suits your fancy.