



# Christmas Celebrations

Christmas time is once again approaching. Cards will adorn classrooms, houses and offices; festive music will be played in shops; presents will be bought and wrapped; trees will be dressed and decorations will be hung throughout houses and shops and all along the streets. Scrumptious food will be prepared and holidays, long or short, will be planned. And all around the world, children will send their wishes to the man many people call Santa.

While in many northern hemisphere countries Christmas is celebrated with traditional hot food eaten around an open fire, in Australia, Christmas Day occurs in summer and the traditional hot Christmas feast has in many cases been replaced by Australian alternatives such as cold turkey, roasts and seafood. Traditional Christmas pudding (hot or cold) with ice-cream or custard is also very popular.

Christmas day finds many Australians:

- out in the bush sitting under a gum tree decorated with tinsel and hand-crafted streamers and singing Aussie Christmas carols
- on the beach or by a river keeping cool
- lunching outside in the backyard around the BBQ
- delaying their own Christmas lunch to instead help one of the organisations that provide a Christmas banquet for the homeless and needy.
- singing carols and attending churches

The Christmas celebration is now part of most Australians' lives whether they are Christian or not. Most Australians join in and celebrate this time of year with much eating and gift giving.

Here are some ideas and activities that you might want to use with your students, along with a selection of websites to investigate and enhance your classroom Christmas program.

## Website resources

[www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/christmas/](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/christmas/)  
(Enchanted Learning: Christmas Crafts)

[www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/teacher/christmas.html](http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/teacher/christmas.html)  
(Christmas Resources on the Internet from Woodlands Junior School, UK)

[www.atozteacherstuff.com/Themes/Christmas/](http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/Themes/Christmas/)  
(A to Z Teacher Stuff)

[www.edna.edu.au/edna/go/schooled/school\\_theme\\_pages/pid/549](http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go/schooled/school_theme_pages/pid/549)  
(EDNA Christmas resources)

You will find many more useful Christmas-related websites on the downloadable page.

## Activities

### Create an Australian Christmas carol

Traditional Christmas carols have a very northern feel, featuring cold weather and strange animals. Some Australian musicians have reworked these to become Australian Carols, like the Australian 'Twelve Days of Christmas' featuring Australian animals. Ask your students to compose their own Aussie Christmas carol.

### Write an Aussie Christmas poem

Have kids create their own Aussie Christmas poem. You might want to have a look at *An Aussie 12 Days of Christmas* (Scholastic Press, by Morrison and Niland).

### Help those in need

There are organisations around the country that make sure the needy don't miss out on Christmas day. Ask students to create handmade cards to be given out on the day. Alternatively, at the school Christmas celebration raise money that can be sent to one of the aid organisations to sponsor a child for a year. What a perfect Christmas present ... especially for the sponsored child!

### Same day, different approaches

Around the world, Christmas is celebrated by Christians in different ways.

- In Germany the man we call Santa is known as Nikolaus. He visits children on December 6th leaving gifts in their boots ... but watch out if you have been bad!
- In France, gifts are given on St Nicholas Day.
- In Mexico they hold a Christmas procession, the posada, that dramatises Mary on a donkey and Joseph searching for an inn. This ends with a Mass at the local church.

NB: you might wish to re-visit the Teachers' Toolkit Issue 6 teaching unit, *World Religions*, to remind students about some of the other religions in Australia and the world.

Find out more about Saint Nicholas at [www.stnicholascenter.org/Brix?pageID=38](http://www.stnicholascenter.org/Brix?pageID=38). You can also find out the origins of Santa Claus at <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/Brix?pageID=35>.

What type of Christmas will you and your students be celebrating? Split the class into groups and ask each group to research how different cultures celebrate Christmas. Groups should report back to the rest of the class with their findings.



## CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

### Further website resources

[www.activityvillage.co.uk/christmas\\_pages.htm](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/christmas_pages.htm)

(Christmas Fun For The Family from Activity Village)

[www.abcteach.com/directory/seasonalholidays/christmas/](http://www.abcteach.com/directory/seasonalholidays/christmas/)

(ABC Teach: Christmas)

[www.classbrain.com/artholiday/publish/christmas\\_word\\_match\\_game.shtml](http://www.classbrain.com/artholiday/publish/christmas_word_match_game.shtml)

(Christmas Word Match games)

[village.education.vic.gov.au/lv/beps/hp.nsf/PreviewHomePages/christmas2](http://village.education.vic.gov.au/lv/beps/hp.nsf/PreviewHomePages/christmas2)

(Kerri's Christmas Page for Teachers)

[www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/christmas/](http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/christmas/)

(Christmas celebrations in Australia)

[www.santas.net/howmerrychristmasissaid.htm](http://www.santas.net/howmerrychristmasissaid.htm)

(How 'Merry Christmas' is said around the world)

[www.history.com/minisites/christmas/](http://www.history.com/minisites/christmas/)

(The History of Christmas)

[www.blackdog.net/holiday/christmas/](http://www.blackdog.net/holiday/christmas/)

(K-6 Christmas links)

[www.teachersfirst.com/holiday/christmas.cfm](http://www.teachersfirst.com/holiday/christmas.cfm)

(TeachersFirst's Christmas Resources)

[www.teachers.ash.org.au/denise/HowChristmasIsCelebrated.htm](http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/denise/HowChristmasIsCelebrated.htm)

[www.the-north-pole.com/around/](http://www.the-north-pole.com/around/)

(Christmas Celebrations Around The World?)

[christmassongbook.net/](http://christmassongbook.net/)

[xmasfun.com/Lyrics.asp](http://xmasfun.com/Lyrics.asp)

(Christmas songs)

[www.christmas-poems.org/](http://www.christmas-poems.org/)

(Christmas Poems)

[www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/christmas/poems-rhymes/index.html](http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/christmas/poems-rhymes/index.html)

(Children's Christmas Literature, Christmas Poetry and Recitals for Kids)

[www.stnicholascenter.org/Brix?pageID=38](http://www.stnicholascenter.org/Brix?pageID=38)

(St Nicholas page)

**And the following appeared in the printed article:**

[www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/christmas/](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/christmas/)

(Enchanted Learning: Christmas Crafts)

[www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/teacher/christmas.html](http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/teacher/christmas.html)

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