

LVCC Learner News: Holidays and Family

Homemade Gifts Save Money, Create Memories

Based on article by Thelma Godin, from www.keynews.org/

The December holidays are coming. Everyone knows about Christmas, but there is also Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Las Posadas, not to mention other celebrations throughout the year. For many of these holidays, it is the **custom** to **exchange** gifts. That does not mean you have to spend a lot of money. A **homemade** gift is a great way to show someone how much you care. It can also be a way to get your family **involved** in the holiday.

Mix up a batch of cookies

Not everyone bakes, but children love **decorating** cookies. **Non-bakers** can find **pre-baked** cookies in the refrigerated foods section of the supermarket. Decorations are in the baking **aisle**. People who bake may want to arrange a cookie exchange. It's an easy way to get **several** kinds of cookies without having to do a lot of work. Each person brings a **dozen** cookies for everyone else. Everyone goes home with the same number of cookies they brought, but now each person has one dozen of many different kinds of cookies, instead of all the same cookie.



Best gifts are good memories

Remember that the holidays are about family, **tradition**, and creating **memories**. **Carve out** some time when no one has to work or study. Take a walk where there are holiday decorations or decorate something at home together.

More homemade gift ideas

- Fill a glass jar with several different types of beans. Attach a bag of spices with a **ribbon**. Include your favorite bean soup **recipe**.
- **Purchase** and decorate a notebook or journal.
- Make a **family tree**. Fill it out on nice paper, decorate it and give it to someone in your family (see blank example).
- Time is a great gift. **Offer** yard work, child care, cleaning, bringing in mail, washing a car or cooking dinner.
- On a **similar** note, make gift **coupons**. Cut colored paper into shapes. Write: This coupon good for one _____. (Fill in the blank). Some ideas are: one hour of babysitting, a car wash, one hour of reading or cooking a meal.

What are some other homemade gift ideas?

Family Activities

In *The Polar Express*, a little boy receives a magic bell as a gift. Discuss the questions below as a family.



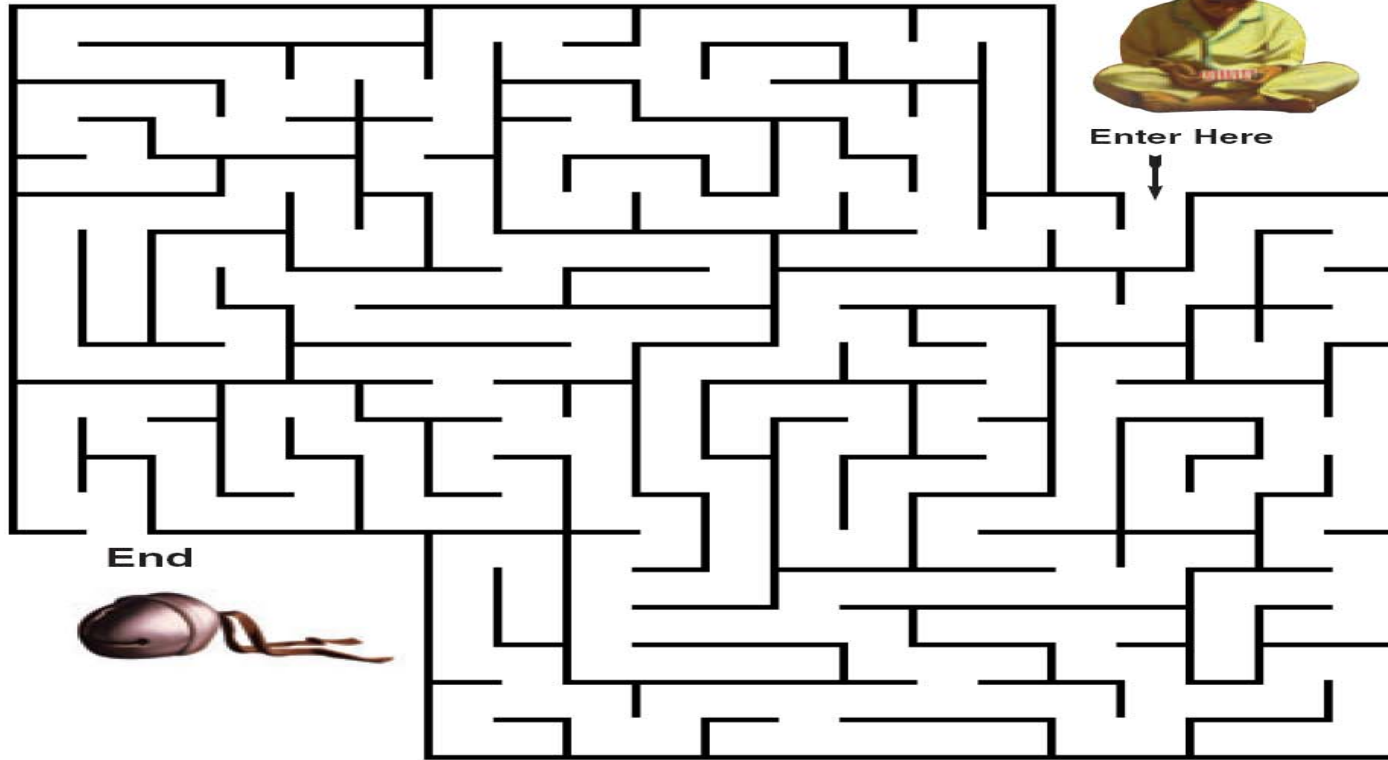
Imagine you are able to go on a magical journey like the boy. Where do you go? How do you get there? How are you changed by the experience? _____

The boy's bell is magic—only he can hear it. Imagine you find or are given a magic _____ that only you can _____ (fill in the blanks). Describe how this object changes your life.

The boy chooses a simple, meaningful gift over a fancy gift that is meaningless. Think of someone you love very much. What kind of gift could you give that person that would mean as much as the boy's bell? It doesn't have to be a real object. _____

A Polar Express Maze

Can you help find the bell?



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REPRODUCIBLE

*Write down the directions for the boy to find the bell. For example, turn to the right, turn left, go straight, etc.

From <<http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/thepolarexpress/pdf/polarpartykit.pdf>>

Family Tree

Fill in the names of your family members in each circle. Add circles where needed.

