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Paducah Parenting & Family[®]

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Make It Special: Holiday Crafts for Children ✦ Thanksgiving Traditions

Give Santa and his elves a little break this year by making your own gifts. You have your own little elves running around the house, and I'm sure they're looking for a fun activity the whole family can participate in. Pull your children away from the video games and tell them it's "craft time". Craft time not only provides fun, it can also provide a learning opportunity for children. Crafts will stimulate your little elves' imaginations, teach them colors, shapes, and counting; perhaps they'll do some writing as well, which will help them write and spell.

Teachers, daycare providers, bus drivers, grandparents, and many more make up your child's shopping list this year. There is an easy alternative, and it's easy on the budget! You can make these crafts from things around the house, and some from items you can find at your local craft supply stores. Remember, that a homemade gift from a child is a gift from the heart! With the holidays just around the corner now is a great time to create simple gifts.

First, compile a list of everyone on your child's Christmas list. Next, decide which craft project will be made for that person--write the name of the project next to their name. Third, make a list of the supplies you will need for each project. Fourth, gather the supplies that will be needed for each project. Finally, clear a work area and begin craft time with the family. As time ticks by, you might find yourself in the holiday spirit--pop a Christmas CD into the stereo and sing along as you work.

No matter what age your little elves are, these crafts can be created by all. Some steps to the crafts will call for an adult's assistance for the younger children, but for the most part the child can assist with each of these projects.



Paper Maché Box

What you need:

- Small, sturdy cardboard boxes
- Paper Maché
- Non-toxic paints
- Jumbo kids paintbrush
- 8 x 10 20 lb drawing paper (white)
- Pencil
- Non-toxic crayons
- Decoupage glue
- Red or green felt

1. Cover a small, sturdy cardboard box with paper mache--apply decoupage glue for the paper mache to stick.
2. Give your child the jumbo kids paintbrush, non-toxic paints, and let them paint the paper maché boxes one solid color, leaving the top unpainted.
3. On 8 x 10 drawing paper (white) allow your child to draw and color a picture. Once the picture is finished, place it on top of the box and seal it with decoupage glue.
4. Line the insides of the paper maché box with red or green felt.

5. Place another craft item that your child makes inside the box for an added gift. Or, you could buy a small gift to place inside the box.
6. Place a gift tag (see gift tags) and a bow on top for the finishing touch.

This paper mache box makes a wonderful gift for anyone!

Painted Rock

What you need:

Rock (nicely shaped)

Oil paint

1. Find a very nicely shaped rock anywhere, including your backyard.
2. Wash and dry the rock -- overnight.
3. Paint the rock with oil paint.....with any pattern that fits the child's ages. The pattern can be as simple as a daisy, Christmas poinsettia, Christmas tree, star, snowman, or initials. Again, if your child is too young or not really a budding Picasso, you can use a stencil or a stamp.

This not only makes a fun activity for everyone, but it also makes a simple decorating idea and a gift for anyone.

Candy Plant

What you need:

4 inch clay pot

Green floral foam

Paint and paint brush

Wrapped candy

Shredded tissue or Easter grass

Popsicle, ice-cream, or craft sticks

Hot glue



1. Using the tip of a paint brush, have your child place dots, stars, or any design all over the clay pot. Or, you can have your child paint the entire clay pot a solid color. Paint too messy...how about stickers.
2. Place a piece of green floral foam inside the pot; make sure it fits snug.
3. Hot glue your favorite wrapped candies (small chocolate bars, red hard candies, striped mints or chocolate kisses) to the popsicle sticks. As an alternative, you can use super glue instead of the hot glue.
4. Once you've glued your candies to the sticks, place the sticks into the green foam.
5. Fill in the bottom of your clay pot with shredded tissue or Easter grass.

You now have a nice plant that will never die, and a great gift for anyone.

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Fall Picture

What you need:

Construction paper

Scissors

Pencil

Elmers Glue

1. Lay your child's hand on a brown piece of construction paper, draw around it including the area from the middle of the arm, around all the fingers (spread out), and back down the other side. Cut this out and it becomes the trunk of a tree.
2. Get another piece of construction paper in a fall color (light orange or yellow), and glue the cut out of the arm/hand at the bottom.
3. Take several fall colors of construction paper and tear them out in little ovals like leaves. Let the child glue these pieces at random on and around the hand.
4. Have the child sign the art; offer assistance if he or she can not sign their name that well.

This gift gives a pretty fall picture to frame and hang containing a drawing of the child's hand as the trunk and branches of the tree. Not only does it make a pretty gift, but a good memory as well.

Beaded Keychain

What you need:

Pony beads

Concho

Round keyring

Suede lace

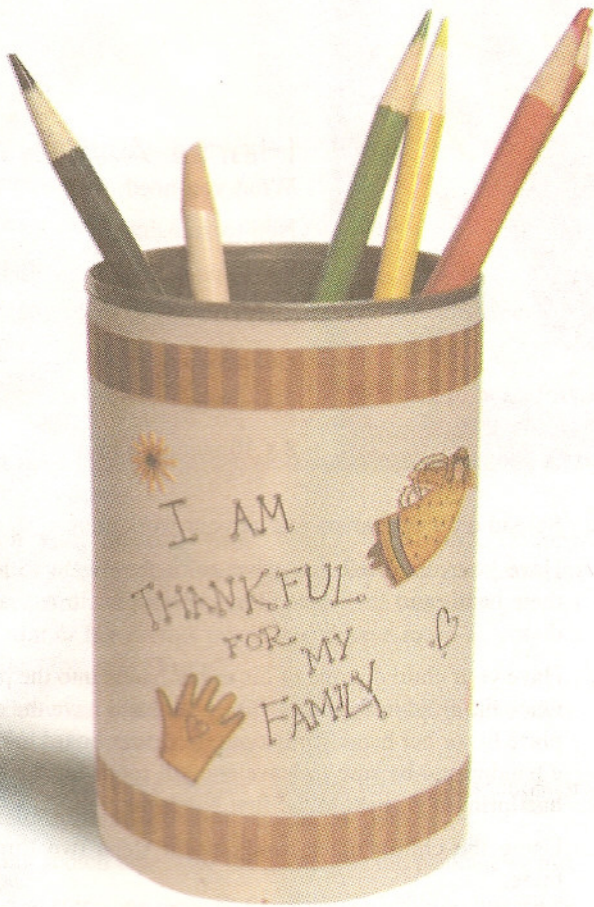
1. Decide on how long you want your keychain to be, and then cut off that much suede lace.
2. Double up the lace, take the ends of the lace and wrap around the keyring, and then bring the ends through the

loop (similar to a hitch knot) and then pull your knot tight. Make sure the knot goes on the bottom of the keyring so that the keys can be put onto the ring.

3. Thread the lace through the concho. When finished with the lace you should have two strands of lace to place beads on. You can choose any design concho you want.
4. Put any color beads you like on one strand of lace, and then put any other color beads you desire on the other strand of lace. Depending on how long you made your lace will determine how many beads will fit onto one strand. You will then place the same number of beads onto the second strand of lace.
5. Tie a knot at the bottom of the lace to hold the beads on.

You should now have a beaded keychain. I started making and giving these keychains when I was a teenager--they made great gifts for anyone.





Pencil/Pen Holder

What you need:

Empty can of corn, peas, or any small tin can

Decoupage glue

Construction paper (if painting)

Non-toxic paints or wrapping paper

1. Wash the empty can out good, remove the label, and let dry.
2. While the can is drying, have your child draw a picture on construction paper. An alternative to a picture is wrapping paper.
3. Glue the picture or wrapping paper around the can until it's completely covered.
4. While the glue is drying, have your child paint a picture on construction paper, or help your child cut out enough wrapping paper to go around the empty can.

5. Glue your child's picture or wrapping paper around the empty can.
6. Allow the glue to dry.

Now the teacher's desk will be more organized and contain less clutter. For an added touch you can buy a package of pencils and/or pens to put into the holder.

Puzzle Picture

What you need:

Wooden or fabric picture frame

Puzzle

Puzzle glue

Cardboard

Tape measure

1. Buy a puzzle containing as many pieces as you wish to work with, and be sure the picture is appealing as well.
2. Sit down together and work the puzzle until you've completed it.
3. Take a tape measure and measure the finished puzzle to see what size cardboard and frame you will need.
4. Using your measurements cut out the correct size of cardboard. Once you have the correct size of cardboard cut out, take puzzle glue, and glue each puzzle piece to the cardboard. You will have to take the puzzle apart to do this, but if you do it carefully you have already worked the puzzle, and you should be able to fit the pieces onto the cardboard correctly.
5. Once all the pieces of the puzzle have been glued onto the cardboard let it dry overnight.
6. Using the measurements from the puzzle, buy a frame that will fit it.
7. Place the puzzle, which is now glued to the cardboard, into the picture frame.

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Fall FUN



Hand Art

What you need:

- Non-toxic paint
- 8 x 10 posterboard
- Shallow dish
- Old newspapers
- Pencil/Pen
- 8 x 10 picture frame

If everything is done correctly you will have a beautiful picture for any wall. This is a gift that anyone will love! If you know who you're making the gift for, and if you know they like a certain thing (horses, dogs, cats, waterfalls, etc.) you can always try to find a puzzle that fits that theme.

You've finished making all your gifts, but you lack something for each gift, right? Sure you do, you need a gift tag for all those gifts. Using the list below, gather up the supplies and grab those little elves again!

1. Spread old newspapers out on your work area.
2. Have your child tell you what color they want to make their hand, and then place that color paint in a shallow dish.
3. Have your child dip one of his or her hands into the paint. Once the child has paint on his or her hand have the child place his or her hand firmly onto the poster board to make a handprint—be sure to leave enough room for the other handprint to go next to the first handprint.
4. Using the child's other hand, repeat steps two through three.
5. Help the child take a pencil or pen and write his or her name toward the bottom of the poster board and then below the child's name write the date.
6. Let the paint completely dry.
7. Parents, so your child doesn't get cut, place the poster board of your child's handprints into an 8 x 10 picture frame.

Together you have created a hand art that any grandparent is sure to love!

Want something a little more challenging for the 10 to 12 year olds in your life? Here's a great gift to make that will take keep them busy for several hours. In addition, it makes a great activity for the whole family. When the weather has you 'cooped-up' in the house this is a project that will make it worth while, and the finished results make it even better.

Masquerade
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Retail & Rental

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Gift Tags

What you need:

110 lb. card stock paper (any color you like)

Scotch tape

Marker (any color that will show well on the color paper you chose)

Scissors

1. Cut out a square from the card stock paper. It can be any size you desire.
2. With your marker, write "Merry Christmas", "Happy Holidays", "Season Greetings", or anything you desire on the square you just cut out. If your child can write you can let him or her do this unassisted. Leave room so you can write "To:" and "From".
3. Under what you just wrote write "To:", and put the name of the person you're giving the gift to.
4. Under "To:" write "From:", and put your child's name, or whatever name or names should go there.
5. Using scotch tape, tape the gift tag to the package or gift.
6. Repeat steps one through five for each gift you just made.

There are many local craft supply stores in the area where you can buy things you will need for these projects. Trees n Trends, Poppy Seeds & Beads, and Those Were the Days—Scrap booking.

The holiday shopping season does put many of us on a tight budget, so check consignment, antique and used clothing stores in the area to see if they have any of the supplies you may need. Some do carry lace, embellishments, and etc. Yard sales are also a great place to look for craft supplies.

No matter what craft activities you choose to do with your little elves, hold on to those memories, and have fun together as a family. Wishing you and yours a happy and safe holiday! Don't get too stuffed on turkey and all those trimmings! ✦

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