

Dear Families,

As we head into the holiday season, I wanted to share a few simple, playful ideas you can enjoy together at home.

These activities aren't about worksheets or keeping busy; they're about slowing down, exploring, and noticing the little moments of wonder that happen through everyday play.

Each one uses common materials you likely already have around the house and encourages your child to think, create, and problem-solve through hands-on exploration.

You'll find four easy invitations inside this handout, perfect for cozy afternoons, snow days, or quick bursts of family fun.

If you'd like to see more playful ideas like these, visit our classroom partner, Preschool STEAM, for additional tips and inspiration: www.preschoolsteam.com

Wishing you and your family a joyful, wonder-filled holiday season!

Warmly,





CANDY CANE CHEMISTRY

Materials: Candy canes, warm water, clear cups or bowls, stopwatch

Challenge: Predict and then observe how long it takes for a candy cane to dissolve in warm water. Document the process.



5-STAR CHALLENGE

- ★ **Curiosity:** Why does sugar dissolve in water?
- ★ **Creative Thinking:** Hypothesize what might happen if you change variables like water temperature or candy cane size.
- ★ **Critical Thinking:** Measure and document the dissolution process at regular intervals.
- ★ **Communication:** Share your observations and findings with others.
- ★ **Collaboration:** Compare results with a friend and discuss any differences or similarities in your experiments.

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REINDEER BRIDGE CHALLENGE

Materials: Blocks, cardboard, craft sticks, or any building materials; a small toy reindeer (or any small animal)

Challenge: Build a bridge strong enough for your reindeer to cross. Test its strength, stability, and height.



5-STAR CHALLENGE

- ★ **Curiosity:** What makes a bridge strong enough to hold your reindeer?
- ★ **Creative Thinking:** Design different bridge types; tall, wide, arched, or flat.
- ★ **Critical Thinking:** Test your bridge. How many reindeer can it hold? What happens when you add weight or make the span longer?
- ★ **Communication:** Explain your bridge design and describe what worked and what didn't.
- ★ **Collaboration:** Work together to improve your bridge or combine designs into one super-strong structure.

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SNOWFLAKE PATTERNS

Materials: Q-tips, toothpicks, craft sticks

Challenge: Build your own snowflakes using loose parts. Explore symmetry, size, and repeating patterns.



5-STAR CHALLENGE

- ★ **Curiosity:** What shapes show up in snowflakes?
- ★ **Creative Thinking:** Design snowflakes using different materials and patterns.
- ★ **Critical Thinking:** Try making a big and a small snowflake. Which one is easier to build?
- ★ **Communication:** Describe your snowflake and explain how you built it.
- ★ **Collaboration:** Work together to create a matching snowflake or a snowflake collection.

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MARSHMALLOW TOWERS

Materials: Mini marshmallows and pretzel sticks or dry spaghetti

Challenge: Build the tallest or strongest structure you can.



5-STAR CHALLENGE

- ★ **Curiosity:** What shapes make the strongest structures?
- ★ **Creative Thinking:** Build towers, arches, bridges, or creatures.
- ★ **Critical Thinking:** Test your design. What helps it stand tall?
- ★ **Communication:** Explain your structure and any improvements you made.
- ★ **Collaboration:** Combine ideas to build a larger group structure

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