

# *Simply Christmas*



by Christopher Byrnes  
and Bernadette Dimitrov

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# Introduction

Welcome to this brand new ebook!

I hope that you'll find plenty of inspiration both for your students and for yourself this Christmas within these pages. I've teamed up with Christmas expert Bernadette Dimitrov to produce something I hope you will treasure for years to come.

Here's what's in store...

- First we'll kick off with a short essay by Mary Wilson, that I think really encompasses the spirit of Christmas at home.
- Next, pit your wits against my Christmas quiz and find out how much you really know about Christmas.
- Then, you'll find plenty of easy recipes that you can make with your children, and a Christmas dinner plan, perfect for those prone to putting on weight over the holiday season.
- Learn how to make an origami Santa and a 3D origami Christmas tree. Even if you've never tried your hand at origami before, my step-by-step photos will show you how to create these models clearly and easily.
- Finally, get in touch with your spiritual side this Christmas with Bernadette Dimitrov's exclusive contribution to *Simply Christmas*.

This year, I've put together a huge collection of Christmas materials that will provide you with thousands of new ideas for your classes and for yourself, so I really do urge you to take a look, if you haven't already. It's at <http://www.traditionallychristmas.com>

I'll be adding other things to supplement this ebook in the free resources area, so if you didn't sign up when you received this ebook, or if it was simply passed on to you by someone, you can sign up now at: <http://www.traditionallychristmas.com/xmasebook.html>

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teacher and author

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# Christmas Memories

By Mary Wilson

Christmas for the young ones starts on the very first day of December, when they eagerly open the number one door of their Advent calendar, anticipating a festive picture or chocolate treat inside. One a day until the 24<sup>th</sup> keeps raising their excitement while the parents will have installed a Christmas fir tree in the main room, lovingly decorated with baubles, tinsel and an angel on top to watch over the proceedings – reminding everyone that it is the season, not only of gifts and pleasure but also of a very important birth.

Christmas Eve: the biggest and best door of the Advent calendar – and, for many, a midnight sortie to church to begin in reality this Special Day. Mum will then have but a few hours sleep before rising to dress the turkey – sage and onion stuffing, perhaps chestnut too – well basted and roasted slowly, as the aroma diffuses through the house, prompting the younger ones to clamour towards the tree, now encircled with presents from the ever-reliable Santa Claus. Traditionally he's always left his sleigh and reindeer on the roof and clambered down the chimney; how he manages to come down modern flues is still a mystery, but he's never let anyone down yet. And in return each household will have left him a little glass of his favourite tipple (or maybe dad's favourite tipple) with a mince-pie to keep his energy going throughout his nocturnal journey. Of old, children hung out their stockings on the mantelpiece and received, if they'd been good, a little wooden toy and piece of fruit. The stockings are still hung in many homes, but are either more symbolic or considerably huger to hold the bigger gifts the more affluent Santa now provides.

Late morning: the guests start to arrive.- always family, grandparents, siblings, maiden great-aunt Valerie who searches round for the mistletoe in the doorway in the hope of a little kiss from Dad. The hallway is filled with garlands, holly, ivy – out of harm's way but essential to bring the cold snowy winter into the house to enhance the ambiance. And of course it's snowing outside – it always snows at Christmas!

Pre-meal drinks while mum and grandma busy themselves with the roast potatoes, brussel sprouts, breadsauce, roast parsnips and other family preferences. Maybe some cocktail sausages wrapped in bacon; perhaps some roasted chestnuts, and gravy – infused with turkey juices – gravy galore!

Before the meal proper – the crackers! Everyone has one at their seat; everyone pulls one with their neighbour, wondering after the BANG who will have the longer end which contains the little gift, corny joke and paper hat which must be worn by all during the proceedings.

Joy and laughter with lashings of turkey gravy – and then, the Christmas pudding – dim the lights! This has to be done with great solemnity as it is brought into the dining room and placed centre-table with a pouring of brandy. A match, a second's silence and then the flames arise, lighting the room with literal Christmas spirit. Whether the pudding be accompanied by cream or the traditional brandy butter it is always a welcome contrast to the meaty main course – and for some families, there is still maintained that tradition of including a little coin in the pudding which some lucky soul might discover in their portion and have good fortune in the coming months. Oh look! It's mum! Well, she does deserve it after all, for all her efforts.

And then the group will retire to the main room ,admire the tree, smile as the children play with their new toys and welcome the arrival of strong coffee and mince pies.

Let us leave them there, in front of the glowing real fire, as we now plan for our own, special Christmas.

# Easy Christmas Quiz...or is it?

See how much you know about Christmas by answering *true* or *false* to the following questions.

## Questions

- (1) The Christmas traditions we know and love today are derived from not one festival, the birth of Jesus Christ, but of two different festivals.
- (2) Santa Claus may have originated as the Anglo-Saxon god *Woden*.
- (3) Santa Claus was always, traditionally, clad in red.
- (4) The day after Christmas Day is known as *Boxing Day* to honour an organised contest of pugilism on that day dating back to Henry VIII.
- (5) Christmas trees were not really popular before 1840.
- (6) Oliver Cromwell introduced Christmas carols to the church service.
- (7) Turkey was not always traditional fare at the Christmas table.
- (8) Christmas puddings should be stirred from East to West in honour of the Three Wise Men.
- (9) The tradition of giving Christmas cards dates back to Roman times.

## Answers

- (1) False. The Christmas we know and love today is actually a mixture of elements from *three* festivals: the birth of Jesus Christ, the Roman festival of *Saturnalia*, named after the Roman god Saturn, and the *Nordic Winter Solstice*.
- (2) True. Although *Santa Claus* is undoubtedly a corruption of the Dutch, *Sinter Klaas*, his origins go back much further to the *Nordic Winter Solstice* festival, which means he was probably also thought to be a personification of *Odin*, the Norse version of *Woden*.
- (3) False. Pagan tradition usually depicted him in green, which signified the coming of spring. Greenery played a major role in the Pagan traditions of winter, as you might have guessed from the types of decorations we associate with Christmas, such as the Christmas tree. Surprisingly, the establishing of Santa as a jolly man, clad in red and white, was purely down to commercial reasons. Coca-cola chose to depict Santa in red for an advertising campaign in the 1930s and the colour simply stuck.



- (4) False. The name has nothing whatsoever to do with sports, fighting or otherwise. The boxes referred to are the alms of the church, which were opened up on that day, and the contents distributed amongst the poor and needy of the locality or parish.
- (5) True. Although evergreens were part of the Pagan traditions to welcome in the spring and the start of new life, the Christmas tree tradition that plays such an important part in Christmas nowadays only regained such popularity through Prince Albert,

the husband of Queen Victoria, who revitalised the tradition in the 1840s.



- (6) False. Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, was probably the last person who would ever allow carols as part of the church service! In fact, in 1647, he actually banned all Christmas celebrations altogether in England. Christmas carols were originally introduced by St Francis of Assisi.



- (7) True. Turkeys originally came from Mexico, so they were unheard of in Europe before the discovery of the Americas. Traditionally, almost any large birds were fair game for roasting at Christmas, and although goose was the usual bird of choice, peacocks, pheasants and swans also featured on the banquet table.
- (8) True. They were traditionally made on the Sunday before advent, known as 'Stir-up Sunday'. Each member of the family took it in turns to stir the pudding and make a secret wish. Traditionally 13 ingredients should be used to honour Christ and his disciples. Interestingly, Christmas pudding started out as a kind of porridge in Mediaeval times, called *Frumenty*.
- (9) False. Christmas cards were a product of the Victorian era. The first Christmas card was the brainchild of Sir Henry Cole in 1843. We do, however, own the tradition of gift giving at Christmas time to the Romans, more precisely, as part of their festival, *Saturnalia*.



# Christmas Cooking



# CHRISTMAS CANDY

Candy is an institution at Christmas. People who resist it the rest of the year will eat it happily during the holidays. And those who don't make much candy, ordinarily, find themselves right in the kitchen turning out batches of sweet treats for family, friends, and neighbors, as gifts of loving thoughtfulness.

## SUGARED WALNUTS

¼ teaspoon salt 2 to 3 cups walnuts, halves or large pieces  
1½ cups sugar  
½ cup liquid  
1 teaspoon white corn syrup

Cook first 4 ingredients to soft ball stage (236° to 240°). Remove from heat; add walnuts. Stir till creamy. Turn onto foil. Separate walnuts. Spiced: ½ cup water, 1/2 teaspoon each nutmeg, cloves, 2 teaspoons cinnamon. Minted: ½ cup  
Sugared walnuts are so easy to make

## QUICK COCONUT DROPS

1 tablespoon butter grated rind of one orange  
1 can flaked coconut candied cherries  
1 package coconut-cream pudding mix  
1½ cups sugar  
½ cup evaporated milk

Combine all ingredients except coconut and cherries. Bring to a boil and cook, stirring constantly about 3 minutes or until a soft ball forms when a small amount is tested in cold water. Cool slightly and add coconut; beat until mixture is somewhat thick. Drop in small balls onto waxed paper, and top each with a piece of cherry.

## CANDIED CRANBERRIES

Wash 2 cups large, firm cranberries; drain well, and spread in bottom of buttered baking dish. Sprinkle with 1M cups sugar, and cover tightly. Bake in moderate oven, 350° F., 1 hour. Stir once to distribute sugar. Let cranberries cool in syrup. Lift out onto waxed paper. Sift a little sugar over berries. Let stand until dry and firm.

## FROSTED ORANGE SLICES

For each large seedless orange, thinly sliced, combine one cup sugar and ¼ cup water in a large skillet and heat until sugar is dissolved; season, if you like, with whole cloves and pieces of stick cinnamon. Arrange orange slices in flat layers in the skillet. It's best to do just one or two layers at a time. Simmer gently until the oranges are well cooked; the peels will look translucent. Drain slices on a wire rack. You can reuse the syrup for the next batch, adding a little more sugar and water as needed. Dry slices overnight, then cut them in half. Mix ¾ cup confectioners' sugar with enough water to thicken; heat just enough to dissolve the sugar; do not boil. Dip half slices, one by one, in frosting; drain; return to rack to dry.

## VANILLA CARAMELS

1 cup milk  
½ cup heavy cream  
¼ cup butter  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
2 cups sugar  
1 cup light com syrup  
1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk

1. Mix ingredients except vanilla in a heavy two-quart saucepan and cook, stirring and scraping, to 249° F. (a firm, caramel-like ball in cold water). Add vanilla.
2. Turn into an oiled 9 x 9-inch pan and cool. Cut into squares and wrap in waxed paper or use for caramel pecan rolls. Makes 2 pounds.

## JELLY CANDIES

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar  
1 cup canned applesauce granulated sugar  
1 package strawberry or lime-flavored gelatin  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup shelled walnuts

Combine sugar and applesauce in 1-quart saucepan. Bring to boil over moderate heat and boil 3 minutes, stirring frequently. Add red or green hours until dry. Roll again in sugar; pack between layers of waxed paper in covered container (not airtight).

## PEPPERMINT PINWHEELS

basic recipe (above)  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon vanilla  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon peppermint flavoring  
4 drops red food coloring  
3 tablespoons chopped walnuts or peanuts

Make basic recipe (above) and divide in half. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon vanilla to one half and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon peppermint flavoring and 4 drops of red food coloring to the other. Press each mixture into a ball; chill about 1 hour. Then roll vanilla mixture between 2 sheets of waxed paper into rectangle 7x5 inches. Repeat with peppermint mixture. Remove top sheet of paper from each. Turn the peppermint layer over to fit on top of the vanilla layer. Peel off paper now on top. Starting with short side roll up as for jelly roll, gently and firmly. Turn roll over in 3 tablespoons chopped walnuts or peanuts until well covered. Wrap in waxed paper; chill. Cut in  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch slices when ready to use. Makes about 15 slices.

(Taken from our amazing Monster Christmas Package at [www.traditionallychristmas.com](http://www.traditionallychristmas.com)) [Click Here](#) to find out more!

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# Easy Treats For Kids To Make

Participation in Christmas activity is a fine source of holiday joy, and it can happen in the kitchen as happily as anywhere else in the house. There are lots of good things to make which are so simple and yet intriguing that the children can make them with exceptional results.

## PEANUT BUTTER BALLS

¼ teaspoon cinnamon about 2 tablespoons  
lemon juice shredded coconut  
1 cup raisins  
½ cup peanut butter  
½ cup confectioners' sugar

Cut up a cup of raisins into small pieces. Mix with ½ cup peanut butter and ½ cup confectioners' sugar. Stir in ¼ teaspoon cinnamon and about 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Form into 30 small balls. Roll each ball in shredded coconut.

## ROLLED COOKIE FACES

3½ cups flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 cup butter  
Panettone

## GUM DROP WALNUT BREAD

Make batter for Holiday Walnut bread, except use 1 cup chopped walnuts and add 1 cup chopped gum drops (except black ones). To get round loaves, bake in cans. Divide batter between three well greased 8-ounce (2 cup) cans (or No. 2 size cans), filling cans slightly more than half full. Bake, uncovered, about 45 to 50 minutes until toothpick thrust into center comes out clean.

## **EASY CHRISTMAS MINTS**

food coloring various mint extracts

3 egg whites

6 cups confectioners' sugar

In a large bowl, beat 3 egg whites until stiff. Slowly blend in 6 cups sifted confectioners' sugar. Divide candy into three bowls. Tint 1 red, 1 green, and 1 yellow. Flavor each with one of various mint extracts. Roll each mixture out between pieces of waxed paper. Cut patties with the mouth of an olive jar or, for tiny mints, a thimble. Let dry overnight.

## **SUGAR FROSTED APRICOTS AND PRUNES**

apricots, prunes

egg white, beaten

sugar

Dip little clusters of the dried fruits in beaten egg white. Drain off the excess egg white; now, dip in confectioners' sugar. Place on paper toweling to dry, then arrange fruits on a platter.

## **FROSTY STUFFED FIGS**

dried figs

walnuts or pecans

confectioners' sugar

Slit side of soft whole dried figs and fill center with broken walnuts or pecans; press closed. Dip bottom of figs in sifted confectioners' sugar.

## **BUTTERED HONEY NUTS**

Spread 6 ounces shelled, unsalted nuts on a cookie sheet. Bake in slow oven, 300° F., 15 minutes. Mix 1 tablespoon each honey and butter, and pour over nuts. Stir until nuts are completely coated with the honey mixture. Store in airtight container until ready to pack. Makes 1 1/3 cups.

## **PEANUT BRITTLE**

1 3/4 cups shelled roasted  
2 cups sugar  
1 teaspoon butter  
peanuts  
1/8 teaspoon salt

Rub hulls from nuts; arrange on a buttered, shallow pan. Add salt to sugar, and heat in skillet until melted and caramelized, stirring constantly. Add butter; spoon mixture over peanuts, spreading to distribute syrup evenly. Let stand until cold. Break up. Makes 1 1/4 pounds.

## **POPCORN STARS**

8 cups popped corn  
1/2 cup light corn syrup  
1/4 cup water  
1/2 cup sugar

Combine sugar, corn syrup, salt, and water and bring to a boil. Cook till a few drops form a firm ball in cold water. Add butter, flavoring, and green coloring and pour over corn, stirring syrup through with two forks. Grease hands and mold corn into star shapes or press into a

kitchen funnel for trees. Using the same method, you can also make star shapes or wreaths with ring or jelly molds.

Frost ice cream cones with instant frosting mix and decorate with candy sprinkles or chocolate bits.

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# Gourmet Christmas Dinner For Dieters

This gourmet Christmas dinner for 6 is feast to be remembered and it **won't** pile on the pounds like the usual Christmas meal would! Planned for gourmets who want to rise to an occasion and rise from it. What's more, no-one will even suspect your serving them up a diet dinner, unless you tell them. Guests who diet and guests who don't will find it a savory banquet that is completely satisfying and delicious, but magically low in calories. All by way of a chef's clever hand in the kitchen, each serving adds up to 510 calories, or 1,000 less than anyone would predict.

The merry meal begins with sea food in rosy tomatoes under a frosting of creamy cottage cheese — a fitting overture with ocean tang and holiday brilliance. A sumptuous roast turkey comes next, lording it over the dressing all spiced with thyme and rosemary and nuggeted with mushrooms and water chestnuts — but there is to be no bread! There will be cranberry-apricot sauce; there will be delicious vegetables.

For dessert, orange crepes of a blissful flavor bide in a chafing dish. And we depart from tradition only in one way — the turkey, first broiled, then baked, comes to the table already carved. As tantalizing aromas rise, who could bear the suspense otherwise?

## LOBSTER-AND-CRABMEAT COCKTAIL

Red, white and festive . . . our first course, a lobster- and-crabmeat cocktail cupped in tomato. Slice off tops of 6 small tomatoes, scoop out insides, wrap hollowed tomatoes in plastic film and chill in refrigerator. Now for the meat of tasty crustaceans. Bone 1 cup cooked crab-meat — with zeal. Add to it 1 cup cooked lobster meat, bite size. Marinate both for ½ hour in ¼cup tarragon vinegar, then chill. Half an hour before dinner, lightly salt insides of tomatoes. Fill with sea food. We'll spoon over it Creamy Cottage-cheese Dressing. Combine in electric blender or put through sieve ½ cup cottage

cheese, 2 tablespoons skimmed milk, 1 teaspoon grated onion, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, ¼teaspoon salt, dash of pepper. Blend until smooth. Chill. A most refreshing dressing. And it brings calorie count up to only 71 per serving.

### ROAST TURKEY WITH MUSHROOM DRESSING

Have butcher cut an 8-pound bird into 8 pieces. In shallow roasting pan, melt 2 tablespoons butter with ½teaspoon seasoned salt, ½ teaspoon meat tenderizer, ¼ teaspoon pepper. Rub all turkey pieces with this savory seasoning, place in pan, then broil until they are bubbling and gold on both sides, about 20 minutes. Cover pan tightly with aluminum foil and bake 1 hour in moderately hot oven, 375° F. Meanwhile, the dressing. Cook until tender in ½ cup chicken stock 4 cups chopped fresh mushrooms, 4 cups chopped celery. Add 2 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon rosemary, ½ teaspoon thyme, ⅛ teaspoon pepper. Remove from heat and stir in ⅔ cup coarsely chopped water chestnuts, ¼ cup flour. Uncover the bird and put the dressing around the turkey. Re-cover and continue roasting another hour or until done. Spoon dressing into center of hot platter. Arrange turkey on top. Brush with pan juices and garnish with crisp fans of cauliflower, radish roses, and parsley. Enough here for 6-8 servings, only 224 calories per serving.

### PEARL ONIONS TO BEDECK GREEN BEANS

We tell you an art here. After you peel 1 cup of the tiniest white onions, pierce the ends crisscross — it keeps them from coming apart while they cook. Simmer them gently in salted water for 10 minutes. Drain. Place 2 packages frozen cut green beans in saucepan; join the onions to their emerald companions. Cook together in boiling salted water 8-10 minutes for a courtly blend of flavors, and only 70 calories per serving.

### TANGY CRANBERRY-APRICOT SAUCE

Nothing's missing — not even the noble cranberry. And here the color of the sauce is brilliant, the flavor profound. Dissolve 2 packages lemon-flavored low-calorie gelatin dessert in 1/2 cups hot water. Add 6 non-caloric sweetener tablets and stir patiently until they dissolve.

Open 1 medium-sized can water-packed apricots and measure 1 cup apricot juice (add water if liquid doesn't make a cup) to stir into gelatin mixture, then chill it until thick and syrupy. Meanwhile, cut apricots into medium-size pieces, grind 2 cups fresh cranberries with the coarse blade of the grinder, add 2 teaspoons lemon juice, and blend all into gelatin when it is thick enough. Stir only a bit, then chill. Each serving: 18 calories.

### ORANGE CREPES SUZETTE

Our Elysian finale is going to be after-dinner pancakes fragrant with orange, luscious with strawberry, steeped in sauce set for the cockles of the heart. The recipe: Sift together into a bowl  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup flour, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 teaspoon baking soda,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt. Beat together 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups buttermilk, 1 egg, grated rind of 1 orange. Stir into the dry ingredients until smooth. Bake on a hot, lightly greased griddle until golden on both sides. If you use a level measuring tablespoon to a pancake, count on 20 cakes. Cakes may be made ahead. For the sauce, open 1 small can mandarin orange sections. Pour the liquid into a saucepan. Add 2 tablespoons sugar and heat with strips of rind cut from 1 orange. When removing rind from orange, use a light hand — only the colored part has the flavor you want. Cook gently until liquid thickens and rind is tender. Remove rind; it has worked wonders. Add 2 teaspoons cornstarch to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup orange juice and add to the saucepan along with 1 teaspoon rum extract. Heat again until mixture thickens and add orange sections, and sliced strawberries if you wish. Stop kitchen work here if you plan to finish with a flourish at the dining room table! Next step: Reheat sauce, and warm pancakes in slow oven. In a chafing dish put a round of the little pancakes, heap sauce over, more pancakes, more sauce, and heat them together for 4 or 5 minutes until flavors swim together. When piping hot, serve. Servings of 3 cakes each come to only 124 calories.

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# How To Make An ORIGAMI Santa Claus



**By Christopher Byrnes**

# How To Make An Origami Santa Claus

This simple origami Santa is easy to make, and is a creative delight for younger children who enjoy some hands-on craft.

You will need:

1. 2 sheets of red origami paper (or two squares of paper, of equal size, red on one side and white on the other)
2. glue
3. some coloured pens or pencils

Information:

Origami paper is very thin, and usually coloured on one side and white on the other. The paper shown below is the normal variety used in Japan. For this model, however, you don't necessarily need to use real origami paper. But it is essential that the reverse side be white for this to work. You could glue a red and a white sheet of paper together to get the same effect. The folds we'll use are not so complex as they require the thinness of real origami paper.



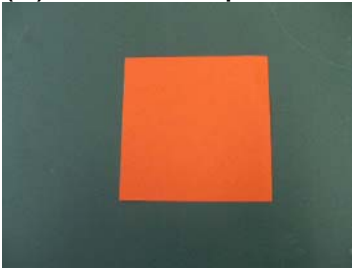
## Directions:

### Part One – The Torso

(1) You will need two pieces of origami paper, one for the torso and one for the head.



(2) Take one piece, red side up.



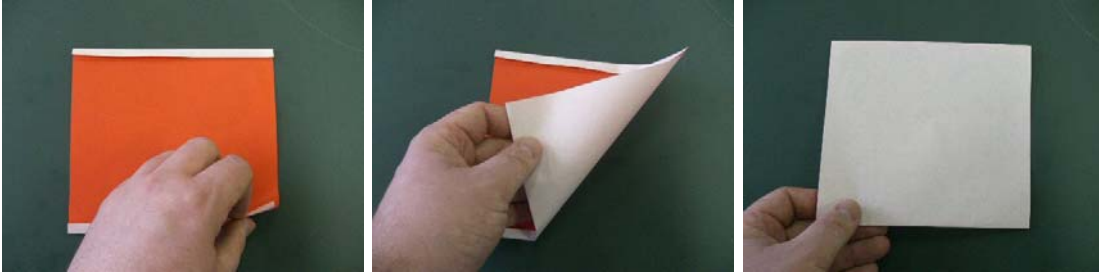
(3) Fold the edge of one side up about ½ centimeter, revealing the white paper below.



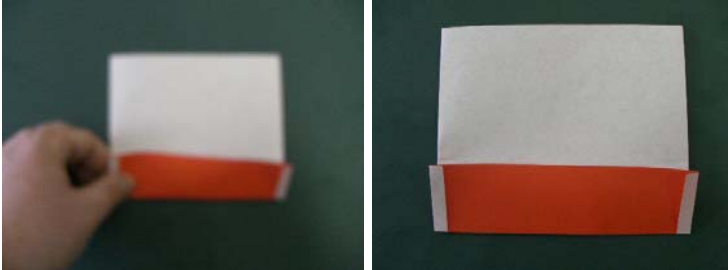
(4) Next, fold the opposite edge up in the same way.



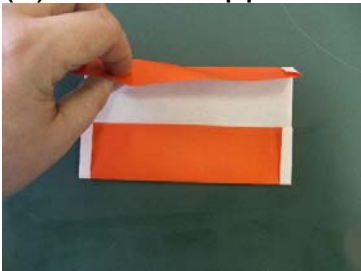
(5) Turn the paper over



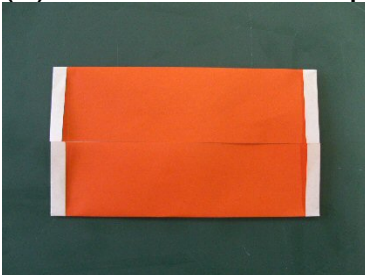
(6) Next, fold one side to the center of the paper.



(7) Fold the opposite side of the paper to meet it.

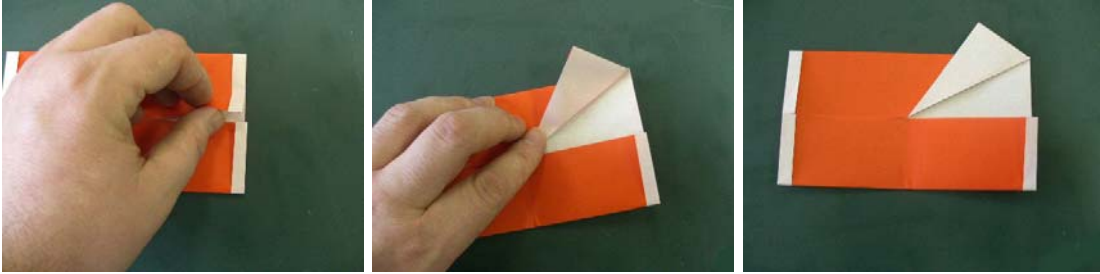


(8) You should end up with a shape like this:

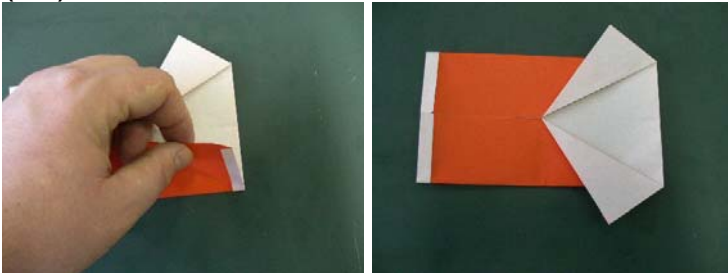




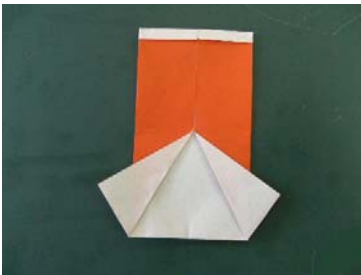
(9) From one end of the rectangle, fold one side back in a triangular shape, as shown below. The fold should start at about the imaginary vertical center line of the rectangle, viewed lengthways.



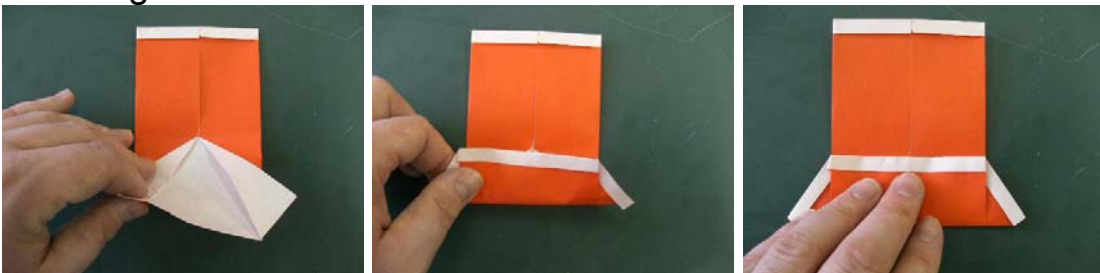
(10) Do the same with the other side, mirroring it exactly.



(11) Turn the paper 90 degrees clockwise, to make the next fold easier.



(12) Fold the end you opened out back upon itself to the point where the triangular folds started.



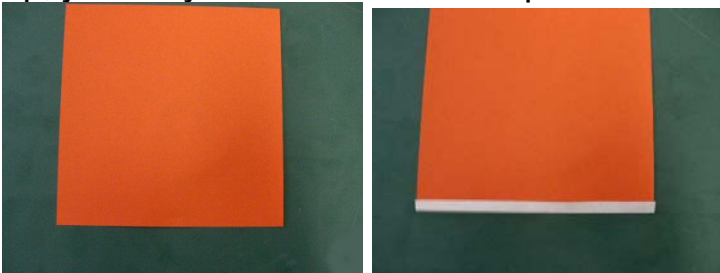


(13) You should be left with this shape, which completes the torso:



## Part Two – The Head And Bonnet

(14) Take the second piece of paper and fold the edge of one side up, just as you did with the first piece



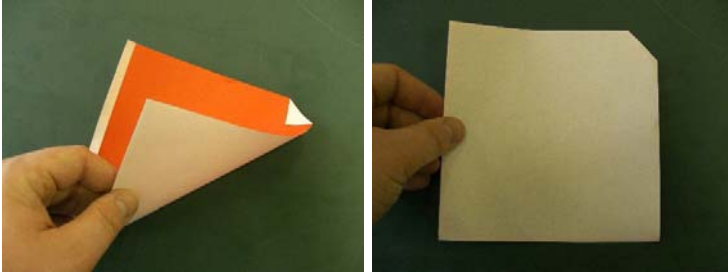
(15) Next, fold the edge perpendicular to the fold you just made. The fold should be of equal width.



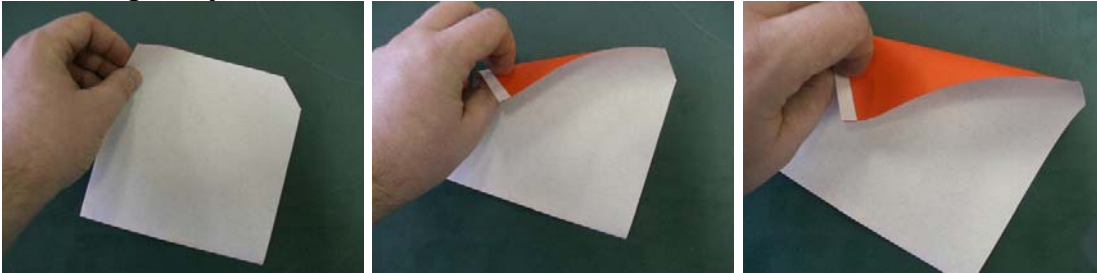
(16) Now, fold down a small triangle opposite the folds you just made.



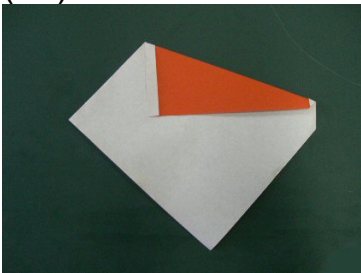
(17) Turn the paper over.



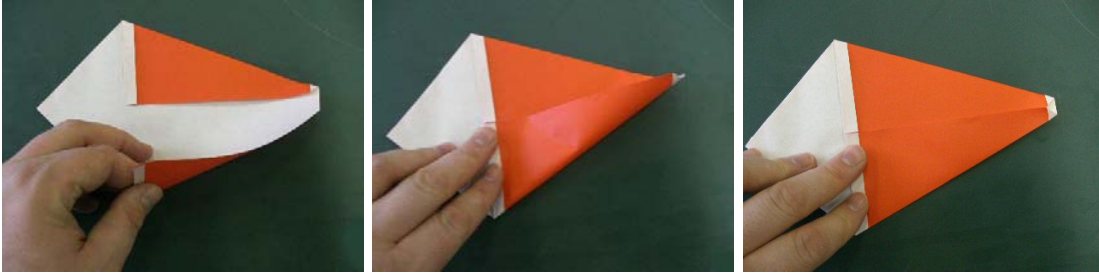
(18) With the flat part you just folded at the top, fold the left corner to the imaginary center line.



(19) You should have something like this:



(20) Now fold the opposite corner to the centerline, so that both sides meet.



(21) Turn the paper so the larger, red triangle is at the top. Then fold down part of the red triangle at an angle, either to the left or right. It doesn't matter.



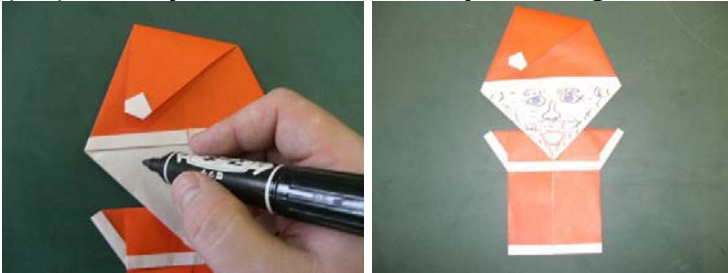
(22) You now have both parts of the model complete.



(23) Glue the head onto the torso by applying a small amount of glue to the rear of the small triangle of the head part.



(24) Finally, draw a face on your origami Santa.



You now have an easy-to-make origami Santa Claus!

To find out more about origami, click [HERE](http://www.myjapansite.com/origami.html) or visit <http://www.myjapansite.com/origami.html>

### Tip for teachers!

Why not use this origami model to teach about the origins of Santa Claus? As you know from the introductory quiz, Santa used to be depicted in green.



You can buy double-sided origami paper from specialist art shops, or, as I did in the model above, glue a sheet of green paper to a sheet of brown. It still works just fine, as long as the paper doesn't become too thick.

# How To Make An **ORIGAMI** Christmas Tree



**By Christopher Byrnes**

# How To Make An Origami Christmas Tree

This model is more advanced than the last one, and might require some practice in order to get it just right, but it's well worth it! The result is a realistic 3D model that you'll be proud to be able to make. You can download specially designed paper from our resources area. If you haven't already, you can access it by clicking [HERE](http://www.traditionallychristmas.com/xmasebook.html) or going to (<http://www.traditionallychristmas.com/xmasebook.html>)

You'll need:

1. A square piece of paper (the paper in the resource area is recommended for first attempts).
2. A small circle of gold or silver paper
3. Glue
4. Scissors

1. Take your square piece of paper, turn it over...



2. ...and glue the circle of silver or gold paper in the centre. Make sure you stick it well.

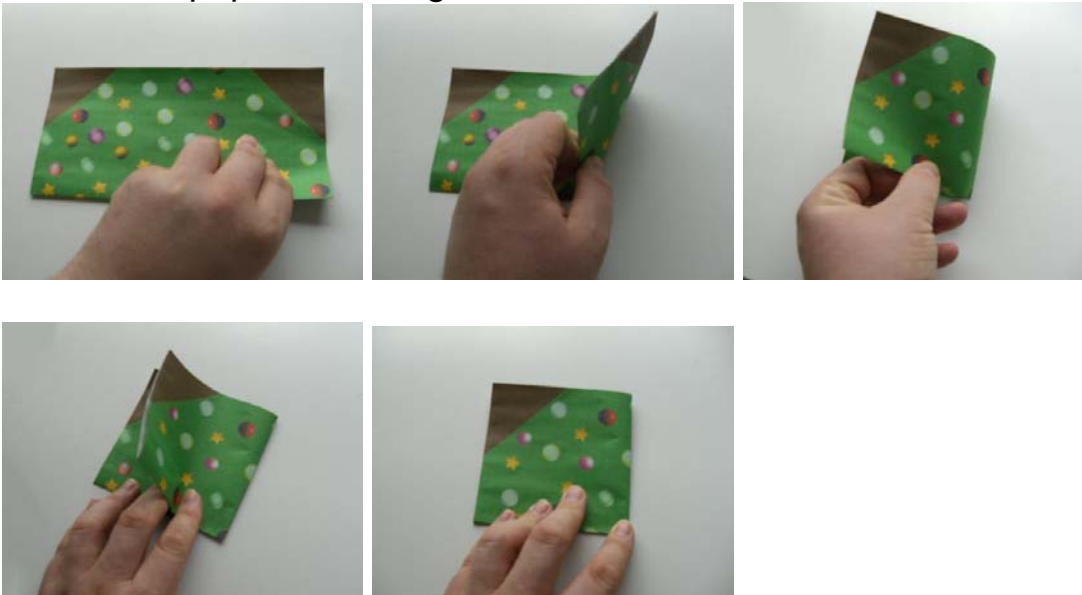




3. Next, fold the paper in half, to make a rectangle as shown above, being sure to match corner to corner.



4. Fold the paper in half again, as shown below.



5. You should end up with a square like this. Note the brown triangle in the top left-hand corner with the paper used here.



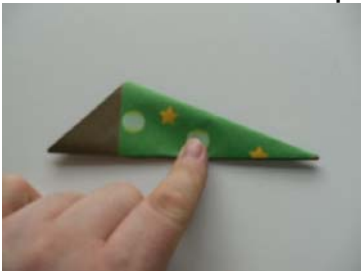
6. Next, with the brown triangle on the left, fold the top corner down to the bottom corner, so the whole paper is now a triangle.



7. Now, fold the long edge of the triangle onto the short edge without any brown on it.



8. You should end up with this shape.

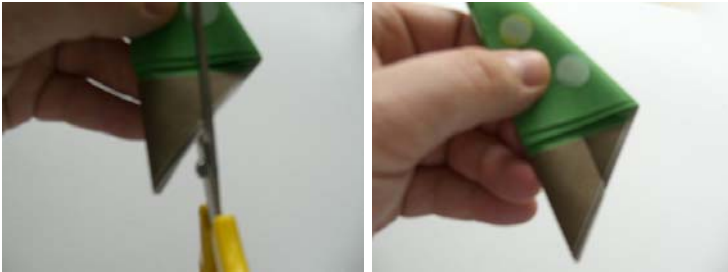




9. Next, turn the paper over. You'll see that on this side, several layers of paper are on top of the ones with the brown areas on them.



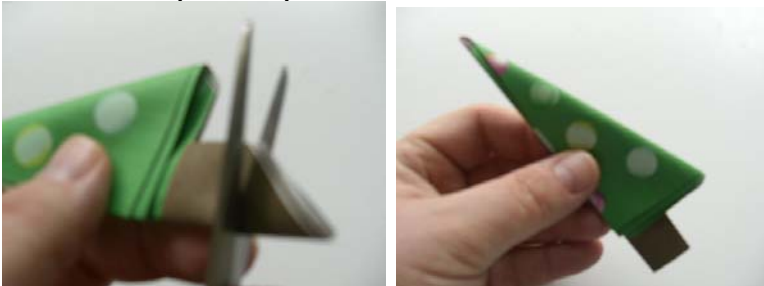
10. Take a pair of scissors, and make a cut as shown below. The cut should be made about half way. Go as far as the other papers, but no further.



11. Next make another cut, from the left, and towards the end of the first cut you made at a right-angle. Remove the small triangles of paper and discard.



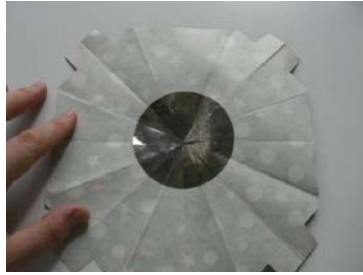
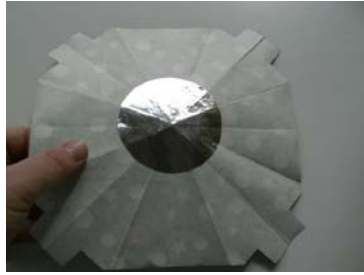
12. Make a final cut, this time from the right. You should be left with the brown part squared off. This is the trunk.



13. Open the paper out completely, and you should have the shape below. If you don't you have folded the paper in the wrong direction at some point and you'll have to start again. Using the paper with the trunk areas marked as triangles, you can easily see how to fold.



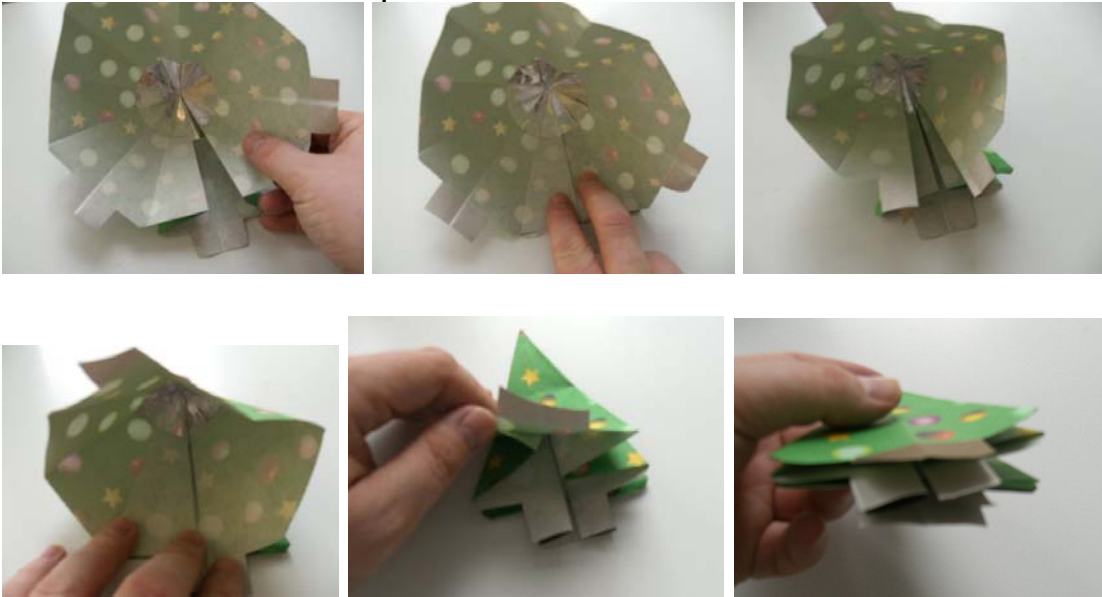
14. Turn the paper over and locate one of the 'Christmas Tree' shapes (There are 4 and it doesn't matter which one you start with).



15. Now comes a tricky bit! Start to fold one the creases on either side of the tree shape on top of the one below.



16. Next, fold the opposite crease on top of the one below, and so on, until every crease is folded in, and you have what appears to be a constellation of 4 tree shapes.

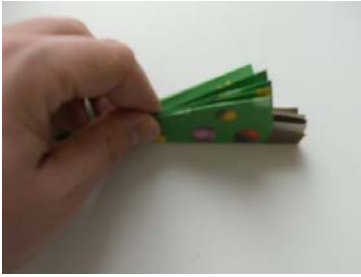


17. You should be left with this shape, with 4 layers on either side.



18. Turn the tree on its side, and fold down the center crease





19. Next take a pair of scissors, and make a cut from the point at the edge of the tree, diagonally inwards, until about half way through the tree. Cut through all 8 layers.



20. Make a second cut, at the same angle as the first one, just under half way up the tree. Cut as far as approximately half-way through the tree.



21. Now make a third and final cut, about half way between the second cut and the top of the tree, at the same angle as the first two cuts, and again, about half way through the tree.



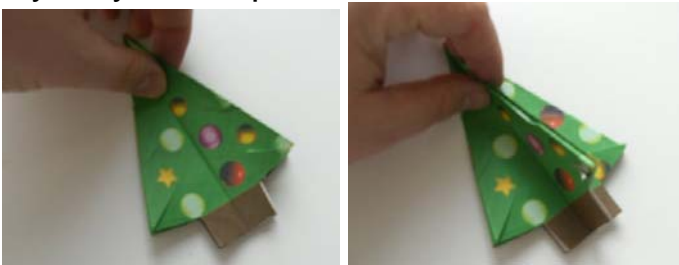
22. Now open the tree out again, keeping 4 layers in each side.



23. Your tree should look like this one, at this point. Notice the angle and depth of the cuts.



24. Keeping the tree flat, lift two layers from one side of the tree. Note that the white parts of the inside of the paper should not be showing. The white areas should meet and conceal themselves with each two layers you lift up.



25. Now, go to the first cut you made near the bottom of the tree, and fold the piece back into a triangle at about 45 degrees. The top of the piece you are folding should be where the second cut started.



26. Fold the opposite piece back in the same way, creating a kind of butterfly effect.



27. Move to the second cut you made, and fold both pieces back in the same way, making a smaller 'butterfly'. The top of these folds should be where the third cut started.



28. Finally, fold the top two pieces back, from where you made the third cut. You'll have to control the angle yourself, as there is no fourth cut to guide you.



29. You should end up with something like this:-





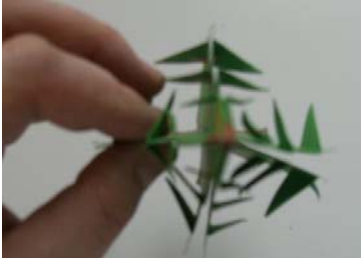
30. Now do the same for all 4 sets of cuts, making sure that the white areas meet. If you've done the first one correctly, they'll all work out evenly anyway.



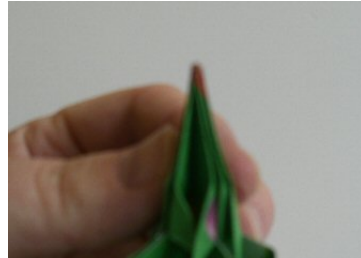
31. You should have something that looks like a Christmas tree, when all these folds are made. Compare yours to mine at the different angles in the images below.



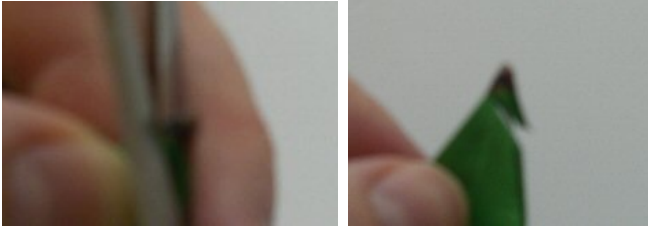
32. Now comes the really tricky bit! You could leave the tree as it is now, and avoid this, but the silver or gold star on top is the icing on the cake! If you look at your tree from the top, you'll see there are eight folds coming to the point at the top.



33. Gather together 5 of the folds



34. Now, starting at the side with the five folds you have gathered together, make a cut upwards at an angle almost at the top of the tree. Cut through the five pieces right through to the three pieces gathered together at the other side, but not right through so you cut the top off. You need to stop just before you cut the whole top off.



35. To finish the model, gently lift up the top of the tree above the cut you just made.



36. It should open up into a silver or gold star.



Your tree is now complete!

To find out more about origami, click [HERE](http://www.myjapansite.com/origami.html) or visit <http://www.myjapansite.com/origami.html>





# How to Create the Blissful Spirit of Christmas

**With Rituals to Transform Your Inner World Which Will Magically  
Transform Your Outer World!**

By ★[Bernadette Dimitrov](#), The HoHoHo Expert!

Christmas is the most universally recognized holiday transcending language, culture and even religious beliefs. It is a time when people come together in acknowledgement, gratitude, forgiveness and love for one another showing good will and generosity to all. To be at our best, exhibiting the spirit of Christmas during the festive season we need to do some work on ourselves during the year to ensure we exhibit the positive powerful joyful spirit of Christmas wherever we go.

So what's the best way to light up the spirit of Christmas? The number one most important way is to ensure your attitude (which comes from your thoughts) is in step with what the spirit of Christmas stands for. Below are 8 great principals and if you work on them you will ensure your attitude is at its best not only during the festive season but over-flowing throughout the year.

But first there are a number of areas that we need to be aware of including body language. Many experts tell us that non verbal cues are more important than verbal communications. Yes this may be a surprise to many but non-verbal communication or your body language is your major communication tool and not what comes out of your mouth. The non verbal often contradicts what we say in words.

The body doesn't lie even when words do! Body language includes gestures, voice tonality, pitch, pace, hand and eye movements and much more it all contributes to a deeper understanding of your real thoughts and feelings. However rather than just learning how to try and control your body language (which will be almost impossible for most people), it is far better to learn how to be congruent. This way you will be thinking, feeling and meaning what you say and not masking good cheer during the Christmas festive season when deep inside you may be angry, in emotional pain or confused, unhappy or feeling unfulfilled.

So how do we do it you say? Well a great way is to incorporate some rituals into your life that will support you to focus on and bring out the best in you. Rituals that help to get to the core of your feelings, by acknowledging and addressing them. When you are feeling on top of the world everyone else around you will be too. You will leave the spirit of Christmas where ever you go!

## Rituals



Rituals have been an important practice throughout human history and the benefits are many. An alter in a private space in one's home set up in a quiet, undisturbed place where you can concentrate your intentions and desires for higher growth and/or peace, tranquility and joy and is also a place of reflective thoughts on gratitude, forgiveness and love. It is your own sacred space, a reminder to create a positive environment and attitude. Ultimately it is your sacred place to let go of troubles, give thanks and seek enlightenment. Having a reflective space and a ritual will support your attitude to positively soar!



Who doesn't want to start their day feeling on top of the world? Well you can! So to start your day fresh, in a positive, joyful

and peaceful mind, prepare a small alter in your bedroom or other quiet place in your home where you will not be disturbed.



No space – no problems – there is always a solution. You can use the ancient and very powerful tool of visualization. Sit in a chair, make yourself comfortable or lie down in your bed, close your eyes and see in your minds eye your special alter.



See it in full details: the colors you love, materials, textures, smells, sounds your hear such as a bird in a tree or a waterfall etc. soft in the background. Either physically or in your minds eye sit or kneel at your alter. Light a candle, burn some incense, place some flowers; set it up to make you feel good. Place items at this space that will symbolize to you a peaceful, safe and love filled space.



I would also recommend you add to your alter three beautiful long tall candles. One representing your physical world, one representing your inner world and for your spiritual world or world of higher power or higher consciousness. Spend time reflecting on these three areas of your life. For example each week you could focus on different virtues such as one week you could focus on gratitude for all that you have in your physical world. You spend moments reflecting on the smallest to the largest things. Start with the light switch being grateful for the person who invented it, the person who made it and the person who installed it. Then you move to your inner world and give thanks for the beautiful mind you have, the intelligence, the positive thoughts that you have and the ability to

find the gift in a challenge and then let it go. Next move to the your spiritual / higher power / higher consciousness and give thanks for the awesome power around you and deep within you such as the air you breathe, the sun that gives forth life and food. Give thanks for your connection to the greatness within you, that is within everyone, the greatness that connects us all as one. Give thanks for your intuition for this is also part of your higher consciousness and when you focus on it it will expand. Giving thanks as you show acknowledgement. This is a powerful and transformational exercise.



## The Healing Power of Breath!

At your alter or special place ensure you start with some deep breathing. Breathing in slowly for 8 seconds, expanding your stomach with your breath as well as your chest with breath, holding for 4 seconds then breathing slowly out for 8 seconds and repeat this at least 3 times. You are detoxifying your body as you breathe deeply. There are an abundance of overall health benefits from deep breathing for a few minutes each day. You will feel more relaxed and your mind will be more peaceful. When you are in this state you are less likely to fly off the handle or exhibit irritability and hence leave a happier disposition where ever you go in the joyful spirit of Christmas.

- You can go to <http://www.dynamicpowerbreathing.com> and get a free copy of the ebook 'The Power of Deep Breathing Exercises'. According research shallow breathing from the chest is associated with anxiety sufferers where a loss of carbon dioxide in the blood can result in intense physical symptoms very similar to panic attacks. Benefits of deep breathing include lower blood pressure, relaxed muscles, reduces insomnia and fatigue, increases energy levels and quietens the mind by helping to turn off analytical thinking and racing thoughts and that is just some of the benefits. Basically you are counteracting the physical and mental affects of the flight or flight response and creating a more relaxed, healthy and peaceful body and mind. So now you can see why it is a great practice to incorporate as part of

your alter ritual daily. You can incorporate breathing into your ritual practice and it will not be a chore but a pleasure with an abundance of benefits and will set you up for successful reflections at your alter. Deep breathing is an essential element in your journey towards your self mastery. Self mastery is a state where you are no longer open to the forces around you. You know who you are and where you fit into the world. You are at peace, you are happy and you are not bound by destructive emotions such as unforgiveness and judgment. Let go of judgments if you want to have a happy life. Decide to learn from people or situations that challenge you and move forward then let it go. Harboring ill feelings will only make you ill and judgment takes too much of your power away. Find the lesson in the challenge and then let it go. Make a decision today to let it go and move forward. You will leave your blissful spirit where ever you go. You are living in the true light of the beautiful messages of Christmas. You exhibit peace and love where ever you go!



At your alter spend time thinking about or visualizing your happy future days. See what it is in life that you want and see it as if you already have it. Feel gratitude and give thanks for its manifestation. Think of yourself as if you are living with the goal or the wishes fulfilled. Enjoy moments basking in its delights. Then spend moments thinking about or visualizing how you can give back to make the world better. Giving is part of the blissful spirit of Christmas. Give without any expectation otherwise you are not truly giving and you are giving for selfish reasons that will bound you to emotions that are not positive, or peaceful and you set yourself up for disappointment. The act of giving is not about your needs it's about meeting somebody else's needs. It's about generosity a positive beautiful virtue that is also a prominent message and practice of Christmas. Give and expect nothing in return. Experience and play act it out in your mind at your alter. Experience the feelings it brings up and see the joy you give to others.



People have practiced rituals since early man. Having an alter has been popular throughout history whether in a temple, church or under an open sky as part of a sacred and reflective ritual. Ancient people acknowledged at their alters their dependence upon the earth and nature. They regularly reflected upon it with gratitude and acknowledged the life forces of the earth that supported them. Gratitude, acknowledgement and appreciation kept them strong, positive and happy. Acknowledgement, gratitude and appreciations of the forces that sustained them created a sense of inner well being and harmony. Ritual also represented a way to impose some order in their lives in a world that emerges out of chaos.

Research has produced evidence of special sites or alters erected as far back as 4800 BC. The most enduring were made of stones such as Stonehenge in England that was constructed around 3000 BC and is popularly visited today. It is said to be a place resonating with an abundance of positive energies. It is orientated to the direction of the sunrise to moonrise at the solstices. It has a circular form with an effect of concentrated energy in its centre. It is suggested that the shape amplifies sounds and as a place of reflection and chanting at its sandstone alter with the nature elements harnessed and magnified, it truly is a magnificent place to reflect and re-energize with private prayer.



## Celebrate & Connect with Dearly Departed Loved Ones!

For centuries and still practiced today particularly in the East regardless of religion or beliefs it is practiced the veneration of departed ancestors including at Christmas. They believe rituals of consulting at their alters with the wise departed elders including past, present and future kept them positive, feeling strong and kept their attitude in good form.





Even children partake in these rituals. People and children develop a greater understanding of their connectedness to all things through deeper inflection on gratitude and love at their alters. Alters have also become a place to talk to ancestors and relay and reflect on family news. It is a common practice for children to spend quiet time apologizing if they have been naughty as they reflect on their behaviors as they speak to ancestors at the family home alter about their day. You can certainly incorporate Christmas into this practice and speak to Saint Nicholas for guidance during the festive season. Alters are a wonderful way to pay attention to your thoughts and reflect upon moments of gratitude, love and forgiveness. They are a great place to clear clutter from our minds and burdens from our shoulders. It will help to keep our attitude in the spirit of Christmas – loving, forgiving and thankful for all that we have and forgiving and accepting as we connect with our fellow human beings.



## Reflections via Journaling!

In modern times writing in a personal journal has been a wonderful way to reflect on inner thoughts, express gratitude, love and forgiveness etc. A journal is too a sacred space where time stops and inner connection and reflection takes place. A place to centre and renew ourselves. Journaling is another sacred space similar to an alter.

Whether at an alter, a personal journal or through visualization, the desired outcome is the same. Through reflection, acknowledgement, gratitude, forgiveness, acceptance and love we keep strong, in balance, healthy and keep growing through the process of reflection.



Ultimately in relation to the spirit of Christmas we will keep our attitude bright and shining and leave a positive spring in our step just like Saint Nicholas. This will be our gift back to the world as we live by and exhibit the true spirit of Christmas where ever we go!



Through ritual we find a way to connect with ourselves at a deeper level, with our truth within. Unfortunately for a lot of people in the modern western world the only time they ever think about their deep longing or wishes is when blowing out their birthday cake. Having an alter or special ritual allows the expression of deep longings and attachments to be addressed. It is a way to empower yourself, a way to acknowledge and remember or enshrine that which is precious to us. A place to create intent, ideas and creativity. A place to let go of that which does not serve us and focus on that which does.



When we address our inner world our outer world is addressed in a powerful way. We project our inner world onto the outer world. Our alter or sacred space will help keep our inner world healthy and therefore our outer world will be healthier too. Give yourself and the world around you a great Christmas gift – make yourself a sacred space for inner reflection, gratitude, forgiveness and love and watch your outer world magically transform as you work on your inner world. You will uplift others in the spirit of Christmas. We can make the world a better place if look inside and start with making ourselves better first! Some researchers suggest that our energy can effect up to 1000 people. What a great gift to give the best of ourselves back out into the world, positively uplifting others where ever we go!



## Transformational Principles of Inner Wealth to Attach to Your Alters!

Why not attach some wonderful positive transformational principals to various aspects of your home and make them into minnie alters?

This way you have various places or spots within your environment which trigger and remind you to reflect upon positive principals that support the best in you throughout the year. Then when Christmas comes you are without great effort naturally exhibiting the spirit and good virtues which Christmas represents. Ultimately you will be feeling inner peace and joy and reflecting this out onto others and affecting them in a positive and uplifting manner in the real spirit of Christmas.

Know that your internal world creates your external world. Lets take the famous book 'Think and Grow Rich' by Napoleon Hill. This is one of the greatest books ever written. Its reflections of 13 principals of life are indeed living in the spirit of Christmas. Lets take a look at some of those principals and attach each one to a separate place or room in your home that you can either physically spend moments reflecting at each spot or do it in your journal either writing or drawing images and symbols or by visualizing in your minds eye. Practice reflections of these principals daily and you will be living in the blissful spirit of Christmas throughout the year:



1. **Desire** – clarify and put a name to what you desire, what you want in life to have, achieve or do. Now attach desire to a place in your home. You may choose your front door as an example. So that each time you come to your front door you will stop and take a few moments to reflect on this principal. To attach your desires to your front door you need to be a bit creative here. Think about images or symbols that represent your desires and see them floating out towards you when you look at the door. See yourself

grabbing them physically and putting them into your heart as you smile joyously. Your heart represents desire. Reflect on what it feels like to have these desires fulfilled. Touch, see and smell those desires and give thanks for their manifestation then put them into your heart. Each time you see or think about your front door you will reflect on your desires. Even just a few moments each day has tremendous subconscious positive effects for you.

Some religions or spiritual persuasions tell us to remove our desires. In the west if we have desires, passions or goals we need to want them single mindedly. Recognize and acknowledge with expectation which equates to motivation. Remember the clarity of what you want and expect equals the motivation to go and get it. It will lift your motivation and attitude to bring your desires into reality. No one will motivate you except short term. Mark out your desires, acknowledge them (we all have them) and expect expectation.



2. **Faith** – now choose your next spot – it could be a mat inside your door or an image on the wall, a light (representing brightness over darkness) a mantle piece or a particular room. Choose something in your home that represents faith to you. This is now the spot that when ever you see it you have unyielding faith that your desires will manifest. Faith that life will provide, faith in a higher intelligence, faith that you can learn, stretch and grow to all that you can be. This is the place that you can be reminded of faith. A good idea is to have a mantra that you say when you see this spot eg. 'All I need is within me now, all I desire is manifesting now, I am abundantly grateful for my desires now manifested'. Expectation comes from faith and faith will lead you to take action even in adversity no matter what the obstacles.



3.

### Auto Suggestion – you need to

learn how to program what you think, your self talk, your affirmations and visualizations in a positive way. You want your thoughts to soar like an eagle. Don't allow others, tv, radio, media or negative people to suggest or tell you that you can't do something. You need to overcome critical voices either inside of yourself or outside of yourself. Stop immediately and auto suggest a positive whenever a critical or negative voice shows up. Start by talking positively to yourself. Get yourself a vision board and place all your desires on it. This is a great tool to automatically remind you to be strong and positive because you are clear where you are going and what your heart desires. Reinforce positive programming in your mind it will uplift your energy, your attitude and your spirit.



4.

### Specialized Knowledge –

yes knowledge is part of inner wealth. Develop yourself each day. Put time aside eg turn the tv off for one hour earlier each night and read a book or listen to a talking cd, go to a class or join a group. Choose a subject that you have an interest in and develop your knowledge of it. Think about what you love to do and what interests you have – these are the keys to what to pursue.

5. **Imagination** – as Albert Einstein said ‘Imagination is everything it is the preview of life’s coming attractions’. Choose for example a symbol for faith above. For me it is my swing-walker gym so whenever I see it or work out on it I imagine myself walking up into the clouds where I allow my imagination to soar. Allow your imagination to run wild. Be outrageous. Your imagination does not need to make sense. Play with it while you get to know it. Now imagine your desires fulfilled and get into the feelings of how you now live and how you feel living this new life. Remember that when the will comes into conflict with the imagination the imagination always wins. Imagination can be your best friend or your underlying saboteur! If you want something and cannot imagine it or see yourself with it your imagination will take over and talk you out of it. So use your imagination often, seeing yourself using all 5 senses achieving or living the life of your dreams. Your attitude will soar!



“Imagination  
is more important  
than knowledge”  
Albert Einstein



6. **Decision** - make great decisions to hit your goals. Now look for something else in your house eg. a special chair in your home may represent decision for you. Decisions have consequences. Don't think that when you do nothing you have not made a decision. Yes you have – you made a powerful decision and you bare the consequences of it. Most people are fearful of decisions. Embrace them and acknowledge the power in decision. If you make a bad decision then learn from it and move forward with a better decision next time. You make decisions constantly so

remind yourself to make positive supportive ones to move your life forward. Don't brush off decisions because then you lose your power and by not focusing on the decisions you make constantly each day, you don't give yourself the best chance of creating a great outcome for your life and others in your life! You are working on old paradigms and default behaviors that may not be supporting the best in your life because you are not giving them the attention they deserve. Focus on your decisions, start to pay attention to decisions you make throughout the day. Awareness is part of your positive power for change.



7.

## Organized Planning – get rid of

the lie that you are not organized. Your brain is powerful and it is actually very organized. It is nothing more than a belief in your head that you are not organized. Get rid of it. Replace it. Remember that whatever you tell your brain it follows. After all it is the most powerful computer on earth. It will create or do whatever you tell it. Make yourself a portable altar. If you are on the move a lot, away from home working, on business trips etc. you can make a portable altar and take it with you. Buy a small box and buy something that represents each of the above principals for you eg. a particular colored stone, a shell, a small picture, icon, crystal, candle, incense, a feather etc.



Your belief in yourself or your inner subconscious level gives off signals to others around you about how you feel inside. If you are living with a critical unforgiving voice, others will pick up on your energy and you will either diminish or uplift their energy. How do you present

to others? Do you walk with a smile on your face? Do you think people look at you and say 'yes there goes a happy person'?

If you don't love, trust and forgive yourself others too will not. Rituals and organized planning will help you to change your inner and out worlds in a powerful way. Remember that external wealth is never a substitute for internal wealth. We constantly need to be working on ourselves internally. From inner wealth or 'improvement of the soul' as Socrates said is where transformation of lives takes place. All wealth is internal - this is true wealth.

Your mind is the most powerful computer on earth. What you say to yourself is how you program your mind. Having an alter is part of organized planning where you feed great beliefs, ones that support and bring out the best in you. Tell yourself you have a great memory. Using some of the tools above such as imagination is a powerful way to program your mind to remember the above principals that will support and bring out the best in you. Now there is no excuse for not exhibiting and living in the true spirit of Christmas!

Tell your brain what qualities you desire and it will work towards developing them in you. Reaffirm the qualities each day at your alter. For example: repeat 'I am healthy, I choose healthy food, I exercise daily and I am radiant with health'



8.

## **Persistence** – this is doing what

ever it takes no matter how long it takes. This is a key principal. Be persistent and attend to your alter each day. Obstacles in life will come and often there are many. Challenge yourself to find solutions, take a different



approach, seek mentors and knowledge then continue and affirm to never ever give up on your desires.

The above are some powerful ways to establish within yourself peace, harmony and a very healthy and positive attitude and way of life. You are creating a healthy and wealthy inner world which will create a healthy and wealthy outer world. This is how you produce and live in the spirit of Christmas. You start by working on yourself. When you transform your inner world you transform your outer world. So go get yourself started with a special reflective ritual such as the use of an alter. When you work on yourself you work on developing and sharing out into the world the real spirit of Christmas - joy, inner peace, acceptance, fulfillment, gratitude, forgiveness and love.



Visit <http://www.HoHoHoChristmas.com> & sign up for our FREE Newsletter full of fun, tips, tools & resources & you'll get our bonus [f\\*r\\*e\\*e 10 day e-course - Amazing Ways to enrich your Christmas](#) experience by The HoHoHo Expert, Bernadette Dimitrov, author of the world's best Christmas ebooks and audio books. Creating fun and cherished memories for families!



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