

Christmas Time

CHRISTMAS DOG

*Tonight's my first night as a watchdog,
And here it is Christmas eve.
The children are sleeping all cosy upstairs,
While I'm guardin the stockin's and tree.
What's that now – footsteps on the rooftop?
Could it be a cat or a mouse?
Who's this down the chimney?
A thief with a beard –
And a big sack for robbin the house?
I'm barkin, I'm growlin, I'm bitin his butt.
He howls and jumps back in his sleigh.
I scare his strange horses, they leap in the air.
I've frightened the whole bunch away.
Now the house is all peaceful and quiet again,
The stockin's are safe as can be.
Won't the kiddies be glad when they wake up tomorrow
And see how I've guarded the tree.*

Shel Silverstein.

From *Falling Up* by Shel Silverstein.
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First and Second Class

Drawing *Make drawings based on imaginative life*

■ Make a drawing using a variety of coloured drawing tools (crayons, markers and colouring pencils) about the scene/room in the poem.

Paint and Colour *Use colour to interpret themes based on imaginative life*

■ Paint a picture about the moment when the dog is "bitin his butt".

Print *Use a variety of print making techniques*

■ Choose a variety of Christmas motifs (bells, holly, trees, presents, etc). Make simple stencils based on these shapes and sponge/spray through these stencils onto squares of cheap fabric. Assemble the individual pieces of printed fabric to make a quilt to keep the children cosy in their beds.

Clay *Make simple pottery (pinch pots)*

■ Make some pinch/thumb pots. Turn them upside down

and attach coils of clay using slip to turn the pots into bell shapes. Turn out the lips of the pots. Decorate the bell shapes with incised patterns or drawings. Paint your bell shapes, add ribbons and hang.

Construction *Make imaginative structures*

■ Stuff a variety of paper bags (of different sizes and shapes) with crunched up balls of newspaper.

Join a number of the stuffed bags together to give you a



figure shape. Add and attach all types of construction materials, papers, paints, etc, to turn your figure into a Santa model. Make a model of the dog in a similar way – attach the dog to the Santa figure – to represent the action of the poem.

Fabric and Fibre *Make small inventive pieces*
■ Take an old sock and attach beads, buttons, bows, fabric scraps, threads, etc to your sock to turn it into a special Christmas stocking. In groups work in the same way on an old pillowcase to make a Santa sack.

Fifth and Sixth Class

CHRISTMAS EVE

*With candles of angels the sky is now dappled,
The frost on the wind from the hills has a bite,
Kindle the fire and go to your slumber
Jesus will lie in the household tonight.
Leave all the doors wide open before her,
The virgin who'll come with the child on her breast,
Grant that you'll stop here tonight,
Holy Mary,
That Jesus tonight in this household may rest.
The lights we're all lighting in that little hostel,
The revere generous servings of victuals and wine
For merchants of silk, for merchants of woollens,
But Jesus will lie in this household tonight.*

Gabriel Fitzmaurice

(From *Rusty Nails and Astronauts*, published by Wolfhound Press. Translation of 'Oiche Nollag' by Maire Mhac an tSaoi)

Drawing *Draw imaginative themes emphasising pattern and detail*

■ Make a monochrome drawing of a table set for the Christmas dinner – use only one chosen colouring pencil.

Paint and Colour *Interpret themes chosen for their colour possibilities*

Third and Fourth Class

IN THE WEEK WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES

This is the week when Christmas comes.

*Let every pudding burst with plums,
And every tree bear dolls and drums,*

In the week when Christmas comes.

*Let every hall have bough of green,
With berries glowing in between,
In the week when Christmas comes.*

*Let every doorstep have a song
Sounding the dark street along,
In the week when Christmas comes.*

*Let every steeple ring a bell
With a joyful tale to tell,
In the week when Christmas comes.*

*Let every night put forth a star
To show us where the heavens are,
In the week when Christmas comes.*

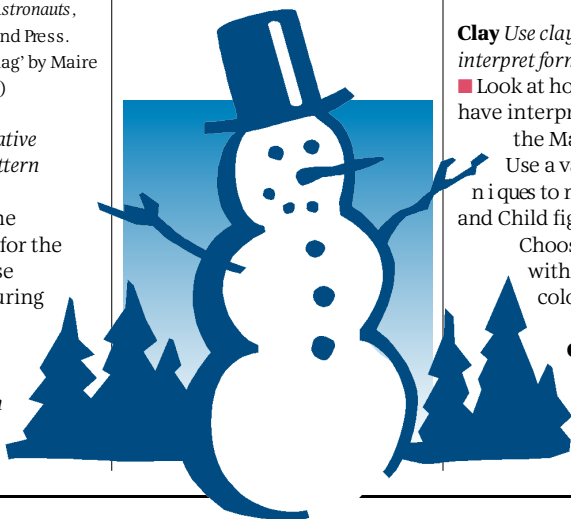
*Let every stable have a lamb
Sleeping warm beside its dam,
In the week when Christmas comes.*

This is the week when Christmas comes.

Eleanor Farjean

(from the Book *Blackbird has Spoken*, published by Macmillan.

■ Think about colours that you might see on a frosty morning. Use these colours only (mixing blacks and whites to create tones) to make a painting of the scene.



Drawing *Make drawings from recalled experiences*

■ Think back to some time when you went carol singing. Make a drawing using pastels on coloured paper of a group of people out carol singing. Emphasise elements in your drawing such as clothing and weather.

Paint and Colour *Explore colour with a variety of materials*

■ Think about the sky in winter time (a very cloudy sky, a night sky lit up by Christmas lights, a clear starry night, etc) Use collage techniques with layers of tissue papers to make a picture of a winter sky.

Print *Make prints for functional uses*

■ Look closely at the shapes of holly leaves. Draw a number of designs using this shape or a variation on this shape and choose one design on which to base a printing block. Draw your design onto a block of wood – glue string over your drawing to create the printing block. Fold card to make some blank cards. Use your printing block to print your motif onto these cards. Add other details

to your card by printing with other found materials.

Clay *Make simple low-relief sculptures*

■ Roll out a clay tile. Make a relief sculpture about a chosen Christmas/Winter scene by attaching coils and pellets of clay to your tile using slip. Add incised decoration, paint and varnish.

Construction *Make imaginative structures*

■ In groups use old boxes, cardboard and a variety of construction materials to make a model of a church at Christmas.

Fabric and Fibre *Design and make an appliqué piece*

■ Use a variety of fabrics stitched to a background of hessian to make an appliqué on the theme of the stable scene.



Print *Use a computer art programme to create original images*

Use a computer art software programme to design and print out an image of angel figures in a Christmas sky.

Clay *Use clay to analyse and interpret form*

■ Look at how various artists have interpreted the theme of the Madonna and Child. Use a variety of clay techniques to make a Madonna and Child figurine of your own. Choose to decorate it with pattern or with colour.

Construction *Design and make theme-based structures*
Imagine the scene

in the little house in the poem. Construct a diorama of the scene using a box and a variety of construction materials.

Fabric and Fibre *Explore simple batik processes*

■ Select an image from the poem and interpret it in simple batik form. Make a drawing on paper first as a design. Transfer your design to a piece of cloth – drawing with a white wax crayon or candle. Wash over your design using diluted fabric inks or paints.

Compiled by Michael O'Reilly and the Visual Arts Team of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme. Visit their website at www.pcps.ie for further Christmas ideas.