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Special days

Photofile

'Chinese New Year'

Literacy links

- *Little Miss Muffet Counts to Ten* by Emma Chichester Clark (Andersen Press)
More than a counting book – ideal for starting plans for making party props or establishing a party role-play area
- All festivals involve stories that are told to children each year. Find a simple version of the main story of your chosen festival

Songs and rhymes

Teach children special songs and rhymes associated with the particular festival or celebration and use these as the focus for activities, card messages and displays. Print out the words for children to take home to sing or say with parents and carers.

Discovery box

- Ephemera and decorations from every festival.
- Photographs of friends and family enjoying festivals (also encourage children to bring in theirs).
- Range of greetings cards designed for different ages and for different occasions and demonstrating different styles and techniques. Look out for cards when abroad and for festivals that are celebrated by minority UK populations.

Display

- Make cross-curricular wall and table displays based on the festival theme.
- Posters, photographs, artefacts and so on will give children visual stimulus for their creative work as well as providing information about the festival.

- Make simple decorations and streamers, if appropriate.
- Don't have cards or presents on display for too long – they are designed for giving, not decorating the room. Make them as late as possible, stand them on a table or hang on strings to dry and send home the same or following day.

Visits and events

- Visit your local church, synagogue, mosque and temple when they are decorated for special festivals.
- Celebrate every festival that is celebrated by children in your setting.

Special guests

Invite a parent or other member of the faith community to tell the story of the festival to the children, and to show special clothes, food, decorations, artefacts, music and dances.

Home-school links

As well as enjoying festivities together, parents and grandparents enjoy receiving cards and presents made by their children. However:

- Provide information to parents and carers about the festival you are celebrating.
- Check your facts about how a festival is celebrated. Do they give cards, make decorations, give presents at this time?
- Some religious groups do not wish their children to celebrate festivals from other faiths, so check with families first.
- Avoid making special food during Ramadan. Although young children are not expected to fast, it is a time for going without special treats to eat.

ICT links

Help children to use Microsoft® *Word Art* (or similar word-processing or desktop publishing program) to customise simple messages or greetings already saved on the computer. They can choose size, shape, colour and positioning of the wording. Allow children to experiment and fill a whole screen with different ideas. This can then be printed for the children to choose which they will cut out and stick into their card.

Links to other Themes

'We have the power: In control: Simple mechanisms and Ghostly mechanisms' have ideas for simple mechanisms that could be incorporated into greetings cards and pictures that tell faith and community stories.

Key opportunities for designerly thought and action

Understand that special occasions prompt people to plan, design and make a range of special decorations and food, to buy and wrap presents, and think about the joy and comfort of family and community.

22–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate awareness that something special is happening and include aspects of the celebration in their play. 	Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Festival foods Carnival Party time role-play
30–50 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use objects associated with the special occasion in play to further stimulate imagination and extend the play narrative. 	
Early learning goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become involved in the thinking, planning and action required for a celebration. 	

Think about the presentation of a simple gift and make the product look attractive.

22–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that we give people presents on special occasions. Help to wrap a present for someone they care about. 	Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving presents
30–50 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a present look attractive to the recipient. 	
Early learning goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about the likes and preferences of the recipient of a gift and make a quality product suitable for giving. 	

Demonstrate understanding of recipient's needs and wants through designing and making a greetings card for a specific occasion for someone they care for.

22–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that cards are given for special occasions. Personalise a card by adding marks and/or collage items. 	Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greetings cards
30–50 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make suggestions about what the recipient would like on their card or what is most suitable for the occasion being celebrated. 	
Early learning goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When designing a card, consider who the card is for and the occasion for which it is being given. 	

Notes

Giving presents

Key design learning

- Think about the presentation of a simple gift in terms of who it is for and what that person likes.
- Make the product look attractive.

Resources

- Illustrations, photographs, prints, patterned wrapping paper and wallpaper
- Stiff card
- Ribbon, lace, frieze paper, crêpe paper, tissue paper, organdie fabric, sequins, buttons, shells, etc.
- Small found and recycled items
- Cardboard boxes and tubes
- Sweets or small biscuits
- Shallow bowls
- Scissors, glue, sticky tape, elastic bands
- Pencils, pens, crayons

Organisation

Small group with adult.

Note: All gift-giving occasions provide a genuine purpose for design and make activities, and many ideas for gifts can be found in magazines and books of crafts for young children. Keep the gift simple, so that it does not require a great deal of adult input. Many of the activities in this Resource File can be adapted to make suitable presents. This activity is about presentation and packaging rather than the gift itself.

Designerly discussion

During design and making:

- Discuss how packaging protects the contents.

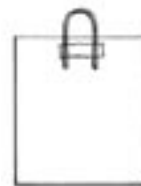
- Develop aesthetic sense through thinking about giving pleasure to someone.
- Encourage children to choose the container.

Design activities

Framed picture: Ask the children to glue a picture, print or photograph to stiff card and decorate the border to make a frame. Children could use ribbon, lace, frieze paper or small found objects, or they could print a border.



For a hanging hook, attach cord with sticky tape.



For a standing support, fix stiff card to the back.



Sweet wrap: To make a gift of wrapped sweets or small biscuits, let children choose tissue or crêpe paper or thin fabric such as organdie. Tell them to gather two layers of their chosen material, then:



Lay the fabric in a shallow bowl.

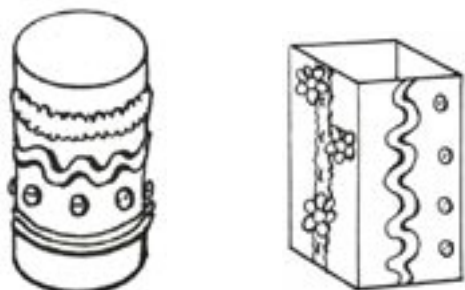


Pour in the sweets or cookies.



Gather the fabric together into a bag with an elastic band, and tie a ribbon over the band.

Gift containers: Use recycled boxes and card tubes as the basis for containers for presents. This can be a quick and economical means of providing sturdy packaging. Let children cover card tubes and boxes with decorative paper, fabric, ribbon, and so on.



Look to make the package into a form connected with the festival story. For example, you could cover a short slice of card tube with yellow paper and add wings to make an Easter egg holder.

Notes