

# La Navidad (Christmas)



***¡Feliz Navidad y Prospero Año !***  
(Merry Christmas & prosperous New Year)



# Spanish Christmas Songs

## Noche de paz

(Silent Night)

Noche de paz, noche de amor,  
 todo duerme en derredor.  
 Entre los astros que esparcen su luz,  
 bella anunciando al niño Jesús.  
 Brilla la estrella de paz,  
 Brilla la estrella de paz.

Noche de paz, noche de amor,  
 oye humilde el fiel pastor.  
 Coros celestes que anuncian salud,  
 gracias y glorias en gran plenitud.  
 Por nuestro buen redentor.  
 Por nuestro buen redentor.

## Cascabel

(Jingle Bells)

Caminando por la nieve,  
 en un lindo trineo,  
 con mi bella Susana  
 salimos de paseo.

Brillaba la alegría  
 en nuestros corazones,  
 en esta tarde fría  
 tan llena de emociones.

Cascabel, cascabel,  
 lindo cascabel,  
 con sus notas de alegría,  
 van buscando a él.  
 (Repeat once)  
 Cascabel, cascabel,  
 lindo cascabel,  
 con sus notas de alegría,  
 van buscando a él.

## Pueblecito de Belén

(Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem)

O, pueblecito de Belén ,  
 la cuna de Jesús.  
 bendito pueblo de Belén,  
 la cuna de Jesús .

El Rey tan adorado,  
 el santo Redentor,  
 el Rey que vino al mundo,  
 a darnos paz y amor.



Bulletin Board Idea**Mis Regalos para el Niño Jesús**

(My gifts for Baby Jesus)

**Teaching Ideas:**

Use a picture of the manger with the three wise men like the one down below. Ask the children to draw pictures of gifts they would like to give to baby Jesus. You can provide them with some ideas. This can also be creative in a three-dimensional way by bringing objects placing them on the bulletin board. If you are able, label the pictures or objects (in English or Spanish) and teach the new vocabulary.

**Culture Note:**

Explain that in Spanish speaking countries Santa Claus is usually replaced by the Three Wise Men (Los Tres Reyes Magos) who bring gifts to the children on January 6. (Puerto Rican children being bi-cultural, have both a Santa Claus and the Three Kings.)

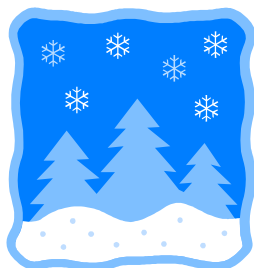
During this time the children leave out their shoes filled with straw for the camels. In the morning the straw is replaced by candy and toys.

In the *Barrios* (neighborhoods) of Mexico City the Wise Men actually parade down the streets with candy for the underprivileged children of the city. The *nacimiento* (manger scene) is the center attraction in many households rather than the Christmas tree; el Niño Jesús (baby Jesus) does not appear in the crib until the day of his birth.

Puestos (little stands) are filled with the tastes and smells of breads and pastries. Groups of people celebrate Las Posadas (The Inn) nine nights before Christmas, going from house to house re-enacting Mary and Joseph's search for shelter. Each night someone finally lets them in for a fiesta, with the biggest fiesta being on Dec. 24.



# Action Poems



## Christmas Time

See the snowflakes falling.  
*(Wiggle fingers like dancing snowflakes.)*  
 See the candles glow.  
*(Hold up index finger like a candle.)*  
 See the wreaths upon the door.  
*(Form wreath shape with fingers.)*  
 It's Christmas time I know!

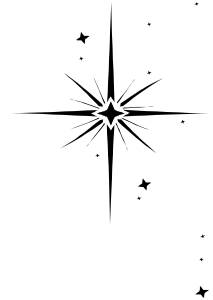
## The First Christmas

Clop, clop, clop went the donkey's feet,  
 Clop, clop, clop down the stony street.  
 Nod, nod, nod went Mary's head.  
 She was tired, and she needed a bed.  
 Knock, knock, knock went Joseph at the door.  
 "Do you have room for anyone more?"  
 "No, no, no!" the innkeeper said,  
 "I don't even have one more bed."  
 "Wait, wait, wait," the innkeeper said,  
 "You can use my stable for a bed."  
 "Sh, sh, sh ... what is that I hear?"  
 The cry of baby Jesus, Oh so dear."



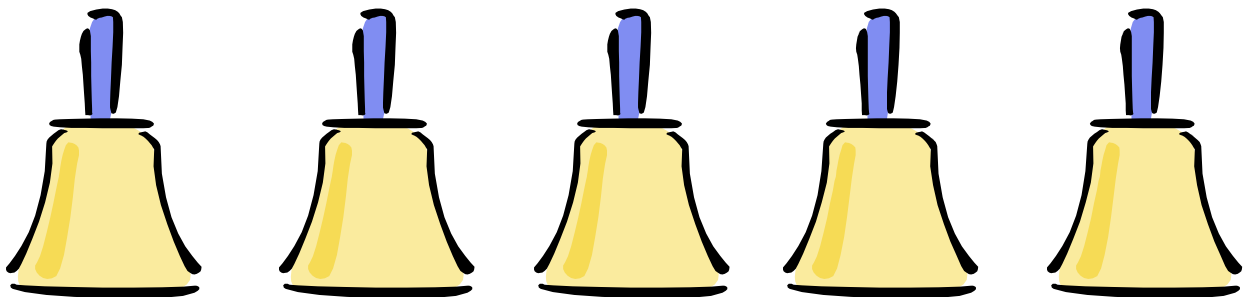
### A Shining Star

On the very first Christmas night,  
*(Put hands together; lay head on hands as if sleeping.)*  
 A wondrous star shone big and bright.  
*(Hold hands above head; more fingers like stars shining.)*  
 It marked the spot where the baby lay,  
*(Pretend to rock baby.)*  
 So kings and shepherds could come to pray.  
*(Fold hands and kneel.)*



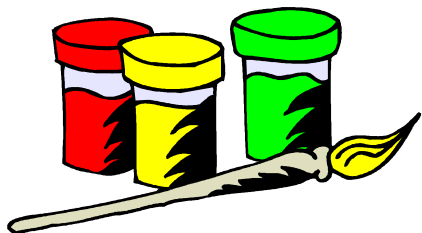
### Five Little Bells

Five little bells hanging in a row,  
*(Hold up five fingers.)*  
 The first one said, "Ring me slow."  
*(Hold up one finger.)*  
 The second one said, "Ring me fast."  
*(Hold up two fingers.)*  
 The third one said, "Ring me last."  
*(Hold up three fingers.)*  
 The fourth one said, "I'm like a chime."  
*(Hold up four fingers.)*  
 The fifth one said, "Ring us all at Christmas time."  
*(Hold up five fingers.)*



# Arts & Craft Activities

## Bread Ornaments



### Materials needed:

a loaf of white bread  
 assorted cookie cutters  
 straws  
 paintbrushes  
 poster or powder of paints  
 household glue  
 gold string  
 glitter (optional)  
 assortment of sequins, beads, etc. for decorating (optional)

### The day before:

Cut shapes into white bread using cookie cutters. With one end of a straw make a hole near the top of the shape. Leave shapes uncovered to harden overnight.

### The next day:

Paint in bright colors using either poster paints or powder paints with a little household glue added. Leave ornaments to dry.

After ornaments have dried, turn them over and paint the other side. When dry, decorate with beads, glitter etc.

Loop gold string through hole. Hang on Christmas tree.

## Christmas Card Puzzles

### Materials needed:

old Christmas cards  
 black marker  
 scissors  
 small plastic bags

1. Collect old Christmas cards. Cut off card fronts and save.
2. Using a black marker, draw several squiggle lines on the back side of the card front (not the picture side).
3. Cut card along these lines. Place all pieces in a plastic bag.

These puzzles are especially fun to create with a friend. Choose cards, mark, and cut, then exchange pieces. See who can assemble their puzzle more quickly.

**Hint:** Use a separate bag for each puzzle.



## Aromatic Dough Cut-outs

### Materials needed:

- 1 cup ground cinnamon
- 3/4 to 1 cup applesauce
- 2 Tbsp. white glue
- 1 Tbsp. ground nutmeg (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. ground cloves (optional)

1. Mix cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves with glue and 3/4 cup applesauce to form a smooth, stiff dough. Additional apple sauce may be added if needed.
2. Divide dough into three or four portions.
3. Place each section between two sheets of waxed paper, and roll to 1/8 inch thickness.
4. Use cookie cutters to cut Christmas shapes out of dough. While dough is still soft, use a straw to make a hole near the top of each shape where ribbon can later be inserted for hanging.
5. Place cut shapes on flat surface to air dry for several days.
6. Flip shapes daily to prevent curling. After shapes are thoroughly dry, insert ribbon in hole, tie, and hang as Christmas ornaments.

Courtesy of geocities.com  
Christmas/cart



# Spanish Craft Activities

## Mexican Piñata

A *piñata* is a very popular toy used for festive occasions, particularly birthdays. It is made from papier mache and filled with candy, toys or fruit and hung from a ceiling or tree branch. Everyone sings a song while a child is blindfolded and tries to break the *piñata* with a stick. When the *piñata* finally breaks, everyone rushes to grab the contents that have fallen to the ground.

### Materials needed

balloons  
 newspaper strips  
 wallpaper paste  
 string  
 poster paint  
 tissue paper- assorted colors  
 white glue  
 candy or small toys  
 white construction paper



Use papier mache to create a colorful *piñata*, great for any celebration.

1. Blow up balloon. Cover thoroughly with newspaper strips dipped in wallpaper paste. Let dry.
2. Tie strong string around the *piñata*. This will be used to hang the *piñata*.
3. Make four cones by rolling construction paper. Fill the inside with crushed newspaper.
4. Tape cones to *piñata*.
5. Cover with two more layers of newspaper strips dipped in wallpaper paste. Do not cut string.
6. Carefully cut a hole at the top of the shape where the string is hanging. Do not cut string.
7. Paint the *piñata* with bright colors and designs.
8. For a glossy finish, dilute white glue with water and paint over dry paint.
9. Make the tassels out of tissue paper and glue to the tips of the cones.
10. Fill the *piñata* with candy and seal opening so the candy will not spill out.





## Papel Picado

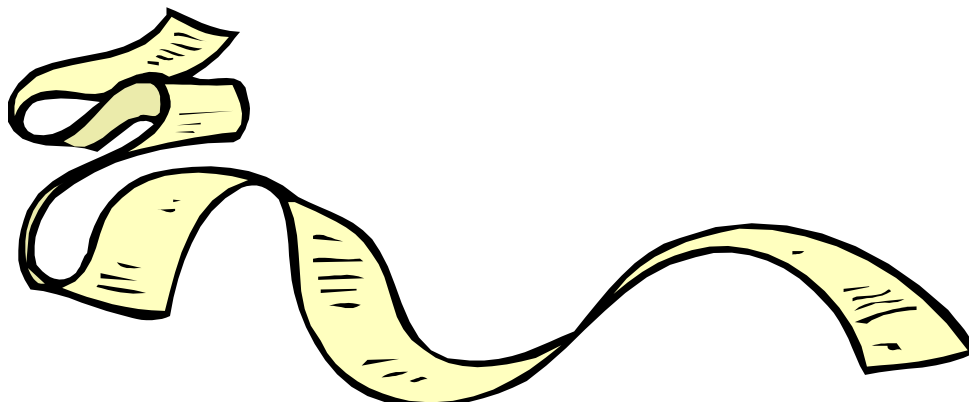
Papel picado is made by cutting tissue paper with sharp instruments to create intricate designs. Papel picado is used to decorate homes and shops around Mexico. Usually a few different brightly colored designs are strung together and hung across a room, wall or ceiling.

### **Materials needed**

color tissue paper, "8 1/2 x 11"  
scissors  
glue  
pencil

Make colorful papel picado to decorate the classroom. Hang during special fiestas such as Cinco de Mayo, La Navidad, or a birthday.

1. Fold paper in half, and then half again.
2. With pencils draw simple designs on the paper.
3. Cut out the designs while the paper is still folded.
4. Unfold the paper and smooth out.
5. Fold the top one inch of the paper down the back.
6. Glue the very edge of the fold to the back of your papel picado, leaving enough room to put a length of string through.





## Edible Crafts

### Sweet Christmas Tree

#### Materials needed:

sugar cones  
green frosting  
small candies  
plastic knives

Hand each child a sugar cone and a plastic knife. Show them how to frost the sugar cones with green frosting to make a Christmas tree. After the tree is frosted, decorate with small candies.

### Bagel Wreaths

#### Materials needed

Plain or cinnamon bagels  
cream cheese, tinted green  
(may be sweetened slightly, if desired)  
dried cranberries (“craisins”), raisins, or dried cherries

1. Give each child half a bagel and a plastic knife.
2. Spread cream cheese onto bagels to make a wreath. Decorate the wreath with dried fruit.

### Holly Jolly Christmas Candies

#### Materials needed

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| ■ 4 cups of corn flakes  | ■ heat source        |
| ■ 2 cups of marshmallows | ■ large mixing spoon |
| ■ ½ cup margarine        | ■ waxed paper        |
| ■ 1 tsp. vanilla         | ■ plastic spoons     |
| ■ green food coloring    | ■ red hot candies    |

1. Melt together over low heat marshmallows and margarine.
2. After mixture is melted, remove from heat and add vanilla and food coloring and stir in corn flakes.
3. Let children take turns dropping the mixture by spoonfuls onto waxed paper.
4. Add three cinnamon “holly berries” to each candy.
5. Allow to dry before eating.

The candies will look both pretty and delicious!



## Spanish Holiday Treats

### ***Arroz con Leche***

(Rice pudding)

#### **Materials needed**

- 4 cups of milk
- 1-14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 Tbsp. Margarine or butter
- 1 cup white rice
- 1 ½ cup of sugar
- 1 stick of cinnamon
- 3 egg yolks

1. Bring two cups of milk to boil with the cinnamon stick.
2. Remove from heat. Remove cinnamon stick.
3. Add rice and let stand for two hours.
4. Cook rice and milk on medium heat. Add the rest of the milk at this time.
5. When the rice is very soft, remove from heat.
6. Beat eggs.
7. Soften margarine or butter.
8. Add eggs, sugar, condensed milk and butter to mixture.
9. Put back onto heat to thicken, stirring constantly.
10. Pour into desert cups and allow to cool, sprinkle with cinnamon and serve.

Makes about 6 servings

### ***Besitos de Coco***

(Coconut kisses)

*Besitos de coco*, little coconut kisses are a popular sweet made by many Spanish speaking families during fiesta time and many other special occasions such as *La Navidad*.

#### **Materials needed**

- 1-14 oz. can of sweetened condensed milk
- 3 1/2 - 4 cups of shredded coconut

1. Pour sweetened condensed milk into a large mixing bowl.
2. Add coconut.
3. Stir ingredients until mixture thickens. If mixture does not thicken add more coconut.
4. Cover bowl and place in refrigerator until mixture becomes stiff enough to hold a molded shape.
5. Roll mixture into small balls. Place the *Besitos* on a serving plate and serve at once. If not serving immediately, cover and refrigerate.

Makes about 24 pieces



## Sangria para niños (Fruit Punch for Children)

### Materials

2 oranges  
1 lemon  
1 lime  
2 apples  
1-28 oz. bottle of carbonated water  
or club soda  
2 cups grape juice

1. Chill carbonated water.
2. Wash peels of all fruit very well.
3. Squeeze the juice from the lemon, lime and one orange into a large pitcher.
4. Pour in grape juice. Stir well.
5. Cut the apples and orange into bite size pieces.
6. Stir into mixture.
7. Pour in chilled carbonated water and stir well.
8. Serve chilled. Add ice as necessary.

Makes about 24 servings.



# Shepherds, Angels, and a Manger

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson



The hundreds of sheep were quiet now, except for an occasional bleat. Night had fallen, stars were sharp in the nippy sky, and shepherds reclined on a steep hillside above Bethlehem, watching their flocks.

The men talked quietly, their low voices soothing to the animals. Old Elias had spent his lifetime on these sheep fields. Then there was Judah ben-Ozzri, twenty years old and cynical. His uncle had been imprisoned by Roman occupation troops for some minor offense. When he could, Judah plotted secretly with a unit of Zealot guerrillas. David, Israel's greatest king, had been a shepherd on Bethlehem's hills a millennium before. As a teenager, David had defeated the giant Goliath and thrown off the yoke of Philistine tyranny. Judah ben-Ozzri longed to do the same. If only a Leader, a Deliver, would come and drive the cursed Romans from their land!

"The lambs will all die before long," he muttered darkly. "Only the ewes, will survive."

"Eh?" said Elias, a bit too loudly. His hearing had faded over the years.

Judah spoke a bit louder, "The ewes will be sheared next summer, and bear more lambs, but the lambs themselves..."

"Ah, Passover in the temple," returned Elias. "On the Holy Day they'll sacrifice a lamb for each family."

"What?" asked Elias, leaning closer.

"The lambs," said Judah loudly into his ear, "won't live beyond Passover. In the Jerusalem temple, they'll be sacrificed."

Jerusalem and its temple were just six miles north of Bethlehem, and supplying lambs for the Passover sacrifice was these shepherds' livelihood.

"Passover..." reflected the old man. "I wish I could have seen the first Passover!"

Elias would rather talk than listen, since it was hard for him to catch the words when others spoke.

"Moses was our Deliverer on that first Passover night when God's judgment fell upon Egypt." As he spoke, his listeners could picture the destroying angel that had passed through Egypt. "The Egyptian firstborn were killed," said Elias, "but each Israelite slave family had sacrificed a precious lamb, and put its blood across the top and on both sides of their doorways. Their sins were atoned for, the lamb's life for theirs. And God's terrible judgment passed over them."

"The ewes will live on," repeated Judah, "but the lambs will be sacrificed."

"What?" said Elias, but Judah didn't say it again.

"I don't think I'd like to be a lamb," the youngest shepherd said solemnly.

The shepherds now fell silent, and tugged their heavy cloaks about them to shelter them from the whistling wind. Their eyes were accustomed to the blackness. Every few moments they would look up to scan the hills for wolves or thieves. They weren't about to lose sheep by carelessness. All of a sudden their hillside was flooded by the light of a thousand of lamps, blinding them with its intensity. When they could



finally see, a man in shining apparel stood before them. “Do not be afraid,” he declared in the ringing voice of a herald.

***“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.***

***Today in the town of David a Deliverer has been born to you. He is the Lord’s Messiah.”***

“The Messiah! The Deliverer!” breathed Judah ben-Ozzri. “He is come at last to set our people free.”

They could scarcely comprehend. Good news! Great joy! In the town of David, the Son of David is born this night. The Lord’s Messiah! The shining man, glowing with the very Shekinah glory of God, had declared it. It must be so!

The angel continued: “This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

What a strange sign. But there was no time to think.

Now the shining angel drew himself to full height, and as he opened out his arms, the radiance and glory upon him began to spread until it covered rank after rank of angels, the heavenly host, the army of God himself — more and more, company after company, battalion after battalion, began to fill the sky. And now they began to chant, to shout in unison.

“Glory to God in highest.”

The sound bounced off the hills and echoed from the valleys, like the rumble of thunder, like the roar of a great waterfall, the shout of triumph reverberated. The shout of worship, the shout of honor, the shout of glorious praise.

“Glory to God in the highest,” they chanted in unison, the overwhelming resonance blotting out everything else and infecting shepherds “Glory to God in the highest,” they shouted together with one enormous voice of worship.

with its utter joy. The host of God, overcome with awe at the archangel words, now shouted again, “Glory to God in the highest! And on earth Shalom — peace — to those whom God has favored.”

Again and again the waves of praise rolled over the hillsides, until finally the voices began to fade, and only in the distance could the shepherds still hear shouts of “Glory, glory, glory,” that finally diminished to silence at last. The brilliant light, too, was fading, like the final streaks of sunlight dipping below the horizon and painting the clouds red and pink in departing splendor.

Old Elias was first to speak, “Praise the Lord, dear friends. We have witnessed what the prophets only dreamed of.”

“Angels,” breathed the youngest.

“The hosts of God’s army,” said Judah.

“Something greater still,” Elias said. “The chance to see the Lord’s Messiah with our own eyes. You heard the angel. He’s here, yonder in Bethlehem, and we must find him. The angel told us how — a baby, wrapped in the swaddling bands of a newborn, lying in a manger.... A manger,” repeated the old man.

You could find dozens of cattle troughs if you searched all the outlying farms, but a manger with a newborn lying in it — that was the sign! In Bethlehem itself, Elias could think of just one — inside a cave at the very edge of town where travelers’ animals were quartered. The old man careened down the hillside at a pace that left the younger shepherds breathless. He was ahead of them now, almost running to the cave behind the inn.



When they finally caught up, the old man was standing at the doorway to the cave, tears running down his cheeks.

“The Son of David,” he was saying, “The Lord’s Messiah. The Deliverer has come.”

The shepherds moved inside and knelt at the manger, peering at the sleeping baby boy, all tightly wrapped in swaddling bands.

The youngest explained to the mother, “An angel told us,” he stammered, “and then thousands, millions of angels filled the sky, lit up with God’s light. ‘Glory to God,’ they shouted, and we joined them until we were hoarse, until they were gone.”

Then Elias addressed her. “Young woman, mother of this blessed Child. You are one of the favored ones of whom the angels spoke, upon whom God’s glory and grace is resting tonight.”

You could see her lips form the words, “Yes, I know,” but no voice came.

The old shepherd went on, “The angel told us that your Child is God’s promised Messiah, our Deliverer.”

Then the old man was silent. He just knelt there for a few more moments. Finally he rose up, took the mother’s hand, and pressed it with his own. “God has entrusted you to raise his own Son, my dear. Our prayers are with you.”

He motioned his compatriots towards the door, and they got up, leaving the cave and its manger and its Christ-Child. Nor were the shepherds silent about what they had seen. They spread the good news far and wide.

Then they went back to their flocks, and carefully tended lambs that were destined for sacrifice on Passover. And though they could not know or understand it, the baby Deliverer in the manger would not challenge the Roman oppressors, but instead deliver from sin and death that oppress us all. For these lamb-herders had seen God’s Lamb, born to be a Passover sacrifice for the sins of the entire world.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, Shalom, for us all.

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# A Child of Promise.

## A Prayer for Christmas Morning

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson



Who are you little baby? Who are you little Christ child, lying so quietly in manger straw? Who are you that angels should herald your presence and stars announce your birth? That wise men and shepherds — the high and the low — should bow before you? Who are you, child of Bethlehem, son of David? What is your future? What is your promise?

Seven centuries before your birth the ancient Scriptures speak of you.....

**For to us a child is born,  
To us a son is given,  
And the government will be on his  
shoulders,  
And his name will be called  
Wonderful, Counselor,  
Mighty God  
Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of  
peace  
There will be no end.\***

What is this government? What is this peace, O Christmas baby? Are you a warrior-to-be?

Are you a king? What promise do you hold?

How can you be the Mighty God while flecks of straw, blown from the stable floor, dot your fine hair? How is this?

How can you be the Everlasting Father while not yet an hour old? How is it?

How can you be a Wonderful Counselor before you've learned? A teacher before you've been taught? What is the wellspring of your wisdom?

What is this mystery set before us, enigmatic newborn lying in a stable manger, born of parents poor, yet destined for this greatness? You must be the One we've hoped for, longed for all our lives. The One who will set us free from our depressions and oppressions, within and without.

Little wonder angels cannot contain their Good News of Great Joy. Little wonder heavenly host sing in chorus,

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men....\***

Be my peace, O Prince of Peace. Let its gentle, joyful blanket comfort my nervous soul, and still the warring of your earth.

Be my government, O Christ. Govern not my own heart only, but also this desperate world in which I live.

Be my Everlasting Father and my Counselor. By your counsel guide me out of confusion and turmoil into the sunlight that always shines above my low-lying clouds.

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