



Name: _____



December Advent Activity Calendar 2023

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Start on 1 December. Complete one activity each day until the 24 th . Colour a box as you do each activity.					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30/31

Should you complete all the activities and want more ideas, refer to:

[An A-Z of Holiday Activities for Families at Home](#)

[21 suggestions for maintaining reading momentum during the holidays](#)

[Let the children write! 20 suggestions for parents](#)

[25 ways to keep the children thinking mathematically during the holidays](#)

[Fine motor Christmas activities](#)

[Keep the children learning at home during lockdown](#)

1 December — Put up the Christmas tree

It is traditional for Christmas trees to be put up and decorated at the beginning of December. In my family, we try to do it on, or as close to, the 1st of December. If you haven't put your tree up yet, perhaps it's time to think about it.

Cut out and colour this Christmas tree. Write the year on it. On the back, write something you wish for yourself, something you wish for others, and something you wish for the world. Hang it on the Christmas tree. If you do the same thing each year, you can reflect on changes in yourself and in the world.



2 December Make — Paper Chain Decorations



Paper chain decorations are easy to make.

You need:

Lots of paper

Glue or stapler and staples

You can use strips of coloured A4 paper, Christmas wrapping paper or other paper of your choice.

The paper does not have to be new. It is great to reuse sheets of paper. If you haven't saved last year's wrapping paper to use this year, remember to save this year's paper to use next year.

What you do:

Cut strips of paper about 30 cm or 12 inches long (that's about the length of an A4 sheet of paper) and about 2½ cm or 1 inch wide (about the width of a ruler).

Start by gluing or stapling the ends of one strip together to make a link.

Thread another strip of paper through the first link or glue or staple its ends together to form another link.

Continue in this manner until you have a long paper chain to hang around the room or around the tree (or have used all your paper).



3 December — Make a Gift Day



Make a Gift Day is a perfect reminder that personal handmade gifts are special and to be treasured.

Children can make gifts for their parents, siblings, grandparents or friends.

The gifts don't need to be elaborate. Child-made cards, books, bookmarks and other small items are gifts from the heart to be treasured.

A calendar with the child's photo will be appreciated by grandparents. You can use the template on the next page.

You could involve the children in cooking small treats. They look wonderful when wrapped in cellophane and tied with a Christmas bow.

Children can decorate cups or plates with their own drawings or designs.

Chains made from coloured paper clips make fun necklaces for siblings and friends. Other small items can be clipped on to add interest.

Wool can be French knitted to make wrist bands or bookmarks.

A framed original painting, signed by the artist (child) is also a thoughtful gift.

The possibilities are limited only by your imagination, so start creating.

Paste a photo or drawing of yourself into this box to make a nice calendar to gift to a loved one for Christmas.

2024

January						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

March						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

April						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
30						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

July						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

4 December — Wildlife Conservation Day

Wildlife Conservation Day aims to make people aware of wildlife crime. Animals all over the world, including endangered animals, are being illegally slaughtered for body parts and products and sold on the black market.

People are urged to stand up for wildlife and not purchase products made from wildlife, especially from endangered animals. This is a perfect day for discussing and reading books about animals, watching nature documentaries or visiting a virtual zoo.

You could invite children to write and sign a pledge with actions they can take to look after the world's wildlife.

I will care for our wildlife.

While you may not be able to visit a zoo or wildlife park in person, many are open for virtual visits.

At [Explore.org](https://explore.org) livecams you can visit animals in their natural habitat, on farms, and in zoos. You can see dogs, cats, bears, goats, manatees — there are so many different animals and environments to explore.

Just ten of the many other places also live streaming animals:

[Victoria Zoos](#)

[San Diego Zoo](#)

[Zoo Atlanta Panda Cam](#)

[Houston Zoo](#)

[Smithsonian's National Zoo](#)



[Edinburgh Zoo](#)

[African Wildlife](#)

[Monterey Bay Aquarium](#)

[Georgia Aquarium, Atlanta](#)

[Aquarium of the Pacific](#)

5 December — Play a Board Game



Playing games together as a family helps to bond family relationships. Adjustments can be made to suit most numbers and ages of players and rules can be adapted to suit your purposes. While the main thing is to have fun together, there is a lot of learning going on too.

Some of the social skills children learn include:

Getting along and taking turns

Playing fair

Abiding by rules

Resilience

Persistence

Having a sense of humour and fun

Being a gracious winner and loser

Depending on the game you play, children may also be developing their skills with literacy and numeracy, or even adding to their store of general knowledge.

You could print out and play the Christmas themed version of Snakes and Ladders — Ladders and Chimneys — I have included on the next page.

All you need to play is a dice and a token (buttons will do) for each player — and a sense of fun!



Ladders and Chimneys

You need a dice and a button or other token for each player.
Take turns to roll the dice. The first to roll a six goes first.
Move your button forward the number of spaces rolled. Make sure you follow the numbers as they snake their way over and back across the board on the way to 100.
If you land at the base of a ladder, you climb up.
If you land at the top of a chimney, you slide down. The first to reach 100 is the winner. You don't need to roll the exact number to win.

End									
100	99	98	97	96	95	94	93	92	91
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
80	79	78	77	76	75	74	73	72	71
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	40
40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Start

6 December — Hour of Coding

Computer Science Week is held in early December. Its purpose is to get everyone involved in Computer Science for at least one hour during the week.

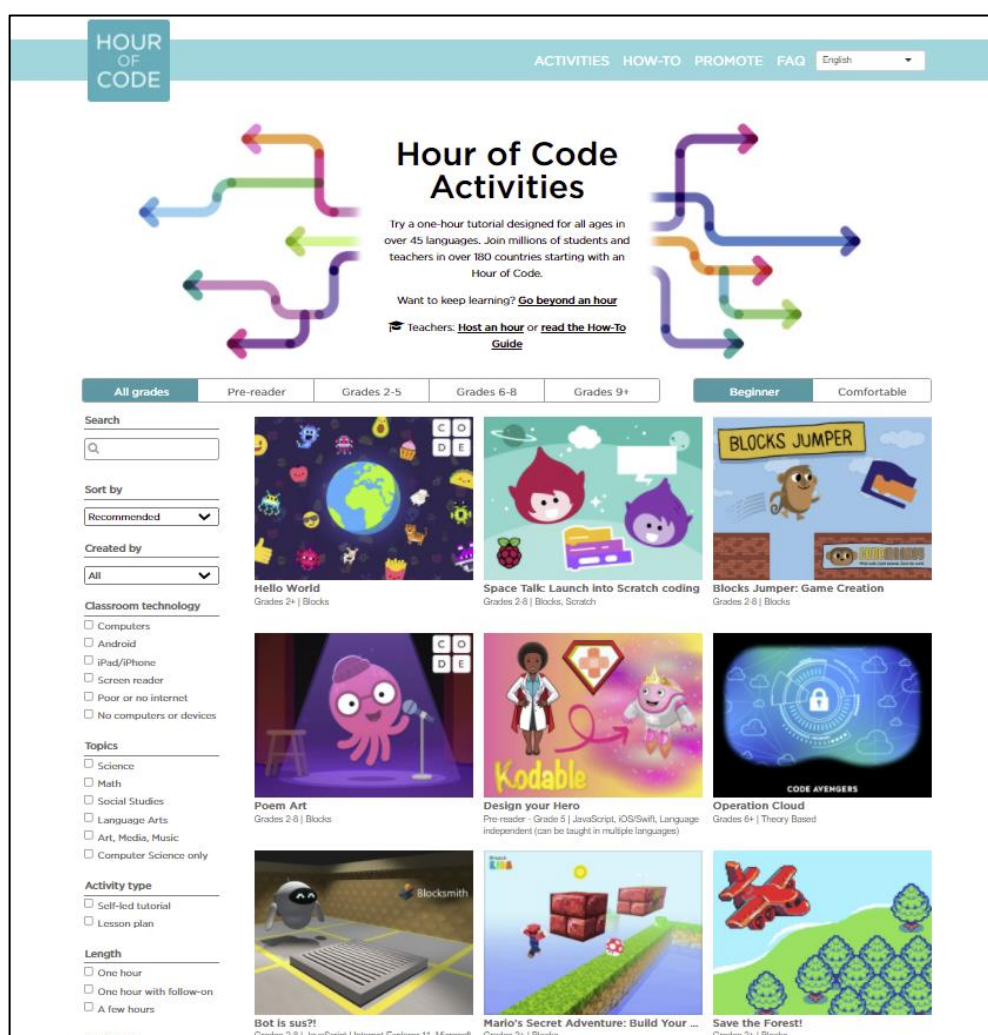
It's easier than you may think.

There are many activities to choose from on the [website](#).

The activities introduce even young children to coding.

Why not do some of the activities as a family? You won't know how much fun it is until you try.

Here is a screen shot of the page showing some of the activities and age group suitability. Click on the image to go to the website.



Jacqui Murray at [Ask a Tech Teacher](#) also has some great suggestions for the Hour of Code.

7 December — Read a Christmas Story



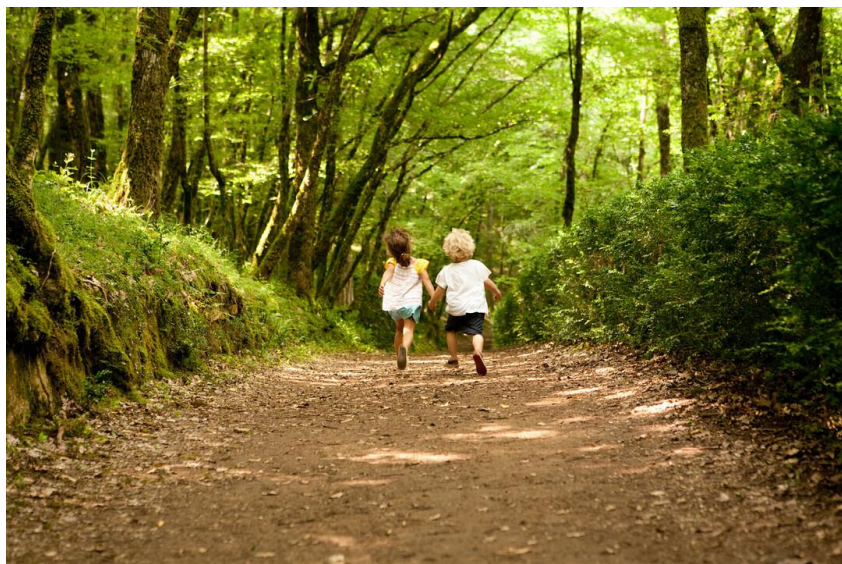
Reading together is another great bonding activity for families and has many benefits for children. In the hectic lead up to Christmas, it is important to ensure there is still time for a story or ten, every single day.

Of course, not all stories you read need to be Christmas themed, and it is important to allow children to choose which books they would like you to read for them.

If you want to give your voice a rest but still share a story together, there are many wonderful story readings on YouTube. Simply search for your favourite book or author, or simply 'children's stories' and you will find many to entertain you.

You can always enlist others, including the children, to do the reading too.

8 December — Explore the Local Environment



Spend time outdoors, experiencing what your local environment has to offer. Be in the present moment, be mindful, experience, wonder and enjoy.

Discuss what can be observed with each of the senses, for example what you can hear, smell and touch as well as see.

Whether in an urban, rural or natural space, there is always much to observe.

Ensure children understand the importance of caring for the environment while keeping themselves and others safe at the same time.

Write a poem – using the example and template on the next page.

Write a poem about Christmas sounds



Read this poem.

I heard

*As I lay in my bed
The tinkling of bells
The clattering of hooves
The padding of footsteps
I felt breathless!*

Look at its structure.

The poem has a simple structure relating a place, the sounds heard and a feeling.

It is easy to use the structure to write your own poem.

Line 1: *I heard*

Line 2: *As I (e.g. lay in my bed, sat on the beach, looked at the sky)*

Lines 3-5: *The sound (an 'ing' word) of a sound maker
(e.g. the crunching of gravel, the crinkling of paper, the scraping of boots)
A different sound on each line.*

Line 6: *I felt (a feeling)*

Use the structure to write your own poem.

I heard

As I _____

The _____

The _____

The _____

I felt _____

Illustrate your poem.

9 December — Take a Deck of Cards



There are many fun games you can play with a deck of cards. I'm sure you have a few favourites of your own.

Here are a few suggestions, to remind you of games you may not have thought of in a while:

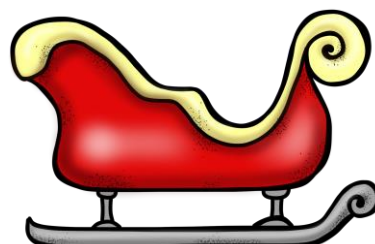
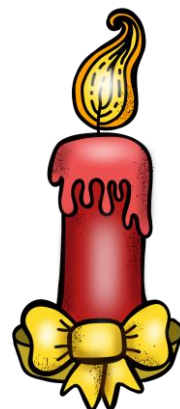
- *Strip Jack Naked*
- *Snap*
- *Happy Families*
- *Cheat*
- *Old Maid*
- *Go Fish*
- *Memory*

Rules for most of these games can be found in an internet search.

On the next two pages are some Christmas-themed cards which can be used for playing Memory. Note: you may wish to paste them onto light card before cutting and laminating them, otherwise the print may show through.

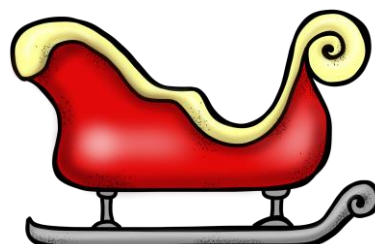
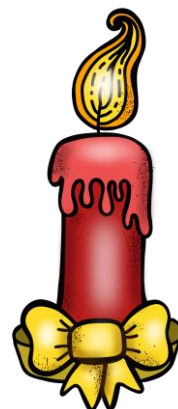
Christmas memory game

Cut along the lines to separate the cards on these two pages. Shuffle them. Place them face down on the table. Players take it in turns to turn over two cards. If the cards match, the player keeps the cards and has another turn. If the cards do not match, they are turned face down again and the next player has a turn. Continue until all pairs have been won. [Hint: Paste the cards onto light cardboard so the images can not be seen through the paper.]



Christmas memory game

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10 December — Human Rights Day



Human Rights Day provides a good opportunity to take some time out from Christmas preparations to think of others who may not have the same advantages as you. While the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) may be a little heavy for young children to fully understand, they will be able to consider the [Rights of Children](#).

The rights include things such as:

- *the right to be treated fairly*
- *the right to have a say about decisions affecting you*
- *the right to live and grow up healthy*
- *the right to be safe no matter where you are*
- *the right to get an education*
- *the right to play and have fun!*

Children may like to consider actions they can take to ensure they don't hinder the rights of others, for example to be treated fairly, to be safe, or to play and have fun.

Some children may be interested in data such as that shown in this [infographic](#).

11 December — Gingerbread Decorating Day



Who needs an excuse to indulge in a little gingerbread from time to time? Christmas is a perfect time to make and decorate some gingerbread cookies for Christmas.



At the very least you could read or tell the story of *The Gingerbread Man*.

For some inspiration, visit Robbie on her [Robbie's Inspiration](#) blog and watch her make [gingerbread dough](#) on her YouTube channel.

12 December — Prepare Christmas Treats



Children love to be in the kitchen cooking with a parent or grandparent, especially when they may get to be the taste-testers.

It doesn't really matter what recipe you follow, there is always something for the children to learn, for example:

- *Social skills of cooperation, turn taking, sharing, patience*
- *Literacy skills – reading and following the recipe, selecting ingredients, writing a menu and invitations, writing a recount, writing a shopping list*
- *Mathematics – counting e.g. the number of eggs, measuring with spoons and cups, measuring time, sharing (e.g. the number of cookies, how many slices)*
- *Science – mixing, adding or removing heat*
- *Safety – with knives, peelers, hot implements, and ingredients*
- *Social Studies: Culture – when preparing ethnic food*

13 December — Invite Friends Over



It is always fun to have friends visit at Christmas time.

Any of the activities suggested for families are great when friends are included too, especially playing games.

It is also good to have some special Christmas treats to share to make the day more festive.

One of my favourite treats to make when friends are dropping over is pinwheel sandwiches. They can be made a few days in advance and kept refrigerated until needed. (See the next page for the recipe.)



Pinwheel Sandwiches

Pinwheel sandwiches

Shopping list:

- ☐ 1 loaf of unsliced bread, wholemeal or white, square or rectangle
 - ❖ Ask the baker to slice the loaf lengthwise, or slice it yourself.
- ☐ 250 g cream cheese

For the fillings try these or substitute your own:

- ☐ 125 g smoked salmon slices
- ☐ 1 tablespoon capers
- ☐ 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- ☐ 125 g turkey slices
- ☐ 2 tablespoons cranberry sauce
- ☐ 125 g ham slices
- ☐ 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ☐ 2 tablespoons parsley



Procedure:

1. Slice the bread lengthwise.
2. Remove the crusts from the slices of bread.
3. Flatten each slice of bread with a rolling pin.
4. Divide the 250 g cream cheese between three small bowls.
5. Add capers and lemon juice to one; cranberry sauce to another; and mustard and parsley to the third.
6. Spread two slices of bread with cream cheese mixed with capers and lemon juice. Top with salmon slices. Roll like a Swiss roll. Wrap in plastic wrap.
7. Repeat with two slices of bread, the cranberry sauce and cream cheese mix, and turkey slices.
8. Repeat with two slices of bread, the mustard, parsley and cream cheese mix, and ham slices.
9. Refrigerate for a few hours or overnight.
10. Remove the plastic wrap. Use an electric knife to slice each roll.
11. Arrange on a serving platter. Enjoy!

14 December — Christmas Lights



In many neighbourhoods, people create amazing displays of lights and other decorations for Christmas.

Going for a walk or a drive to view the beautiful displays always helps build the anticipation and excitement for Christmas.

15 December — Tidy Room, Sort Toys/Books



With Christmas just 10 days away, now would be a good time for children to tidy their rooms in preparation for the big event and the new toys which may be added to their collection.

As children sort their toy boxes and shelves, they could assess their toys to consider which they no longer play with as they have lost interest in them or have outgrown them, which are broken and no-longer playable.

Different areas have different regulations for disposing of broken and unusable toys, as well as suggestions for donating or selling toys that are still in good condition but no longer wanted. Check your own local area for details.

16 December — Sing Christmas Carols



Christmas carols are fun to sing. You don't have to go door-to-door and sing for the neighbours. You can sing together as a family right in your own home.

Even if none of you are musical and no one plays an instrument, you can find plenty of carols to sing along with on the internet or radio.

There are some carols that I just can't help but join in with. What are your favourites?

17 December — Quiet Christmas Activities



Sometimes, the lead up to Christmas can be rather hectic. There's nothing wrong with taking some time out to relax or do quiet things to refresh and rejuvenate.

Jigsaw puzzles can be a nice relaxing activity that the family can do together.

Make some time for everyone to read quietly to themselves.

Put on some quiet, relaxing music, turn off all the lights except the Christmas lights, lie on the floor, close your eyes and concentrate on your breathing as you feel the bustle ebb away and peace flow over you.

Guided meditations can be another way to help everyone slow down and relax.

18 December — Prepare and/or Check Lists



If you haven't already done so, now is the time to prepare and check your lists of last-minute things that need to be done or prepared before the big day, for example:

Tidying

Shopping — supplies as well as gifts

Cooking

Counting chairs, cutlery and plates.

Children could make place cards, menus and party hats for the day.

Simple party hats can be made from strips of paper or light card about 60 cm (24 inches) long by 15 cm (6 inches) high. A design can be cut into the top (one of the long edges) and pictures can be drawn or pasted onto the strip. Ends of the strip should then be stapled together to fit the head of each guest.



19 December — Play 'I Spy on the Christmas Tree'



I Spy is always a fun game to play with children.

It can be played anywhere, indoors or outdoors, at any time.

But Christmas is the only time it can be played using the Christmas tree.

If your Christmas tree is decorated with many different objects, why not make the most of the season by playing 'I spy on the Christmas tree, something beginning with ...'

I wonder if you know what I can spy on my Christmas tree when I spy something beginning with:

R

S

B

T

C C

20 December — Charades



The oldest player goes first to give clues about the title of a book, song, TV, movie, or video game. The first to guess the answer is the next clue giver.

Here are some of the common rules of play:

The clue giver:

- *must not speak or make any sounds*
- *holds up fingers for the number of words in the title*
- *shows it's a book title by holding hands with palms together then opening like a book*
- *shows it's a song by putting one hand on the chest and one hand up in the air with mouth open wide as if singing*
- *shows it's a TV show by drawing a square in the air*
- *shows it's a movie by miming an old-fashioned movie camera with one hand forming a circle around one eye and the other hand winding the camera handle*
- *shows it's a video game by moving fingers as if tapping quickly on a keyboard*

If your children are too young to play charades this way, you could play animal charades in which children act out an animal but must make no noise. You could also include Christmas characters.

21 December — Have a Treasure Hunt



Treasure hunts are always a lot of fun. They don't always need to lead to a prize but may involve looking for a toy or a book that is already owned.

You can make treasure hunts for children to follow or support children to make treasure hunts of their own.

Treasure hunts involve children in a range of tasks.

If they are the finder, they must:

- *read the clues*
- *think about the location described and*
- *follow the clues.*

If they are the hider, they must:

- *decide on good places to hide the treasure and clues*
- *plan a sequence of clues*
- *write the clues*
- *hide the clues in the correct order*
- *hide the treasure*
- *give the finder the first clue*
- *support the finder's progress.*

Make a treasure hunt

1. Think of a good place to hide your treasure and some other places to hide clues.

2. Write a list of the places and note where you will hide the treasure, for example:

- On the table
- Under the chair
- Beside the lamp
- Between the oranges
- In the wardrobe
- In front of the TV
- Next to the phone
- Behind the couch (treasure)



Other good places to hide clues include:

- On the stairs
- Under the mat
- Beside the computer
- Between the pillows
- In the drawer (treasure)
- In front of the mirror
- Next to the door
- Behind the clock



3. Write each clue on a piece of paper, for example:

Look on the stairs.

Look under the mat.

4. Place your clues in order. Put the clue that tells where the treasure is last. You could number the clues, or even make a map to plan the route (but don't show it to the finder!)

5. Read your first clue. Put your second clue in the place that the first clue says. (You must keep your first clue to give the finder.)

6. Read your second clue. Place your third clue in the place that the second clue says.

7. Read your third clue. Place your fourth clue in the place that the fourth clue says.

8. Continue like this until you have placed all your clues. The treasure goes where the last clue says.

9. When all your clues and the treasure are hidden, give the finder your first clue. It is then the task of the finder to follow the clues to the treasure.

10. Enjoy!

22 December — Let's Get Physical



Getting physical should not be something children need a reminder to do, but sometimes a little nudge can be required.

Holidays can be a good time to go Ten Pin Bowling or Play Mini-Golf or the like.

However, you don't need to leave your local area or spend any money to get physical.

You could walk or ride to a local park and play a game of tag or throw, kick and catch a ball.

Or you could stay at home and put on some music and dance.

Gardening activities are another great way to get physical. Why not tidy up the garden in preparation for the big day.

What are your family's favourite ways to get physical?

23 December — Track Santa's Journey



On Christmas Eve you can watch where Santa is travelling around the world on the [NORAD Tracks Santa](http://www.norad.com) website.

You can visit the website from 1 December for lots of interesting information, fun games and other entertaining stuff. (NORAD = North American Aerospace Defense Command. It has been tracking Santa's annual journey for over 60 years.)

Won't you want to know when he'll be arriving at your door?

24 December — Jolabokaflod



Jolabokaflod is a great Christmas tradition from Iceland. The word translates to 'Christmas Book Flood' in English.

In Iceland, books are popular Christmas gifts and, when they are opened on Christmas Eve, everyone immediately reads the books they have received.

What books will you gift this Christmas?

Here are just a few of my favourite Australian Christmas picture books.



25 December — Enjoy Christmas Day!

Happy Christmas from readilearn 2023

