

a great informer but it is a wonderful way to keep up your family history. Plus, it is a wonderful homeschool project. Just gather news from all of your family, special artwork, special writing, and of course, photos and other goodies! Mail these treats instead of traditional cards. It will delight all your loved ones!

CHRISTMAS TAPES...

Either audio or video. These can be alternatives to the family newsletter and wonderful treats for loved ones! You can let your little ones record stories, their special music (instruments or vocal!), messages, etc. Also, these can be done for little friends (or your own children), just read aloud a favorite story and send that special part of you through the miles.

MAKE YOUR OWN NATIVITY SET...

We baked a *Nativity Gingerbread Bake Set* one year. We have also made a nativity set of finger puppets with each character (even the Star!). We try to make a new set each year and we still enjoy the ones from years gone by!

CHRISTMAS READ ALOUDS...

We are intense readers at our house! I have always loved to read and my little ones have inherited that love. Every year we read Christmas Stories from Thanksgiving until the New Year! We usually buy one really nice book each year to add to our collection. You can get really good "deals" after Christmas, so that is a great time to start your collection. If money is tight, which mine always is, just go to your local library. There will be a massive selection of wonderful books for the



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CHRISTMAS CARDS...

We have a great time each year making homemade cards to go along with our homemade gifts. The children add LOTS of sequins and glitter making them extra special. They also copy their favorite verses or poems inside. (YES, I count that as their daily Copywork lesson!) For the Christmas Cards that we receive, I always keep them from year to year. We have placed ours in different places every year, sometimes we hang them and sometimes we just

place them in a basket. I keep them to remember to pray for the special loved ones that God has sent in our lives.

MAKE GIFT TAGS... We make homemade gift tags for our gifts. We have used materials ranging from colored paper to brown paper bags. They can be cut out nicely with *Paper*

Edgers (scissors) with various edgings. You can tie them on the gifts with different ties...twine for the paper bags...silk ribbon for the colored paper... so on! Include a

favored Bible Verse handwritten by the children or a cute picture drawn by the children!

CHRISTMAS OUTFITS... I always make Elisabeth and myself matching Christmas dresses. I make them to coordinate with our men in our family. I also make lots of dresses (usually smocked) for Elisabeth as gifts. Some

of our favorites were made them to match her new baby dolls. One year she got Kirsten (An American Girl Doll) for Christmas. I made an entire wardrobe for Kirsten and for Elisabeth that matched from Smocked Christmas Dresses to Smocked Nightgown. It was such a wonderful time and it was so

special for Elisabeth that she asked for me to make her Itty Bitty Baby a wardrobe. I love it and it is evidently a tradition because she has already requested a matching wardrobe for her and Samantha (another American Girl Doll)!

CHRISTMAS MUSIC... We try to

purchase a new tape each year for our home library. We have beautiful organ music, harp and chimes, accapella hymns, and even Alabama's Christmas Collection!

We begin in November to enjoy the soothing music of the holidays and reluctantly put it away in January!



CHRISTMAS VIDEOS... We enjoy videos of past Christmas times. We also love to snuggle up and watch classics such as The Christmas Carol, It's a Wonderful Life, and Miracle on 34th Street.

MAKE CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS... I guess it is official! I have made everyone in my family new stockings each year for the past 3 years, so I guess that is a new tradition for the Rushtons! The stockings are each so

special. One year, I made everyone woods on the Christmas Tree hunt and including grandparents, aunts and un- finished off the successful hunt with cles a new stocking. I made them from tree trimming and holiday treats. Our material that I had inherited from tree is filled with memories of all of Mamaw. I made each of them with our Christmas Celebrations. Each year that ugly old polyester that she we add new goodies to our collection! LOVED to sew on and they made They may be adding to our collections precious crazy patch stockings! I even or they may be homemade...they are all leave my family's stockings out all year very special! As you are decorating, long! This is sooo much fun that you you may want to share verses from may want to give your hand at sewing Scripture to help your little ones up stockings for your crew this year! remember Christ as they glance at the beautiful tree all year long...

CHRISTMAS TREE HUNT...We always have a great time looking for that perfect Christmas Tree every year. Many years we have gone to the

Lights...John 1:4; 1:9; 8:2;
 Matthew 5: 14-16
 Ornaments...Galatians 5: 22-23
 Star...Matthew 2: 1-12
 Tinsel...1 Peter 1: 18-19
 Icicles...Revelation 22: 1



OTHER Fun Family Advent Activities....



No peeking until Christmas

Go caroling...

Go ride and look at the lights...

Go to see a live nativity...

Bake Christmas cookies and sample with Hot Chocolate or Hot Tea...

Make Christmas gifts and goody baskets...

Make Christmas wrapping paper...

Take goody baskets for Troopers...Firefighters...Your Pastor...or a lonely neighbor! Fill with lots of homemade goodies!

Make Christmas Decorations...

Go visit a nursing home...sing carols, take homemade cards, really talk...

Make Christmas cookies for your neighbors...An open house with cookies and wonderful smelling tea is also a nice touch...

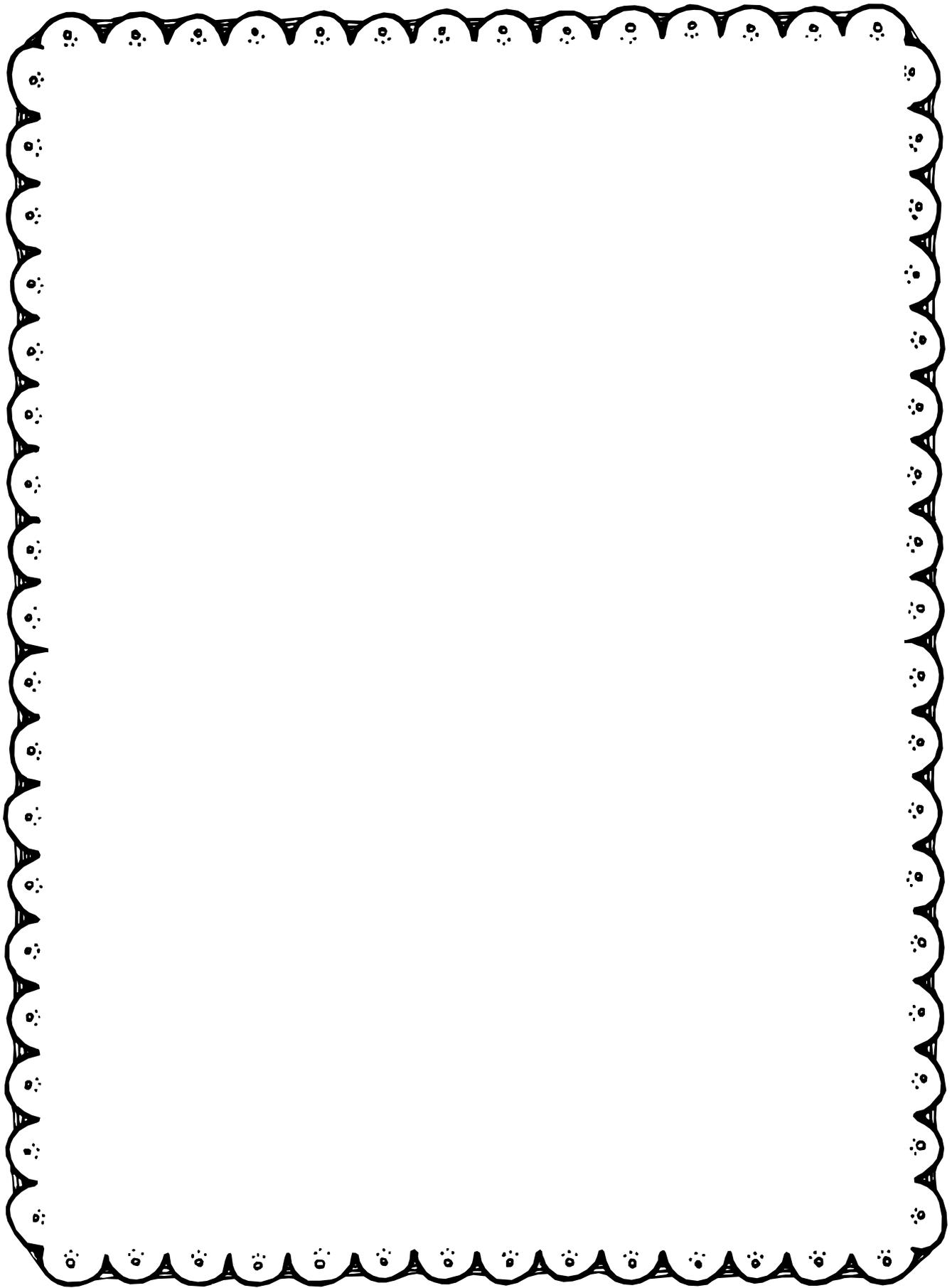
Have a Birthday Party for Jesus for the children of your neighbors and friends...let each child bring a canned food/toy to donate for Christmas...

Pull out the old family photo albums and tell all of those hilarious family stories...

You may want to even take time this holiday to make up a Scrapbook of just your past Holiday memories complete with stories from each holiday...

Go shopping with your little ones...





Christmas Read Aloud Ideas for Advent From The Rushtons...



We are intense readers at our house! I have always loved to read and my little ones have inherited that love. Every year we read Christmas Stories from Thanksgiving until the New Year! We usually buy one really nice book each year to add to our collection. You can get really good "deals" after Christmas, so that is a great time to start your collection. If money is tight, which mine always is, just go to your local library. There will be a massive selection of wonderful books for the holidays. If you are not sure what you should choose try some of these:

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

The Gift of the Magi by O Henry

Take Joy by Tasha Tudor (I LOVE Tasha Tudor!

This book has a collection of many wonderful stories. She also tells of her wonderful family traditions and shares her family recipes! This is on my list of "To buy my own copy!"

Christmas by Alice Dalgliesh (This is another collection of Christmas Stories)

Becky's Christmas by Tasha Tudor (Keep in mind reading this book that the real life Becky is Tasha Tudor's daughter Bethany. This story is about the

Christmas Celebration that was common to the Tudor home! It will certainly get you in the spirit of Christmas!)

"The Fir Tree" by Hans Christian Anderson

Raphael, the Herald Angel by David Appel and Merle Hudson

The Little Drummer Boy by Ezra Jack Keats

The Gifts of the Christ Child by George MacDonald

Let's Keep Christmas by Peter Marshall

Little Lost Angel

The Polar Express by Chris Allsburg

The Story of the Other Wise Man by Henry Van Dyke

A Cup of Christmas Tea by Tom Hegg

Martin the Cobbler by Tolstoy

A Christmas Dream and How It Came True by Louisa May Alcott

Baboushka

The Shepherd's Reward by Leonard Wibberly

"Mr. Edwards Meets Santa Claus" by Laura Ingalls Wilder

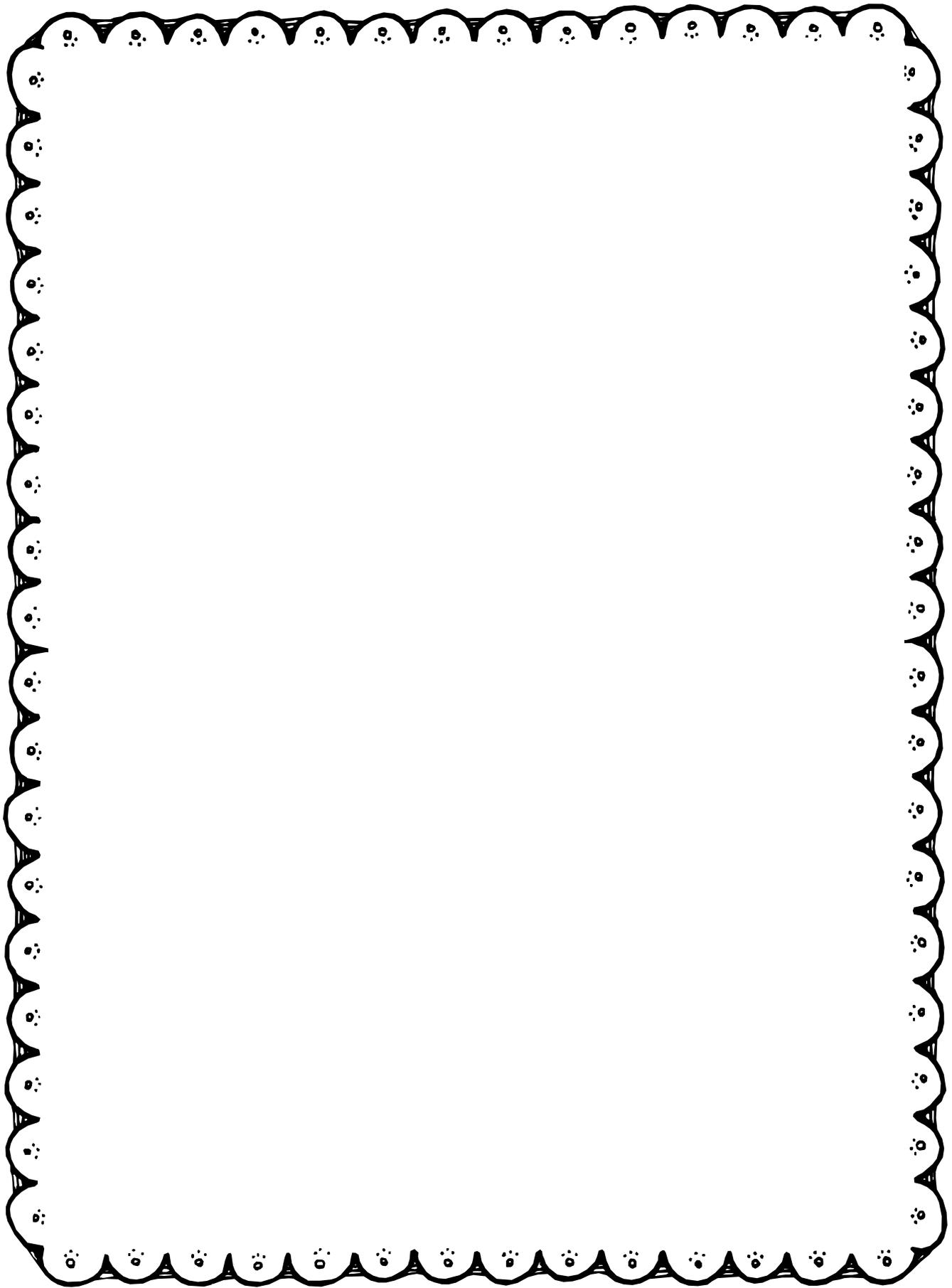
"Mr. Pickwick on the Ice" from The Pickwick Papers
By Charles Dickens

"The Night Before Christmas" by Clement Clarke Moore

"The Tailor of Gloucester" by Beatrix Potter

How the Grinch Stole Christmas by Dr. Seuss (This is sure to encourage the giggles!)





Some of My Favorite Resources for Christmas Ideas...



Advent Foretold by Wanda Sanseri

Christ in Christmas: A Family Advent Celebration by James Dobson, Charles Swindoll, James Montgomery Boice, and R.C. Sproul.

Creating Christmas Memories by Cheri Fuller

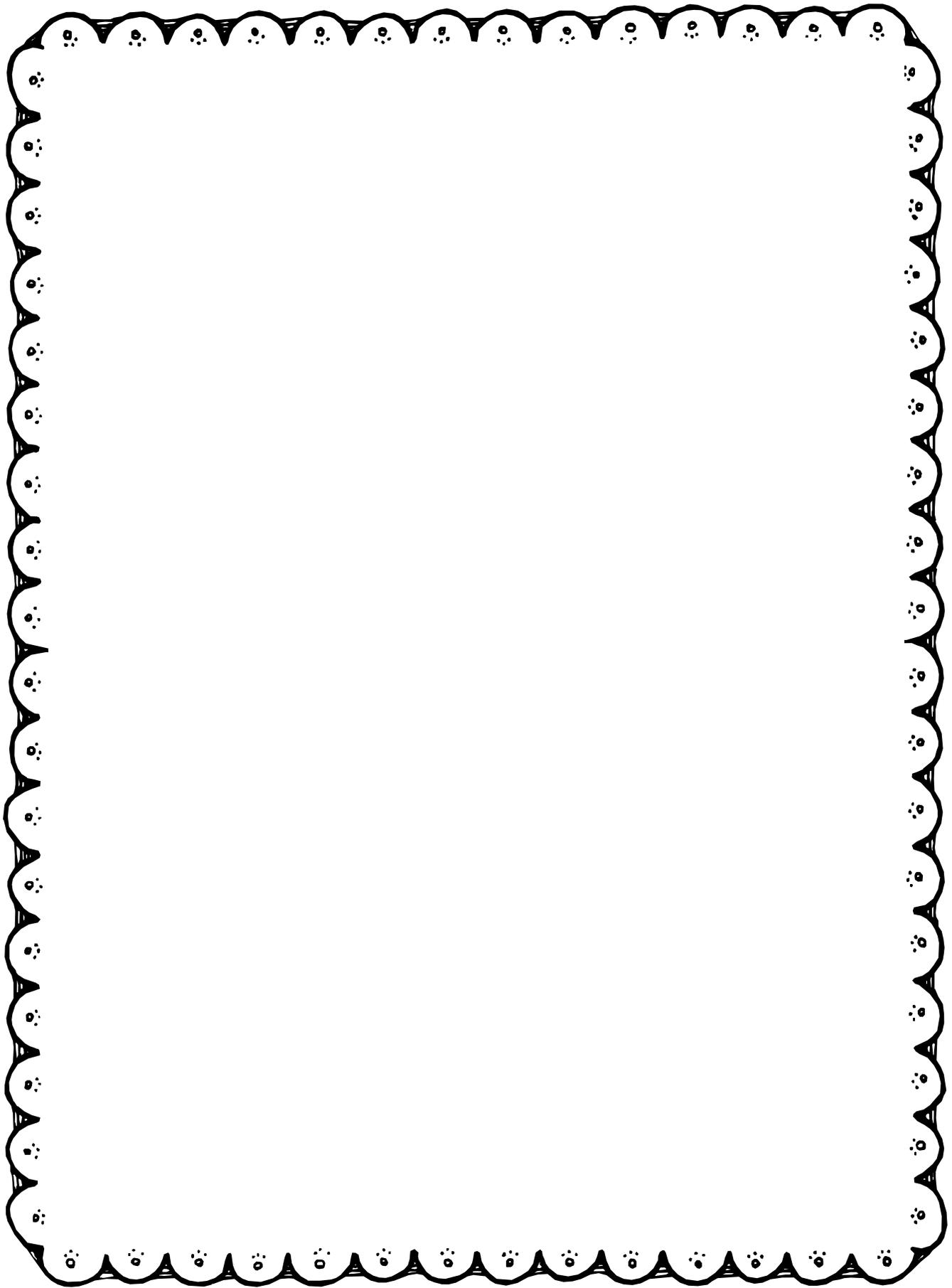
Let's Get Ready for Christmas by Sandra Myhr Anderson

Make a Christmas Memory by Juliane Kammrath

When all the World Was Waiting-An Advent Book for Children by Dorothy Van Woerkom

Come to Christmas: The Customs of the Advent Season



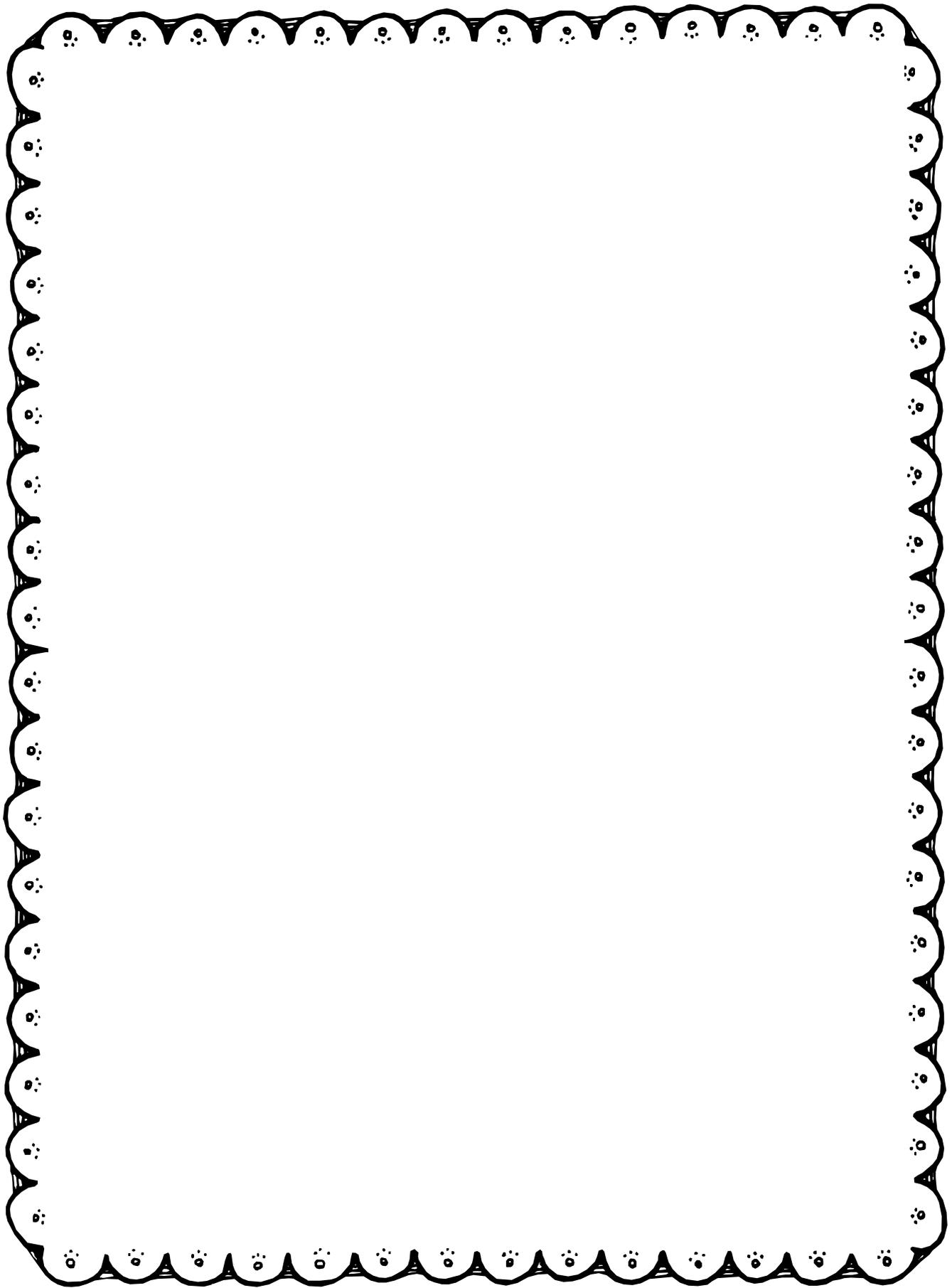


Let's Make Christmas Gifts!



It is SO MUCH fun to make gifts for others during the holidays! It may be those precious teachers at church who sacrifice their time and energy to bless your little ones...or maybe the librarian who has helped you all year find those books that make homeschooling come alive...or...it may be the pastor and his wife who are always sure to pray for your family...it may be those who work with Dad who unselfishly lay their lives down to keep our highways safe...

No matter who you take time to minister to during the holidays, you will find special memories in each moment spent...whether the creating or the giving (OR the eating WHILE creating and giving!))! Have fun!



EASY and ALWAYS Perfect Candies!

Candies are lots of fun to make and give...not to mention to sample! We make most of these in the microwave and package on platters or in baggies placed in gift baskets. These are EASY, NO FAIL, and ALWAYS PERFECT! Enjoy!



Easy Candies With Anything!

Use white or dark *Chocolate Candy Coating* to cover:

Pretzels
Animal Cookies
Fresh Fruit (Strawberries are excellent!)
Nuts
Big OR Mini Marshmallows
Graham Crackers

- ⇒ Simply melt *Candy Coating* in a microwave dish
- ⇒ Dip your choice of above
- ⇒ Place on a sheet of wax paper in the refrigerator till firm!

Excellent...NO ONE will know how easy they are to make!!

Almond OR Pecan Bark

Need:

Nuts of your choice
Chocolate Candy Coating—either white or dark work fine

- ⇒ Roast or use dry roasted nuts.
- ⇒ Melt chocolate coating in the microwave.
- ⇒ Stir in nuts.
- ⇒ Spread thinly on cookie sheet and refrigerate till firm.
- ⇒ Break apart in chunks of bark and enjoy!

Peppermint Bark

Need:

Crushed Peppermint Candies
White Chocolate Candy Coating

- ⇒ Crush Peppermint Candies into small pieces.
- ⇒ Melt chocolate coating in the microwave.

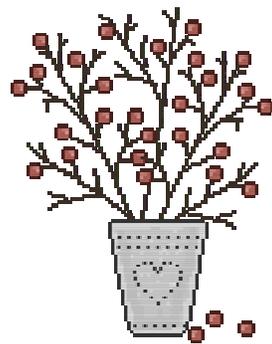
- ⇒ Stir in peppermint pieces.
- ⇒ Spread thinly on cookie sheet and refrigerate till firm.
- ⇒ Break apart in chunks of bark and enjoy!
- ⇒ Combine and mix well.
- ⇒ Dip in Chocolate coating or use to fill molds and peanut butter cups! Yummy!

Deluxe Centers

Easy and Super Yummy Fondant

- 1/3 cup of butter
- 1/3 tsp. Of Light Corn Syrup
- 1 tsp. Vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. Salt
- 3 1/2 (1 lb.) sifted confectionery sugar

- ⇒ Blend butter, syrup, vanilla, and salt in large bowl.
- ⇒ Add sugar and knead well until smooth.
- ⇒ Flavor as desired with nuts, cherries, candied fruit, etc.
- ⇒ Store well covered in a cool place.



- 1 cup Condensed Milk
- 1 cup Butter
- 2 cups Dry Fondant
- 4 cups Pecans
- 4 cups Desiccated Coconut

- ⇒ Cream all ingredients well.
- ⇒ Chill 2 hours.
- ⇒ Form in balls.
- ⇒ Dip in Chocolate Coating or use unrefrigerated to fill molds.

Fast and Easy Fudge

Some say this is "cheaters" fudge...but, they keep on eating it! Give it a try. You will be sure to be hooked!

Easy Peanut Butter Balls OR Peanut Butter Cups!

- 1/4 pound Butter or Oleo
- 1/2 pound Peanut Butter
- 3/4 pound Confectionery Sugar
- 1/4 cup Light Corn Sugar
- Chocolate Coating

- 1 can Sweetened Condensed Milk
- 1 box (1 pound) Candy Coating (milk chocolate flavor!)

- ⇒ Melt coating in the microwave.
- ⇒ Add milk.
- ⇒ Mix well.
- ⇒ Pour into a buttered pan and refrigerate.
- ⇒ Cut into squares.

- ⇒ Nuts may be added when you mix together.

Rocky Road

Chocolate Coating (dark chocolate)

Mini Marshmallows

Nuts (we use crushed pecans)

- ⇒ Melt Chocolate Coating.

- ⇒ Butter a Square pan lined with foil. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ of chocolate and sprinkle with desired amount of mini marshmallows and nuts.

- ⇒ Drizzle rest of chocolate on top.

- ⇒ Chill until firm in refrigerator.

- ⇒ Cut into squares.

Easy and Wonderful!

Coconut or Nut Clusters

Flaked Coconut/Nuts

Chocolate Coating

These are SUPER easy! Just stir in desired amount of flaked coconut or nuts into melted coating and drop into molds or into mounds on wax paper.

Green Coconut Nests

1 pound Green Coating

1 (7 oz) package of Flaked Coconut Water

- ⇒ Melt coating, add coconut and mix well.

- ⇒ Add drop of water until mixture holds its shape.

- ⇒ Form into nest and make a hollow with your finger to add jellybeans or candies.



Peanut Butter Fudge

1 pound White Chocolate Coating

1 cup Peanut Butter

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup oleo

- ⇒ Combine ingredients in a saucepan.

- ⇒ Melt over low heat until smooth.

- ⇒ Stir in 1-tsp. vanilla.

- ⇒ Fold in $\frac{2}{3}$ -cup marshmallow cream.

- ⇒ Pour in buttered 8" square pan.

- ⇒ Refrigerate 30 minutes.

- ⇒ Cut into squares.

Cream Cheese Mints

2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups confectioner's sugar

Food coloring

3 ounces softened cream cheese
Granulated sugar
Peppermint flavoring to taste (about 1
tsp.)
Candy molds

⇒ Mash cream cheese and
mix in the sugar.
⇒ If you will be using more
than one color, divide the
mixture and place in
separate bowls.
⇒ Add flavoring and color
sparingly; you want soft
pastels with a delicate
flavor.

⇒ Stir together until mixture
resembles pie dough.
⇒ Roll into small balls and roll each
ball in granulated sugar.
⇒ Press balls into patties with glass
dipped in granulated sugar or press
them into candy molds and unmold
at once.
⇒ Shake sugar into mold, if necessary,
to prevent sticking.

Originally from If Teacups Could Talk by Emily Barnes

Haystacks

1 (6 ounce) package butterscotch
morsels
2 tsp. salad oil
1 (3-ounce) can chow mein Chinese
Noodles (2 cups)
1 small can salted peanuts

⇒ In top of double boiler over hot
(not boiling) water, melt
butterscotch morsels.
⇒ Stir in salad oil.
⇒ In a large bowl, mix chow mein
noodles and peanuts.

⇒ Pour on butterscotch and
mix thoroughly with a fork.
⇒ Drop mixture by
teaspoonfuls on waxed paper
or greased cookie sheet.
⇒ Let cool.



Cream Cheese Candy

8 ounce package cream cheese
1 box powdered sugar
1 ½ cups chopped pecans or walnuts
1 tsp. Vanilla flavoring

⇒ Melt cream cheese in double boiler.
⇒ Mix in sugar, nuts, and vanilla
extract.
⇒ Drop immediately by spoonfuls onto
a large sheet of wax paper.
⇒ Yields 4 dozen.

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Gift Mixes...

Gift Mixes make perfect gifts. Sometimes we get tired of eating during the holiday season. The perfect answer is the gift that keeps on giving into the New Year. We add gift mixes into gift baskets with other goodies. Of course, packaging gift mixes is yet another thing that can take one simple mix and make a great gift for those that you do not want to forget along the way—while still being great for your budget. Give them a try!

For each mix, you may package in paper bags...nice jars with pretty note-tags...in baskets...let your imagination go! Do include a recipe for how to use the mixes. If including in baskets, include matching accessories...Coffee Mugs...Apron...so on! With each mix, include the instructions on how to prepare (included below).



Carrot Cake Mix

- 2 cups sugar
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. powdered vanilla
- 1 tbs. cinnamon
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
- 3 cups all-purpose flour

Combine and blend the ingredients in a small bowl. Store in an airtight container. Yields: 5 2/3 cups Use a Bunt pan, large flour sifter, or covered cake plate as your gift basket, and fill it with packages of your prepared cake mixes with recipe tags attached to each!

To Make Carrot Cake: 1 package Carrot Cake Mix, 3 cups grated carrots, 1 1/2 cups vegetable oil, 1 (8

ounce can) crushed pineapple, and 3 large eggs. Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. and grease a 13-by 9-inch baking dish. Place the Carrot Cake Mix in a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center of the mix and add the oil, eggs, carrots, and pineapple. Blend until smooth. Pour into the prepared baking dish and bake for 40 to 50 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool the cake and frost if desired, or dust with powdered sugar. Yields 1 13- by 9-inch cake.

Spiced Apple Cake Mix

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg

- 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 tsp. powdered vanilla
- 1/2 cup golden raisins

Combine and blend the ingredients in a medium bowl. Store in an airtight container. Yields: 6 cups. Use Ideas from Carrot Cake Mix for gift ideas. Give with recipe for Spiced Apple Cake.

To Make Spiced Apple Cake:

- package Spiced Apple Cake Mix, 3 large eggs, 1 1/2 cups canal oil, and 3 cups shopped apples.
- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. and grease a

tube or Bunt pan. Place the Spiced Apple Cake Mix into a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center of the mix and add the oil, eggs, and apples. Stir until the mixture is smooth. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 1 hour and 10 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool and remove from the cake pan. Serves 8 to 10.

Funnel Cake Mix

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

Combine all ingredients, stirring well. Store in an airtight container. Give mix with the recipe for Funnel Cakes. - Yields: 1 cup of mix, enough for 6 funnel cakes.

To Make Funnel Cakes: Pour vegetable oil into a skillet to a depth of 1 in. Heat oil to 360 degrees over medium-high heat. In a small bowl, combine 1 egg with 3/4 cup of milk. Add 1 cup Funnel Cake Mix and beat

1 with fork until smooth. Holding finger under funnel opening, pour about 1/4 cup of batter into funnel. Allow batter to pour from funnel into hot oil, moving funnel in a circle to form a spiral shape. Fry 1 minute until golden brown. Remove to paper towels to drain. Sprinkle with confectioner's sugar. Yields 6 funnel cakes.



Instant Cocoa With Marshmallows

- 8 1/2 cups (25.6 ounce package) nonfat dry milk
- 1 1/2 cups (6 ounce jar) non-dairy coffee creamer
- 3 cups (16 ounce package) instant chocolate drink mix for milk
- 1 1/2 cups confectioners sugar
- 1 1/2 cups miniature marshmallows

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Store in airtight container. Give mix with the recipe for Hot Cocoa. Yields: 16 cups of mix, enough for 32 servings

To Make Hot Cocoa: In a mug, combine 1/2-cup mix with 9 ounces boiling water; stir.

about 6 minutes. Add Worcestershire and 1 cup of water; simmer 10 minutes. Stir in next 5 ingredients and simmer 10 minutes longer. Add tomatoes, beans (undrained), and meat to Dutch oven. Heat, cover, and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove cover and simmer 30 minutes longer. Yields about 4 1/2 quarts of chili.

Three-Bean Chili

- 2 pounds ground round
- 1 tbs. vegetable oil
- 1 large red onion cut into chunks
- 1 large green pepper cut into chunks
- 1 Jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup Worcestershire
- 2 tbs. chili powder
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- 1-tsp. celery seeds
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans
- 1 can (15 ounces) Garbanzo beans
- 1 can (15 ounces) kidney beans
- 3 cans (14.5 ounces each) Italian-style tomatoes, chopped with liquid
- Brown meat in a large Dutch oven:
- Drain and remove from pan. Add oil to Dutch oven and sauté' onion, green pepper, Jalapeno, and garlic until soft,



Swiss Miss Cocoa Mix

1 16-oz. box of non-fat dry milk

1 C. Sugar
3/4 C. cocoa

Sift all ingredients together three times. Store this mixture in a tightly sealed container in a cool place. When ready to use, you can add a couple of heaping tablespoons to hot water

Gingerbread Man Cookie Mix

1/2 cup dark brown sugar
3/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 cups all purpose flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 1/4 tsp. ground ginger

Combine all ingredients in a medium

bowl and blend until they are evenly distributed. Store in an airtight container. Yields 2 1/2 cups. Include mix, recipe, a gingerbread man cookie cutter and sprinkles in a gift bag! For a big basket, include a rolling pin, apron, and potholder also!

To Make Gingerbread Man Cookies:

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter or Margarine, softened;
- 1/4 cup dark molasses; 1/2 package (2 1/2 cups);
- Gingerbread Man Cookie Mix



- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In the large bowl of an electric mixer, cream the butter and add the molasses. Beat in the cookie mix and mix until blended. Halve the dough and flatten into one-inch-thick rounds. Wrap in Plastic wrap and chill for 2 hours. Roll the dough onto a lightly floured board to 1/4-inch thickness, and cut with a floured 3-inch cookie cutter. Place one inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 12 minutes or until the edges are lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes, then transfer to wire racks to cool. Yields: 2 dozen 3 inch cookies.

Sugar Cookie Mix

- 1 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 6 cups all-purpose flour

- 1 tbs. baking powder
- 1 tbs. salt

In a small mixing bowl, combine butter and shortening. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, and salt. Using a pastry blender or 2 knives, cut shortening mixture into flour mixture until mixture resembles fine meal.

Store in airtight container in refrigerator up to 4 weeks. Give mix with the recipe for Sugar Cookies. Yields: 8 cups of mix

To Make Sugar Cookies:

Combine 2 cups Sugar Cookies Mix, 2/3 cup granulated sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, 2 tablespoons milk, and 1 egg. Stir until well blended. On a floured surface, use a floured rolling pin to roll out dough to 1/8-inch thickness. Cut out dough using desired cookie cutters. Sprinkle with colored sugar and place on lightly greased baking sheet. Bake in preheated 400-degree oven 5 to 8 minutes, or until very lightly browned around edges. Remove from pan and cool on wire rack. Yields: about 3 1/2 dozen 2 1/2" long cookies.

To Make Colored Sugar: In a small jar with a lid, combine 1/4 cup granulated sugar and 2 to 3 drops desired food coloring. Place lid on jar and shake until blended. To make multi-colored

sugar combine equal amounts of individually colored sugars. Stir gently and store in airtight container.

Baked Caramel Corn

2 sticks butter or margarine
2 cups firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 cup light or dark corn syrup
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. vanilla
6 quarts popped popcorn

Melt butter; stir in brown sugar, corn syrup, and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil without stirring for five minutes. Remove from heat; stir in soda and vanilla. Gradually pour over popped corn, mixing well. Turn into two large shallow baking or roasting pans. Bake at 250 degrees for one hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Remove from oven, cool completely. Break apart and store in tightly covered container. Makes about five quarts.

Cinnamon Dip

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
2 tbs. milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 tbs. brown sugar

1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg

Combine all ingredients and beat until smooth. Serve with fruit slices or cookies. Store in airtight container in refrigerator. Yields: about 1 cup of dip.

Red Hot Jelly

2 cups apple juice
4 cups granulated sugar
1/2 tsp. margarine
1/3 cup red cinnamon candies
1 pouch (6 ounces) liquid pectin



Wash and sterilize canning jars and lids. In large heavy saucepan, combine juice and sugar. Stir well. Add margarine and candies. Bring to a rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly, and boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Skim foam from top of mixture with large metal spoon. Fill sterilized jars to within 1/4-inch of tops. Wipe jar rims and seal jars. Yields 4 half-pint jars of jelly.

Gourmet Bean Soup

1/2 cup each of split green peas, lentils, baby limas, black turtle beans, and pinto beans

Mix different beans together give in a salt and pepper to taste. Simmer and enjoy!
mason jar or a zip-lock bag with label and recipe attached.

Whole Wheat Pancake Mix

To Make Gourmet Bean Soup: Soak Beans overnight. In an 8-quart Dutch oven, combine beans with 2 tbs. chopped parsley, 1 bay leaf, and 3/4 tsp. each of thyme and marjoram. Add 10 cups of chicken or ham stock. Bring to a boil and skim off the foam. Reduce heat. Simmer 2 1/2 hours or until the beans are tender. In a skillet, sauté 1 chopped onion, 4 chopped carrots, 3 chopped celery ribs, 2 cloves of minced garlic in 1/2 cup of butter. Then stir the sautéed vegetables into the beans and stock. Add 1/2 lb. cubed ham, 1 28-ounce can of cut-up tomatoes, 1 tbs. prepared mustard, and

In a bowl, mix 1 cup unbleached flour, 1 cup whole wheat flour, 2 tbs. sugar, 1 tbs. baking powder, 1/2 tsp. salt, and place the mixture in a zip-lock bag. Write the recipe on the label, decorate it, and staple it to the bag.

To Make Whole Wheat Pancakes: Add 1 3/4-cup milk; 2 eggs, beaten; 2 tbs. vegetable oil; Whole Wheat Pancake Mix. Mix first 3 ingredients. Add Mix, mixing lightly. Makes 4-6 wonderful pancakes!



Tea Mixes...

Tea Mixes are super gifts! Include in a basket with everything your loved ones need for Tea Time. Great gift!

Hot Lemon Tea Mix

1 cup instant tea
1 cup sweetened lemonade drink mix
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup finely crushed lemon drops

Place all ingredients in a blender or

food processor fitted with a steel blade. Process briefly until ingredients are completely blended. Store in an airtight container and give with recipe for Hot Lemon Tea. Yields: about 3 cups

To Serve: Add 1 cup boiling water to 1 heaping tablespoon tea mix. Stir until

• mix dissolves.

teaspoons coconut extract

Caribbean Tea Mix

- 2 cups unsweetened powdered instant tea
- 2 packages (3 ounces each) orange-pineapple gelatin
- 1 cup sugar
- 3/4

In a food processor, combine all ingredients. Process until well blended. Store in an airtight container and give with recipe for Caribbean Tea.

To Serve: Stir 2 level tablespoons tea mix into 6 ounces hot water.



International House of Coffee Flavored Coffee Mixes

Oh! These will be hits! We mix up several of these per basket and add in goodies to encourage a sweet coffee break. What a great basket this makes up!

Cafe Bavarian Mint

- 1/4 C. powdered creamer
- 1/3 C. sugar
- 1/4 C. instant coffee
- 2 T. powdered baking cocoa
- 2 hard candy peppermints

1 orange flavored piece of hard candy

Process in a blender on liquify until blended. Store in an airtight container.

- Process in a blender on liquify until well blended. Store in an airtight container.

Cafe Swiss Mocha

- 1/4 C. powdered creamer
- 1/3 C. sugar
- 1/4 C. instant coffee
- 2 T. powdered baking cocoa

Cafe Cappuccino

- 1/4 C. powdered creamer
- 1/3 C. sugar
- 1/4 C. instant coffee

Process in a blender on liquify until well blended. Store in an airtight container.

Cafe Viennese

- 1/4 C. powered creamer
- 1/3 C. sugar
- 1/4 C. instant coffee
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

Process in blender on liquify until well blended. Store in an airtight container.

Bavarian Mint Coffee Creamer

- 3/4 cup non-dairy coffee creamer
- 1/2 cup dutch process cocoa (we used Droste brand)
- 3/4-cup confectioners sugar
- 1/2 tsp. peppermint extract

Combine all ingredients in a container with a tight fitting lid. Shake well to blend. Store in an airtight container and give creamer with the recipe for Bavarian Mint Coffee. Yields 15 servings.

To make Bavarian Mint Coffee: In a mug, combine 2 tbs. of creamer with 6 ounces of coffee.

Almond Amaretto Coffee Creamer

- 1/4 cup non-dairy coffee creamer
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4-cup confectioners sugar

Combine all ingredients in a container with a tight-fitting lid. Shake well to blend. Store in airtight container and give creamer with the recipe for Almond Amaretto Coffee. Yield: 12 servings

To make Almond Amaretto Coffee: In a mug, combine 2 tablespoons of creamer with 6 ounces of coffee.



Cookie Cutter Ornaments...

Want to plan a time for some sweet family memories? Make ornaments! Want a gift idea that will keep on giving for years to come? Why not make Cookie Cutter Ornaments? You will love these!



Cookie Cutter Ornaments

1 cup flour
1 cup salt
plastic straws
rolling pin

The easiest and quickest ornaments are cookie cutter ornaments. We simply buy metal cookie cutters and tie bright ribbon through the top. They are then ready to hang on the tree or on presents! You can decorate them more if you prefer. These are adorable on a tree with homemade ornaments cut in these shapes! PLUS, you do not have to worry about your little ones breaking them! Make a "batch" today!

large bowl
cookie cutters
table knife
waxed paper
markers or watercolor paints
1/8-inch-wide fabric ribbon
scissors
homemade clear acrylic paint or shellac
brush
Mix flour and salt with about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm water. Add the water slowly until the mixture reaches a bread dough texture. Knead the ball of dough until it is smooth. Roll the dough out on waxed paper to about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness. Use cookie cutters or a table knife to cut out stars, bells, angels, or other shapes that you choose.

Clay Decorations...

These precious ornaments LOOK like real cookies BUT last for years! (Unlike those that we bake that are edible...which only last the evening!) These are precious when given as gifts OR just as a decoration on a gift.

Press a plastic straw through each does, return pan to low heat briefly (shape to remove a small circle of and stir.) Turn dough out on board dough. In the remaining hole you will until cool enough to handle and knead later thread and tie thin ribbon for until smooth and pliable. Immediately hanging each ornament. Allow at least place into plastic bag and seal; it will three days for the ornaments to dry. Keep indefinitely even without Carefully turn them over once a day. refrigeration.

After they are dry, decorate both sides of the ornaments with markers or watercolor paints. Seal the surface with clear acrylic paint or shellac. Add ribbon and hang on your Christmas tree or give for gifts!



Salt dough can be modeled like play-doh or modeling clay or can be rolled out like cookie dough. Start by rolling out flat and cutting out shapes with cookie cutters. Keep in mind that these ornaments will be heavy so try not to

Salt Dough Ornaments...

Another variation...you probably have these ingredients on hand at home right now!

- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 cup table salt
- 1/3 cup water

Dissolve cornstarch in 1/3-cup water in a bowl. In separate pan, mix 1-cup salt and 1/3 cup water and heat, stirring constantly until mixture comes to a boil. Remove from heat. Stir in cornstarch solution. Stir hard until mixture is the consistency of thick mashed potatoes. (If dough refuses to stiffen as mysteriously, it sometimes

make them too thick or too thick. Let dry, but be sure to poke holes in the tops for hanging. When your creations are dry, you can coat with clear varnish or use any paints whether watercolors (tubes work best), acrylics, poster paints, and enamels. For the porcelain-like finish, brush on 2-3 coats of one-part Elmer's glue to one-part water. For a high gloss finish, brush on 2-3 coats of clear nail polish, shellac, or varnish. Polyurethane varnish is probably best. Aerosol sprays are fine but it takes several coats to give the same look. Once paints dry, you can use fishing line, embroidery floss, ribbon, gold string, thin wire, or hooked ornament holders. After Christmas, store in plastic bags with mothballs to protect.