

# Aotearoa – Unity in diversity - December

## A wreath to celebrate a multi-cultural summer break

### Pre-school – Junior Primary Level Activity

#### OVERVIEW:

This resource is about making a celebratory wreath to symbolise our culture, treasured customs and aroha for friends and family during the December holiday. Contrasted with the origins of traditional northern hemisphere, New Zealand celebrations in the summer break can be explored.



Inclusion of students' multi-cultural and diverse backgrounds encourages a sense of belonging, while common ground of celebrations encourages 'unity in diversity'. The activity can be adapted across preschool to level 1 – 3 of the N.Z. curriculum and another wreath unit covers Primary to junior Secondary curriculum levels.

#### ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES:

**Te Whàriki** – New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum Strands

Strand 2: Belonging – **Mana Whenua** links with the family and the wider world are affirmed. they feel comfortable with customs and regular events.

Strand 4: Communication – **Mana Reo** they experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures they discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive.

#### New Zealand Curriculum – Visual Arts Levels 1-3

<b>Communicating about art:</b>	Students will explore and discuss the different ways that holiday celebrations are depicted in different places / times
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<b>Practical knowledge:</b>	Students will explore elements of colour, shape and the convention of symbolism
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#### New Zealand Curriculum – Social Sciences Levels 1-3

Level 1:  
Understand how places in New Zealand are significant for individuals and groups.  
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Level 2:  
Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people's customs, traditions, and values.  
Understand how places influence people and people influence places.

Level 3  
Understand how cultural practices vary but reflect similar purposes.  
Understand how the movement of people affects cultural diversity and interaction in New Zealand.

## Celebrations there and here and everywhere!

### THERE:

**Look:** at historic Victorian and traditional Christmas cards (see some examples below)

**Discuss:**

What kinds of objects are in the pictures?

What season and what kind of weather do you see in the pictures?

What event are these cards made to celebrate?



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Victorian\\_Christmas\\_Card\\_-\\_11222307273.jpg#globalusage](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Victorian_Christmas_Card_-_11222307273.jpg#globalusage)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santa\\_Claus\\_and\\_His\\_Reindeer.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santa_Claus_and_His_Reindeer.jpg)

Image courtesy of Pixabay - [https://pixabay.com/p-1855287/?no\\_redirect](https://pixabay.com/p-1855287/?no_redirect)

### HERE:

**Compare with cards from Te Papa's New Zealand Christmas card collection and commercial images of Christmas time in New Zealand**

This could also include an exploration of popular kiwiana such as; Pohutakawa, Santa on the beach or in shorts, the song a Pukeko in a Ponga Tree etcetera.

**Points for discussion**

- How are these images different from the ones on the traditional cards?
- Why do you think they have such a limited range of colours?
- What kinds of objects/activities are taking place in these cards?
- What season is it? What kind of weather do you see?
- Compare with cards they exchange with friends and family and for sale.
- The changing ways that people communicate now – emails, e-cards, texts



Christmas cards, circa 1900s, Wanganui, by A. D. Willis Ltd, Kennett Watkins. Purchased 1995. Te Papa (GH012084), (GH012083), (GH012082), (GH004848), (GH012084).

### EVERYWHERE...

**Explore:** (see links in appendix) holidays around the world; Christmas, Kwanzaa, Diwali, Hanukkah. Think what celebrations have in common (usually good food shared with friends and family) and how they are different. Why are celebrations important and necessary?

## Art Activity: Creating a symbolic wreath

Pre-learning: A wreath is a way of arranging symbolic materials in a circle. Traditionally the materials were from nature; flowers, leaves, twigs and fruits.

Wreaths are an ancient symbol and have been used by many cultures from Ancient Romans and Greeks as a symbol of mana and victory, across Europe as decorations and symbols at celebrations and memorials through to table and door decorations and are also worn on heads. Circular symbols, adornments and ornaments are common in many cultures as a symbol of the sun, eternity, endless love, life and many other things.

## Wreaths using – fingerprints and hand-prints

**Tools:** cotton buds/fingers/hands

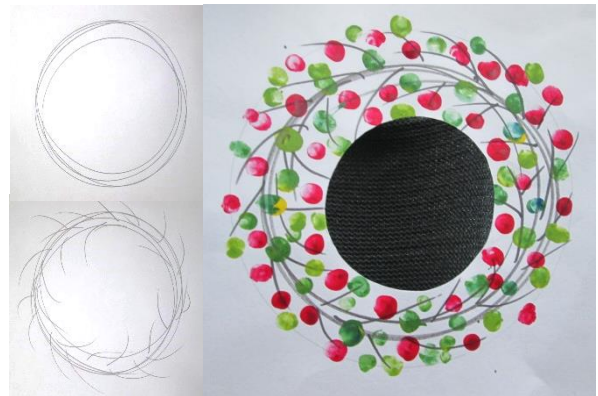
**Media:** Ink, paint, buttons and other small circular crafting objects

**Techniques/skills;** pincer grip, messy play,

**Understanding;** colour (symbolic, primaries or emotive), traditions and belonging, group culture and celebrations.

### Step 1 – drawing warm-up and circle drawing

- Encourage students to stand and use their whole arm to draw large circles in the air
- As they master the circular movement start to make them smaller
- Use markers / pencils to make the same movement connecting with the paper to create a circle made from many lines.
- Add little lines of 'branches' from inside and outside the circle



### Step 2 - decorate the wreath

Apply dots of 2-3 colours with fingers or cotton-buds depending on the skill targeted for development for example; messy play, pincer-grip or fine motor control.

### Adaptations:

- Very small children: supply pre-cut circles to simply add dots
- Add a poem or image of the child to the middle as a gift for caregivers
- Older children; use decorative stamps, small objects such as buttons and glitter glue
- Use symbolic or favourite colours instead of red/green



### Collaborative Handprint Wreath:

Each child creates a hand-print and these are assembled on the wall as a friendship wreath – there are many examples of pre-school wreath adaptations online. For more advanced options involving scissor skills see the Christmas wreath activity designed for primary to junior secondary level.

## Appendix of resources

### Te reo salutations for the holidays:

- Meri Kirihimete (merry Christmas)
- Ngā mihi o te wā me te Tau Hou (A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year)  
Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete (Christmas Greetings)
- Ngā mihi mō te Kirihimete (Wishing you a very Happy Christmas)
- Ngā mihi o te Tau Hou (Happy New Year)
- Ngā mihi o te Tau Hou ki a koutou katoa (Wishing you all a very Happy New Year)
- Ngā mihi o te wā me te aroha nui, nā .....  
(Happy Christmas lots of love, from ....*name*)

### Poems for centres of wreaths:

“little hands and little feet, make this tiny wreath unique hang this up in years to come,  
memories of one so young”

“my hands made the wreath, my fingers each berry, I hope our holiday is bright and merry”

“my hands in a circle are here to remind you, how fast I grow up in so little time”

### Web-links for global multicultural celebrations:

[Cultural Celebrations and Storytelling](#)

[Teaching Multiculturalism and Diversity During Winter Holidays](#)

[Little Thinkers UNIT 3: Holidays Around the World /Christmas Around the World](#)

[My holiday traditions freebie](#)

my  
hands in a circle  
are here to remind you  
how fast I grow up ,  
in so little  
time.