

Theme: Happy Holidays

Date: December 15, 2021

Hello StrongStart friends,

Just a reminder that the **last day of StrongStart this year is Thursday December 16th**. We will be closed for two weeks for winter break and will resume on **Tuesday January 4th, 2022!**

This holiday, no matter what you celebrate, we wish you a healthy and happy one! Today, we will be sharing some songs, books and activities from a few different holidays.

One holiday this season that people celebrate is Christmas! It is celebrated every year on December 25. Let's get creative with some buttons. Maybe a **Button Christmas Tree**, a **Snow Ornament** or a **Santa's Hat?**



Materials:

- coloured buttons or pompoms (in various sizes)
- pipe cleaners
- construction paper
- glitter paper (cut into star shapes)
- glue
- cardboard

After our Christmas craft, let's sing a song with Ms. Natalya called "Santa Claus had a Tree" (to the tune of Old Macdonald Had a Farm) - <https://youtu.be/FL4H960WPu4>! It's about decorating the Christmas tree with lights and toys.



Santa Claus had a tree (form a tree shape with your arms out)

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!

And on that tree, he had some horns (blows a horn)

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!

With a toot-toot here and a toot-toot there.

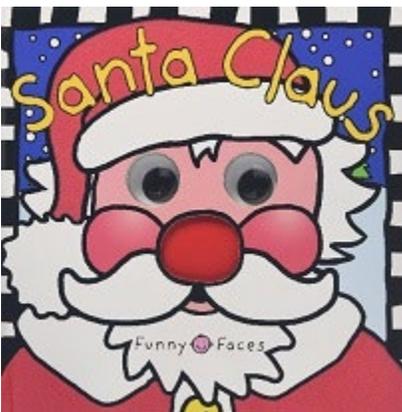
Here a toot! There a toot! Everywhere a toot-toot!

Santa Claus had a tree, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!

Alternative verses:

- lights - blink blink
- candy canes - lick lick
- drums - boom boom
- bells - ding dong
- gingerbread men - yum yum
- stars - twinkle twinkle

After the song with Ms. Natalya, let's listen to Ms. Karolina read a funny face book called "Santa Claus" by Roger Priddy - <https://youtu.be/KQIACkRZfOg>



Another big celebration is Hanukkah, which is the Jewish Festival of Lights. It is a celebration that honours the victory of those trying to keep their faith despite a powerful enemy. It is an 8-day holiday that will be celebrated starting sundown on November 28 through December 6 this year.



The menorah is a popular symbol associated with Hanukkah. After dinner during the holiday, families gather to light the menorah candles - a new one each night until all eight candles are lit. Let's make some menorah handprints!



Materials:

- 2 pieces of coloured paper (if you don't have paper, you can also use paint)
- yellow marker (or paint)
- pencil
- scissors
- glue

Instructions:

1. Trace your child's hands onto a piece of paper and cut the handprint out. If you are using paint, make two handprints (with thumbs overlapping) on the paper.
2. Glue handprints (with thumbs overlapping) on a lighter coloured paper.
3. Use a yellow marker/paint and draw flames over the fingers. You can also cut out the flames from yellow constructions paper and glue them to the top of the candles!

Delicious foods are often part of a happy celebration. During Hanukkah, families eat **loukoumades** (deep-fried puffs dipped in honey or sugar), **pancakes** and **latkes** (potato pancakes). These foods are fried in oil which symbolizes the little bit of oil that burned for 8 days.



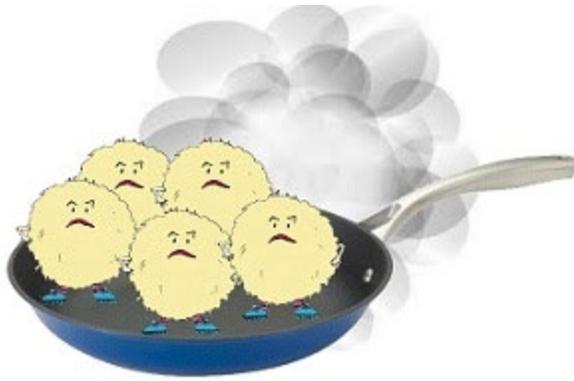
Here is an easy latke recipe you can try:

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of peeled and shredded potatoes
- 1 TBSP grated onions
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 2 TBSP flour
- 1.5 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup of oil for frying

Instructions:

1. Place the potatoes in a cheesecloth and wring it out, extracting as much moisture as possible.
2. In a medium bowl, stir potato, onion, eggs, flour and salt together.
3. In a large, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat, heat the oil until hot. Place large spoonful of the potato mixture into the oil, pressing down on them to form 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick patties.
4. Brown on one side and turn over to brown the other side.
5. Let drain on paper towels. Serve hot and enjoy!
6. Optional: Latkes can be topped with sour cream or apple sauce!

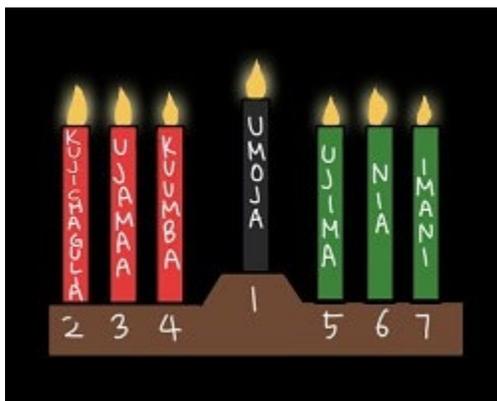


Five little latkes sizzlin' in a pan...

Now, let's join Ms. Cindy for a little rhyme called "Five Little Latkes"
- <https://youtu.be/zVOGhNEAgQM>

*Five little latkes sizzlin' in a pan.
One jumped out and said "catch me if you can!"
And it jumped and it ran all around the kitchen floor.
And when I turned around, it ran right out the door.
Repeat by counting down from 5 to 1
No little latkes sizzlin' in a pan.
None jumped out and said "catch me if you can!"
So I searched and I searched all around the kitchen floor...
Found a few potatoes and made a whole bunch more!*

One last holiday we will share today is Kwanzaa! The word *Kwanzaa* signifies the first fresh fruits of the harvest and this holiday celebrates togetherness. It starts on December 26 and ends on January 1 each year.



The seven principles of Kwanzaa are unity, self-determination, working together, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. Here is a simple craft you can do at home with your family that includes some of the seven principles above.

The Colours of Kwanzaa Paper Chain

(source: <https://www.brighthubeducation.com/preschool-crafts-activities/56850-celebrating-kwanzaa-with-easy-activities-in-preschool/>)



The colours of Kwanzaa are red, green and black so you'll need some construction papers in those colours. You'll also need some scissors, some markers and glue/tape/stapler.

Together as a family (unity), cut out strips of construction papers. You can write each person's name on a strip. You can decorate each strip as you like! Use stickers, paint or markers to make each strip unique to each family member (creativity and self-determination). When all the strips are done, work together to assemble a long chain (collective work) and put them in a place for all to see!

To wrap up, we will finish with a fun **Kinara Paper Towel**

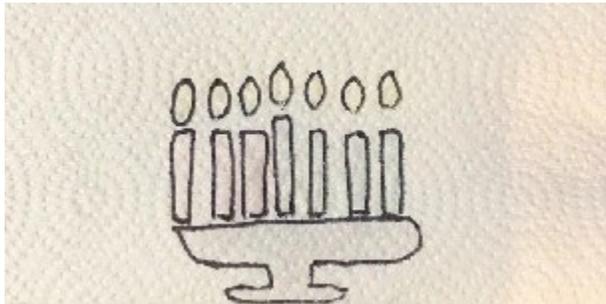
Art (source: <https://happytoddlerplaytime.com/kinara-paper-towel-surprise-art/>).



Materials: 2 sheets of paper towel, markers (blacks, red, green and brown), eye dropper or a small paintbrush

Instructions:

1. On one sheet (the bottom sheet), draw the seven candles of the Kinara - 3 red on one side, 1 black in the middle and 3 green on the other side. Draw the flames of the candles in yellow and colour the bottom of the Kinara brown.



2. Lay another paper towel on top of your first drawing and trace the outline of the Kinara with a permanent marker.
3. Put both sheets on a baking tray. Invite the children to drop water (with eye dropper or paintbrush)

We acknowledge that there are other holidays families might celebrate or that families might have different traditions than the ones listed here. We hope everyone has a healthy, happy and relaxing holiday break. See you in the new year!