

*Special Occasions:*

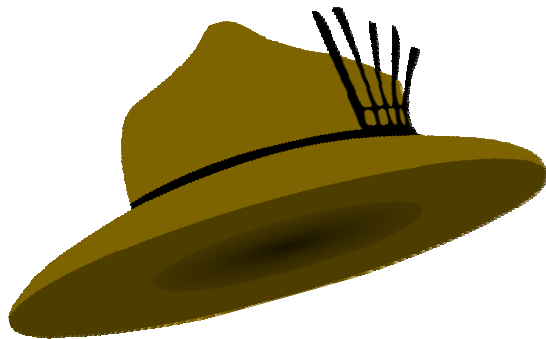
# *Christmas*

*Part 2*

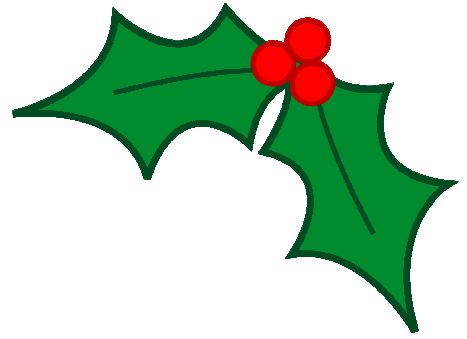


*Almost any biography will have its useful suggestions for making life a success, but none better or more unfailing than the biography of Christ.*

Sir Robert Baden-Powell



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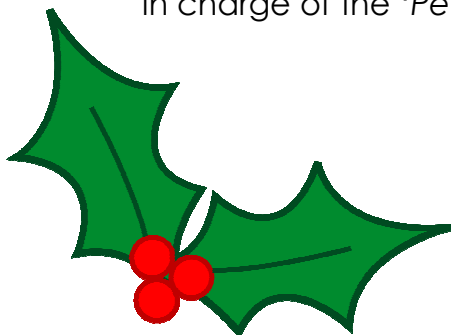
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# Littlest Christmas Star

## By Brandi Dougherty

One snowy afternoon, Max's teacher announced his class would put on a Christmas play.

Everyone was excited especially Max. Max couldn't wait to have a part. Even though he was the littlest student in his class, Max hoped he could be the star of the show!

"I will announce your roles tomorrow morning," the teacher said.

The next morning, Max's teacher called out the role each student would play. Max waited and squirmed and waited and squirmed.

"And finally, Max," the teacher said, "you will be the star." Max's eyes grew wide. He smiles a big, big smile. He really was the star of the show!

"You will be the star of Bethlehem. Your line will be 'Follow me!'"

Max sank down in his chair. "I only have one line?" he asked.

"Yes, Max, but it's a very important line," said his teacher.

Everyone in the class was jumping around and buzzing with excitement.

"I have ten lines!" said Sophie.

"I get to paint the set!" said Max's friend Henry.

But Max did not jump around. He was sad. He wanted to have a big part in the play, but instead he had the littlest one.

The next week at school, the class prepared for the show. There were costumes to make and lines to learn and songs to practice.

Max didn't know what to do. He had his one line memorized already. Maybe, Max decided, he could help out with the other parts, too. Max began to practice the part of Mary. He worked on making his voice as big and loud as he could.

"Hey, that's my part!" said Sophie.





Max wandered to where the set was being painted. He dabbed a brush in purple paint and began to paint a tree. He wanted the trees to stand out on stage.



"I'm the set painter," Henry told him. "And trees aren't purple anyway."



Max walked into the hall where the chorus was practicing their songs. He sang at the top of his lungs, even though he didn't know the words.



Ava pointed at Max. "You're not in the chorus!"



"Max, you're supposed to be practicing your part," his teacher interrupted.



"But I know it already," Max replied.



"I bet a little more practice wouldn't hurt," she said. "We need you to be the best Christmas star you can be!"



Finally, the night of the Christmas play arrived.



Max's family sat smiling in the audience, ready to see his performance. Max was not smiling.



"No one will even notice me," he told his teacher.



"Of course they will, Max," his teacher said. "You'll see."



Max waited for his turn. Then everything was quiet. It was time!



Max stepped forward. Music started in the background. He walked onto the stage.



A bright light shone down right on him and no one else. Max saw that everyone was watching him. He stood extra tall on his tiptoes. He took a deep breath.



"Follow me!" he said in his biggest voice.

The audience clapped and cheered!

Max's teacher was right.

He may have had a small part, but Max was a BIG star!





# Lolly Stick Snowman

## What you'll need:

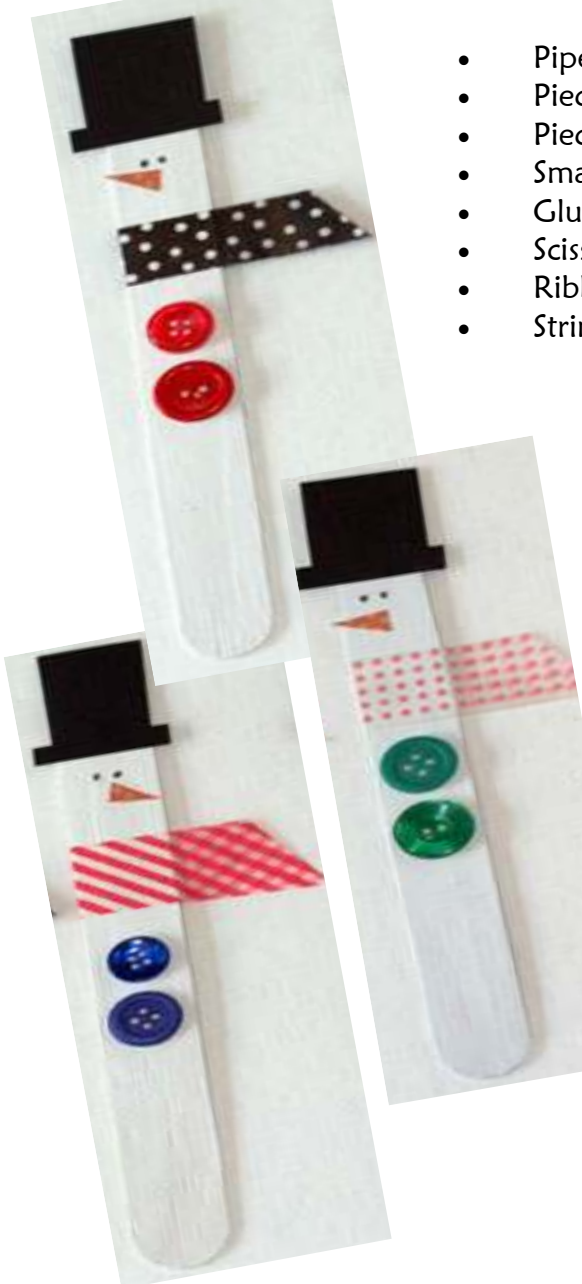
- Lolly sticks
- Buttons
- Patterned tape
- Orange cardboard
- Foam stickers
- Googly eyes



- Pipe cleaner strips
- Pieces of rope
- Pieces of material
- Small Pompoms
- Glue
- Scissors
- Ribbons
- String

## How to do it:

- Tons of imagination !!



# Olive The Other Reindeer

## By Vivian Walsh

Every day, Olive took her daily dog walk, winter, spring, summer or fall. Today was a winter's day. It was the holidays. There was music playing outdoors. People were singing along,

"All of the other reindeer..."

Olive was too shy to sing. "Hmmm-hmm-hm-hm-hmmm-hmmm-hmmm," she hummed.

Back at her dog house, Olive was wrapping presents and listening to the radio. She heard that same song again.

"All of the other reindeer..." went the song.

"Olive, the other reindeer..." Olive sang along.

"Olive... the Reindeer," said Olive. "I thought I was a dog. Hmmm, I must be a Reindeer!"

It was the time of year when all reindeer reported to the North Pole to help Santa Claus. Olive put down her scissors carefully, and marched out the door. She took one bus and then two buses. She got there just in time.

Santa was checking his list for the second time. Elves were busy helping the reindeer and loading the sleigh with presents for all of the good girls and boys. Everyone was getting ready to go. Olive took her place. Santa noticed that there was a little dog in the line-up. Santa knew a lot about dogs, for instance, they can't fly. But as it was time to go, he decided to give Olive a chance.

Comet, the biggest reindeer, used a piece of extra ribbon to make sure Olive was tied in safe and tight. Now they were ready to go. Olive was surprised it was so easy to fly. The other reindeer were very curious about the new helper. They looked at Olive so much – they weren't watching where they were going.

CRASH!

They flew smack into the top of a too tall tree!

"Oh dear," said Santa. "My sleigh is stuck in this tree. I'll have to cut it free."

Olive clung to the side of the tree. She tried to fly up to help Santa but she could not. She climbed up slowly and started chewing. Chewing sticks was something Olive could do well.

The reindeer got jump ropes and the elves got toy trains. Santa reached into his toy sack. There was just one present left. It was for Olive. It was her very own set of Reindeer Antlers. They fit perfectly. Then everyone went outside to play reindeer games.

"Thank you, Olive," said Santa Claus, as they got back on their way.



They had not travelled far when Olive's nose began to twitch. Olive smelled trouble. It was the smell of gumdrop candies as they fell from the sleigh.

DROP... DROP... DROP... Olive barked and Santa knew what to do. He steered the reindeer down and around so that all of the gumdrops fell, plop... plop... plop back in to the toy sack.

"We were very lucky to not lose a single gumdrop," thought Olive. Then she heard a strange sound. It was the musical note, EEEEEEEEE.

She spun around on her string to see the night sky filled with falling flutes. Olive had to howl louder than the wind instruments. This was not music to Santa's ears.

"First gumdrops and now flutes," thought Santa. "That tree must have torn a hole in my sled."

"Prepare for an Emergency Landing," Santa instructed. The sleigh landed in a snowy field full of flutes. Luckily, Olive was very good at fetching sticks. It is something dogs love to do.

Before Santa had finished patching the hole in the sleigh, Olive had returned each and every flute back to the sack.

Ho, ho, ho," said Santa, "we're ready to go."

They were running late. But after a while all the good children received their presents and Santa and his team headed home.

They were almost home when they got caught in the dreaded North Pole fog. The reindeer slowed down until it was only the breeze that moved them along. The fog was as thick as a pillow. It made everyone feel sleepy. Then Santa remembered something about dogs — they are expert smellers!

"Olive, I'd hate to be late for breakfast this year," he said. "Mrs. Claus has planned a parade of cookies. Mmmmm, you can almost smell them, can't you?" Olive could smell the cookies.

"Olive, won't you guide my sleigh this morning?" asked Santa. Olive moved to the front of the reindeer. Thanks to Olive's nose and Mrs. Claus's baking they made it all the way back to the North Pole.

All of the elves sang out a cheer: "HURRAY! HURRAY! Santa and the reindeer and the little doggy are back!"

Back at the North Pole, it was a glorious morning. After eating some good food, it was time to open presents.





# The Man Without A Name

## By Naomi Jones

*Gratitude is born in the hearts that take time  
to count up past mercies.  
- Charles E. Jefferson*

“Get out, get out! You’re on fire!”

Jerked awake by a voice I did not recognize, I sprang from my bed. Hurry! Hurry! Wake up! Wake up! were the only words I could think or say as I bolted through the apartment, rousing sleepy children and grandchildren.

The warning came in time for all of us to get out. On that cold Thanksgiving morning my husband, Bobby, two of our three grown children, my husband’s twin brother and his two grandchildren huddled outside and watched our apartment and restaurant burn to the ground. By dawn, only the brick fireplace remained standing.

But we were grateful to be alive. Who had awakened us? How could we ever thank that person?

The 124-room hotel next to our restaurant, also part of our business, was undamaged. The desk clerk, who had not seen the fire at first, told us that a man in a pickup truck stopped in the middle of the deserted highway, ran into the hotel lobby, told her to call the fire department and began banging on doors.

Who was the man? We asked everyone—the firemen, police and hotel guests.

No one had seen him except the desk clerk. We put an article in the newspaper asking for information. We could never fully thank someone for saving the lives of our family, but we wanted to express our gratitude in some way.

In the following years, we thanked God each Thanksgiving for this person, known only to him, who had done so much for us.

Twenty-five years went by. During those years, we rebuilt our apartment and restaurant, then sold them and the adjacent hotel.

We had become volunteers with group travelling throughout our state, other states and various countries, building churches, dormitories and camps.

On Christmas Day, 1994, my husband Bobby and I and our three children, their spouses and our nine grandchildren gathered at our oldest son's home.

Once again we remembered the man who had saved our lives and without whom none of our grandchildren would have ever been born. We prayed for God to bless him and asked that someday we could meet him.

A few days after Christmas, Bobby and I met Ray Horton, one of our group's lead carpenters, to pick up a tool trailer. He invited us into his home for coffee, and we began exchanging experiences and telling about places we had been and things we had done.

Ray told us about building houses in Portland, Texas, in 1969 and 1970. We shared that we used to own a restaurant and hotel there.

Ray turned to his wife. "Do you remember me telling you about a fire at that hotel?"

At the same instant Bobby and Ray realized that Ray was talking about our hotel. They stood up, facing each other, and started crying and hugging.

Then we all hugged and cried, knowing that we had found the person God had sent to save our lives. At that moment, we finally got to say thanks to the man who had remained nameless for twenty-five years.





# Lolly Stick Christmas Trees

## What you'll need:

- Lolly sticks
- Buttons
- Sequins
- Foam stickers
- Green paint
- Brown Paint
- Pompom
- Glue
- Scissors
- Ribbons
- String

## How to do it:

- Tons of imagination !!





# Not Quite Christmas

## By Dylan Sheldon

The streets were decked with tinsel and coloured lights. The shops were decorated with angels and reindeer and laughing elves. Santa Claus was everywhere. Belinda wanted to celebrate Christmas too.

"Don't be silly," said Belinda's mother. "We don't celebrate Christmas. It's not our holiday."

But Belinda wanted to give presents. She wanted to make cookies shaped like stars. She wanted to sing carols. She wanted a Christmas tree. A Christmas tree covered with bright balls and winking lights. A tree with an angel right at its top.

"But everybody celebrates Christmas," said Belinda.

"No they don't," said her mother. "Everyone has different holidays."

Belinda frowned. "Well, it *seems* like everyone celebrates Christmas."

"What about Uncle Frank?" asked Belinda's mother. "He doesn't celebrate Christmas. And my friend Sandra and her family? And your friend Emily across the street? And that nice doctor who took care of you when you were ill last summer? None of them celebrate Christmas either."

"Well everybody else does," said Belinda.

"Don't pay any attention," said Belinda's mother.

"It's hard not to," said Belinda. Belinda's mother looked thoughtful.

"We could just have a tree," said Belinda. "It wouldn't have to be a big tree."

"There are plenty of trees outside," said Belinda's mother. "Where they belong."

Belinda went to school. The class were making paper chains.

"Have you got your tree yet?" asked Amy.

Belinda wondered what she was going to do with her chain. "No," said Belinda, "not yet."

"I'm going to make my mother a special box to keep her pens in for Christmas," said David.

"I'm making my mother a vase," said Amy. "What are you making for your mother, Belinda?"

"I haven't decided," said Belinda.

"I'm asking Father Christmas to bring me a skateboard," said Amy. "What are you asking him to bring you?"



"I want a new bike," said David.

"What about you, Belinda?" asked Amy.

Belinda said, "I think my chain's too long."

Belinda and her mother and father were watching television. Three polar bears in Santa Claus hats were singing about Christmas.

"You're very quiet tonight, Belinda," said Belinda's father.

"Um," said Belinda.

"What's wrong?" asked her father.

"Nothing," said Belinda.

"What's that red and green thing in the wastepaper bin?" asked Belinda's mother.

"Nothing," said Belinda.

Belinda's mother lifted out Belinda's paper chain. "It doesn't look like nothing," she said.

"It's just something dumb we made at school."

Belinda's father said, "Oh."

Belinda's mother leaned over and whispered to him. "She's upset because we don't celebrate Christmas."

Belinda's father said, "Ah."

It was Christmas Eve. There was no one to play with. No one to watch a video with. Everybody was getting ready for Christmas. Except for Belinda. She sat looking out of the window at the falling snow.

"Are you going to sit there looking out of the window all day?" asked her mother.

"Maybe," said Belinda.

"Why don't you go out and play?" asked her mother.

"I don't feel like it," said Belinda.

"I know. Why don't you take out your sled?"

"I don't feel like it," said Belinda.

"Why don't you watch a video then?"

"I don't feel like it," said Belinda.

"I know," said Belinda's mother. "Why don't you help me make some biscuits?"

"Biscuits?" said Belinda.

"Yes," said Belinda's mother. "I have some red and green sugar we could sprinkle on top."

"You mean like Christmas biscuits?" asked Belinda. Belinda's mother smiled. "Not quite," she said.

Belinda's father came through the front door. "Something smells good," he called.

"It's *not-quite* Christmas biscuits," said Belinda. Then she saw what her father was carrying in his hands. It was a very small tree in a pot. "What's that?" asked Belinda.

"It's a bay tree," said Belinda's father. "It was on sale in the supermarket." He put it on the table in front of the window. "I thought it would look pretty with your paper chain on it."

"Oh, and you know what?" said Belinda's mother. "I think I have some bows that would look nice on it as well."

"And how about hanging a biscuit or two on it?" asked Belinda's father. "That would brighten it up."

Belinda looked at her mother. Then Belinda looked at her father. "You mean decorate it like a Christmas tree?" she asked.

"Well, not quite," said Belinda's father.

It was Christmas Day. Belinda's father was sitting in the living room, looking at the not-quite Christmas tree. "You know," he said, "it looks very pretty. Especially with your chain. It's a shame there isn't anyone else to see it."

"You know," said Belinda's mother, "that's almost exactly what I was thinking. We have all those delicious biscuits Belinda and I made and no one to help us eat them."

"I've an idea," said Belinda's father. "Why don't we invite some friends over to share them with us?"

"Because everybody's busy celebrating Christmas today," said Belinda glumly.

"Not everybody," said Belinda's mother. "There's Uncle Frank, and Sandra and her family, and Emily and her family, and that nice doctor who took care of you when you were ill last summer ..."

Belinda was having a wonderful time. The living room was full of people. They were all eating biscuits and drinking punch and playing games. The doctor who had taken care of Belinda when she was ill last summer was telling jokes. Everyone was laughing.

"And look what I found in the loft," said Belinda's mother hurrying into the room. "Fairy lights from Belinda's birthday!"

"Perfect!" said Belinda's father. "We can put them on the tree."

Everyone stood in a circle to watch. "Isn't that beautiful!" everyone cried when the lights went on.

"Oh, isn't this a lovely party," said Emily.

"It's the best party I've ever been to," said Sandra. "Me too," said the doctor.

"Why, it's almost like a Christmas party," smiled Uncle Frank.

"Oh no, Uncle Frank," said Belinda. "Not quite."



# Christmas Stocking

## *What you'll need:*

- Cardboard sheets or Felt
- Scissors
- Stapler and staples
- Glue
- Colours
- Coloured Markers
- Adhesive gold and silver sheets of paper
- String
- Decorations—tinsel, foamy stickers, ribbons, stick-on gems, etc

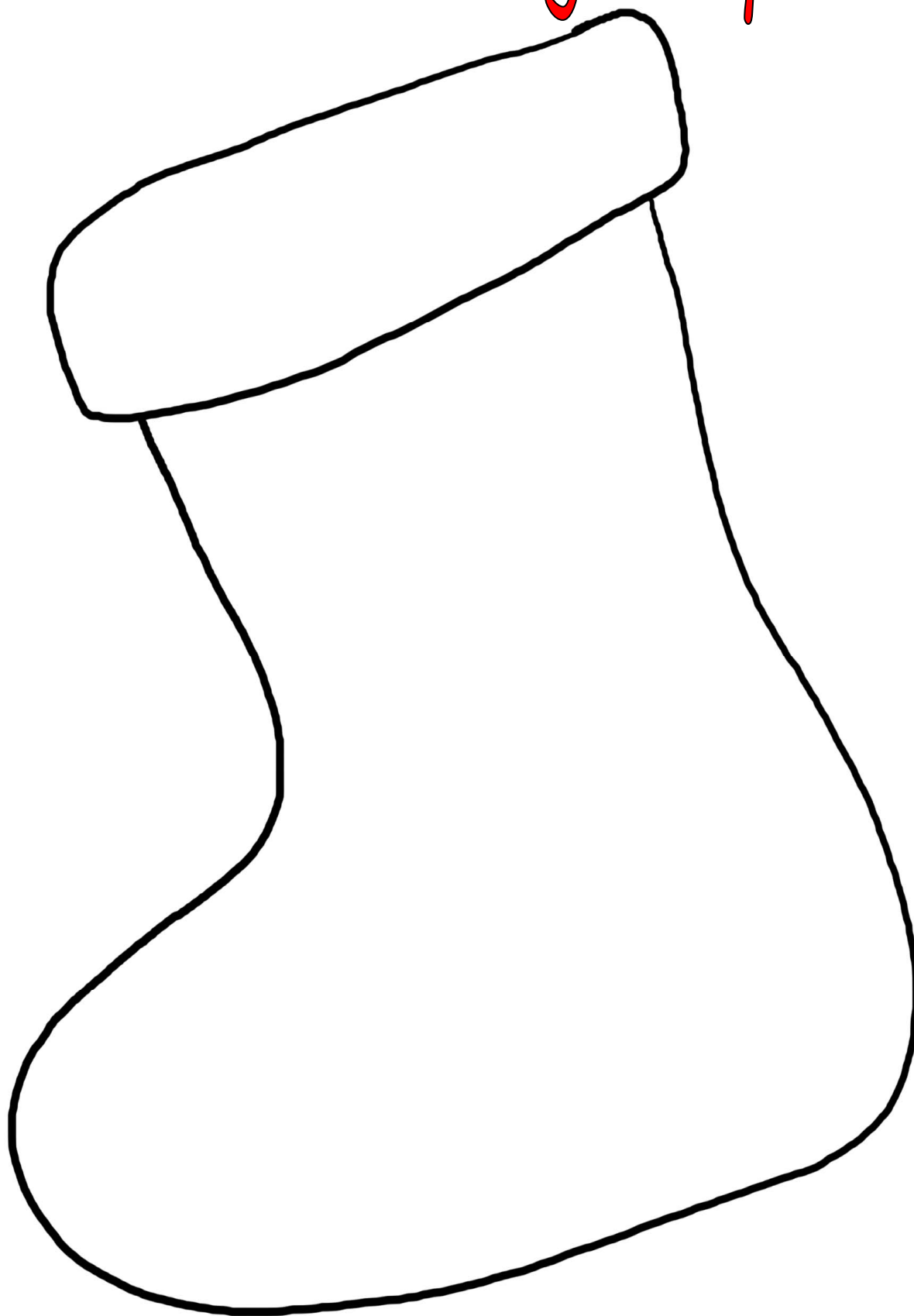
- Goodies

## *How to do it:*

- Using the template in the following page cut out two stockings.
- With the help of an adult staple the two stockings together.
- If using felt you may wish to place a piece of cardboard inside the stocking to make it sturdier.
- If using cardboard colour it in with bright colours.
- Cut out gold and silver stars from the adhesive sheets and stick them to the stockings for decoration.
- Decorate your stocking further using pieces of tinsel, Christmas foamy stickers, flowers, ribbons, etc.
- Attach a piece of string at the back of your stocking to be able to hang it.
- Fill your stocking with sweet goodies to share on Christmas day !!



# Christmas Stocking Template





# Jesus, Me and my Christmas Tree

## By Crystal Bowman

Look at my beautiful Christmas tree  
with dazzling lights that twinkle at me!  
I hung all the ornaments up and down  
and twisted the garland around and around.

My tree has angels with robes of white,  
for angels appeared on Christmas night  
to tell the shepherds of Jesus' birth:  
"Glory to the God and peace on earth."

The star on my tree, like the star in the sky  
points us to Jesus, our Lord from on high.  
As wise men traveled with gifts from afar,  
they found baby Jesus under the star.

The lights on my tree that shine in the light  
help me to see by making things bright.  
Just like Jesus who shows us the way  
to love one another, to trust and obey.

My Christmas tree story is simple but true,  
for all those who seek him, will find Jesus too.  
So as you gather around your tree,  
remember Christ came for you and me.

My tree tells a story of long, long ago  
from the star on the top to the presents below.  
When God in his mercy and wonderful love  
sent His Son Jesus from heaven above.

This is the manger Christ used for a bed,  
for he was born in a stable shed.  
When shepherds hurried to see where he lay,  
they found baby Jesus asleep on the hay.

These are the bells that ring loud and clear  
to spread the Good News so all can hear  
that Jesus was born, our Savior and King,  
He is the reason we worship and sing!

The pretty presents are fun to share,  
to show friends and family how much we care.  
They help us remember the blessings God sends,  
as day after day his love never ends.

# Recycled Paper Ornaments

## What you'll need:

- Scissors
- Stapler and staples
- Glue
- A circle to use as template
- Old Christmas Cards

## How to do it:



- Cut out circles
- Fold the sides of the circles as shown in the picture
- Glue or staple the sides together.
- If using glue attach paperclips to the glued sides so as to hold them in place until they dry.
- Attach a piece of string or ribbon
- Hang in the Christmas tree.

If you do not have any old Christmas cards you can recycle magazines or else you can use templates of pictures such as the ones in the following page.

