

Christmas Around the World

Christmas Around the World is a unit study designed to introduce students to how different cultures across the world celebrate the Christmas holiday! You can easily insert this unit wherever Christmas falls within your school year. It covers 9 different countries across the globe and includes fun hands-on activities, recipes, and cultural traditions!



Make ornaments for an International Christmas Tree!

(Print ornaments on pages 6-8 on cardstock and laminate. Hole punch, then tie with ribbon and hang flag ornaments on your tree!)

Although this unit is great on it's own, here are some more additional Recommended Christmas Resources that we love!

[Truth in Tinsel](#) eBook

[Homeschool Share Free Unit Lap Book](#)

[The Adventure of Christmas](#) by [Lisa Whelchel](#)

[The Jesse Tree](#) by Geraldine McCaughrean

[Say Merry Christmas Around The World](#)

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If you have any questions please feel free to email me directly at erica@confessionsofahomeschooler.com , I will do my best to respond promptly.

Christmas Around the World

⇒ Japan

It is estimated that less than 1% of Japan's population is Christian. Therefore December 25th is not a national holiday. Christmas is mostly a commercial event in Japan. Many people do not know the meaning of Christmas, but big corporations decorate lights buildings and trees. Many people place trees in their homes and have party's such as bonekai (forget-the-year-parties). Many Japanese use lanterns, fans, flowers and dolls to decorate their trees. They may also exchange gifts, go caroling. Hoteiosho is the Japanese Santa Claus, he walks around observing children, if they are being good, he gives them a toy from his sack. In addition to exchanging gifts, there is a custom of sending oseibo (the end of the year gifts) to one another. A common gift given is a red envelope containing lucky money as a gift for the Chinese New Year. They also put out bowls of oranges and tangerines which symbolize wealth and good fortune.

- "Merry Christmas" - **Shinnen Omedeto**
- Make [Japanese Temari](#) Christmas Ribbon Ornaments

⇒ China

The Chinese New Year is the foremost winter holiday in China. This is a time for feasting, family reunions and fun. Food plays a major role in Chinese New Year celebrations, where families hand out oranges, lychee nuts and other snacks which symbolize good fortune. Even though most Chinese are not Christians, you can still see signs of Christmas everywhere. Many people put up Christmas trees, decorated with paper chains, flowers, and paper lanterns. They also decorate houses with beautiful paper lanterns. Chinese children hang muslin stockings for Santa Claus whom they call "Dun Che Lao Ren (dwyinchuh-lau-oh-run) which means "Christmas Old Man".

- "Merry Christmas" - **Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan**
- Make a [Plum Blossom](#) Chinese New Year craft
- Try your hand at [Chinese Knot](#) Ornaments
- If you're feeling risky try the [Pan Chang Knot!](#)
- If you can't get enough...more knot choices by [Tying It All Together](#)

⇒ Russia

Russia celebrates Christmas on January 7th. After the 1917 revolution, Christmas was banned throughout Russia. It wasn't until 1992 that the holiday was openly observed. On the eve of Christmas it is traditional for all family members to gather and share a meal. Some families fast prior to Christmas Eve Service, then have their meal. Their traditional gift given is a Matryoshka doll. The outer dolls open to reveal smaller dolls nested inside. Russian families decorate their trees with candy, oranges, apples, dolls, and fabric.

- "Merry Christmas" - **Pozdrevlyayu s prazdnikom Rozhdestva is Novim Godom!**
- If you can go to the Nutcracker Ballet!
- Make [Russian Star Ornaments](#)

Christmas Around the World

⇒ Great Britain

The Christmas celebration in Great Britain is not unlike Western Christmas celebrations. People decorate all through the month of December, making puddings, baking cookies and decorating Christmas trees. Christmas pudding is an important tradition in British Christmas celebrations. According to custom, the pudding must be prepared by the 25th day after the Trinity. It is prepared with 13 ingredients which stands for Jesus and the twelve disciples. In honor of the journey the wise men made to see baby Jesus, each member of the family takes turns stirring the pudding from east to west with a spoon. Children in Great Britain open presents on Christmas Day after Father Christmas delivers gifts. Instead of saying "Merry Christmas" in England you are greeted with "Happy Christmas". The first Christmas cards were sent out in England and caroling is also a traditional way to celebrate the season.

- "Merry Christmas" - **Nadolig Llawen**
- Make your own festive [English Christmas Crackers!](#)

⇒ France

The celebration of Christmas in France varies by region, but most celebrate on December 25th. French children place their shoes in front of the fireplace in the hopes that *Père Noël* (aka *Papa Noël*) will fill them with gifts. There is also *Père Fouettard* who gives out spankings to bad children! In 1962 a law was passed that all letters written to Santa would be responded to with a postcard. Christmas trees in France are decorated with stars of many different colors and the crèche' (manger scene) is the center of the decorations. They celebrate the birth of Christ by singing carols and rejoicing! Foods like *Buche de Noel* and *Galette des Rois* are made this time of year. Say "Merry Christmas" - **Joyeux Noel**

- Make a [Semi-homemade Yule Log](#)
- Make a Homemade [Yule Log Part 1](#), [Yule Log Part 2](#)

⇒ Italy

Christmas in Italy is a festive time and is traditionally celebrated December 14—January 6 (Christmas Eve - Epiphany). The main day for gift giving is Epiphany when the three Wise Men gave Baby Jesus their gifts. In Italy presents are brought by *La Befana*, who arrives in the night to fill children's stockings. Christmas decorations and trees are becoming more popular, but the main focus of decorations is the Nativity Scene or *Creche*. The first manger scene originated in Italy and was made by St. Francis of Assisi to encourage the worship of Jesus. Traditionally a meatless or 7 fish dinner is eaten on Christmas Eve followed by a living nativity scene and midnight mass.

- "Merry Christmas" - **Buone Feste Natalizie**
- [Nativity Scene Craft](#) (Scroll down to "Stick Nativity Scene Craft for Kids")
- Make a [Nativity Ornament](#)
- Nativity [Silhouette Painting](#)

Christmas Around the World

⇒ Germany

The preparation for this special fest begins with the advent season. This time you will find a lot of advent calendars filled with chocolate or other goodies. Many families in Germany light one candle each Sunday during the advent season. The traditions of the Christmas tree originated in Germany. Martin Luther was the first person to bring an evergreen tree inside. He added lights to the tree to symbolize the stars over Bethlehem. Trees are now decorated with apples, candies, cookies and candles and an angel on top. There are many gift-bearers in Germany depending on which region you are in, but each one is a helper to Kirt Kindl or the Christ Child. Children set out goodies for him to eat as he delivers gifts to their homes.

- “Merry Christmas” - **Froehliche Weihnachten**
- Make German Paper [Star Part 1](#), [Star Part 2](#) Ornaments
- Make [Gingerbread Christmas Ornaments](#)

⇒ Spain

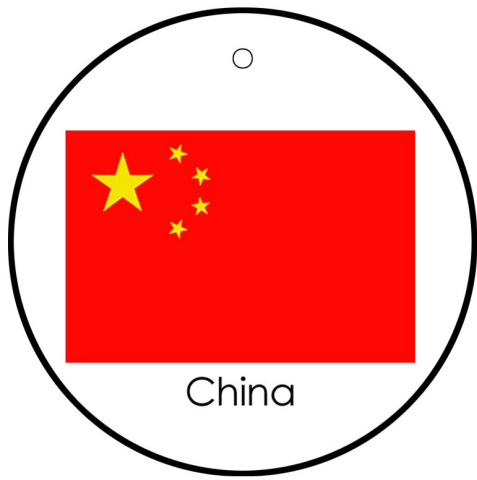
Felices Pascuas is “Merry Christmas” from Spain. Unlike many other places in Europe, Christmas lights go up in December when every town and city will decorate the streets. They often celebrate with meals of seafood and cold cuts of meat. Trays of Christmas cakes and sweets are also served, the most important sweets are Turrón, a nougat made of toasted sweet almonds. They also have paella (a rice and seafood dish) fruits, candy and cherimoyas (apple custard). Every town and most churches will have a nativity display, some are animated and illuminated and can cover massive areas. In Spain people fast all day on Christmas Eve, not eating until after midnight when bells chime loudly at midnight calling people to mass. After midnight mass, feasting can begin. The Three kings deliver gifts on the eve of January 5. The children leave out their shoes with hopes of finding them filled with candy and toys in the morning. On January 6th they have a big parade with floats tossing out candy to the children.

- “Merry Christmas” - **Felices Pascuas**
- More info on [Christmas in Spain](#)
- Make [Turrón](#), a traditional Spanish Sweet Treat

⇒ Mexico

Feliz Navidad is the greeting you'll hear in Mexico at Christmas time. In Mexico Christmas is a big deal! Many Mexican families will celebrate the holiday with family and have what are called Posadas (re-enactments of the voyage that Mary and Joseph took to seek shelter for the birth of Jesus). They will also celebrate with a *piñata* stuffed with candy! Pastorelas (a *pastor* is a shepherd) are plays which reenact the visitation of the angel to the shepherds to announce the birth of Christ. The plays recreate their journey to visit him. In Mexico Christmas begins around December 15 and doesn't end until after January 6 which is El Dia de los Reyes. On January 6, the children receive their gifts from the Three kings. Like in Spain they leave their shoes out hoping to find them filled with candy and toys in the morning. The poinsettia is the traditional Christmas plant and is native to Mexico.

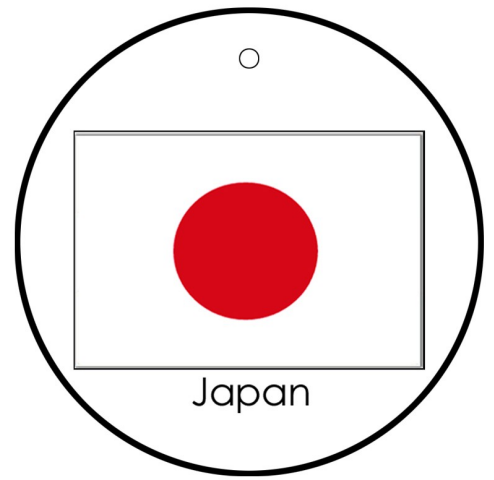
- “Merry Christmas” - **Feliz Navidad**
- Make [Paper Bag Luminaries](#) (Can use battery operated candles)
- Make [Tin Can Luminaries](#)



China



South Korea



Japan



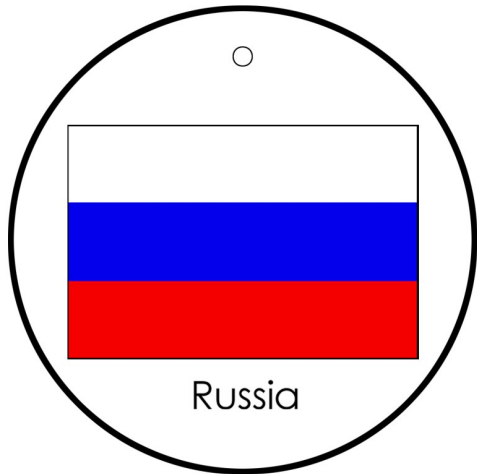
India



Israel



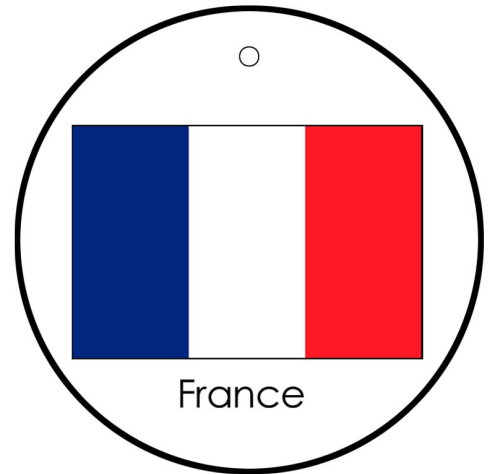
Thailand



Russia



United Kingdom



France



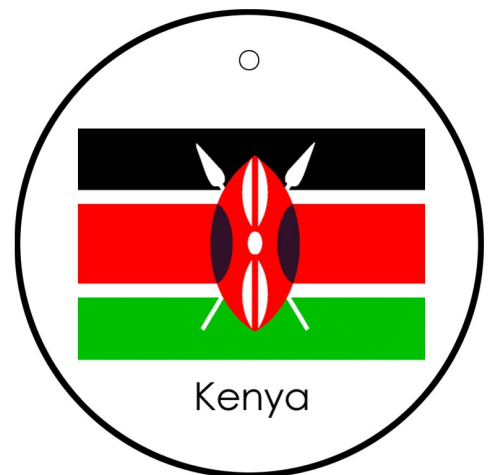
Italy

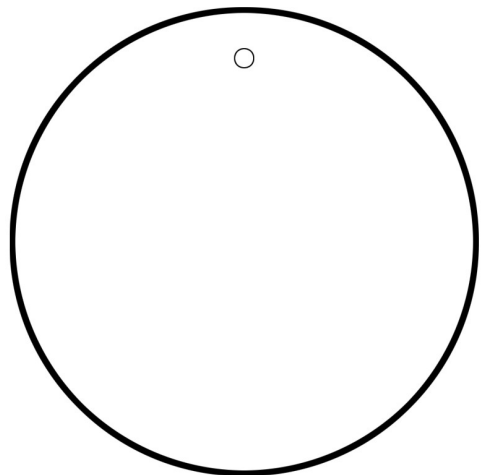
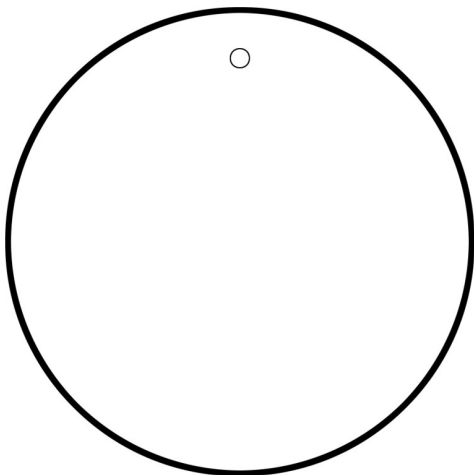
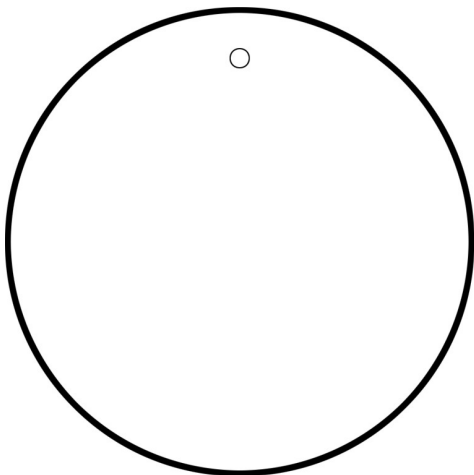
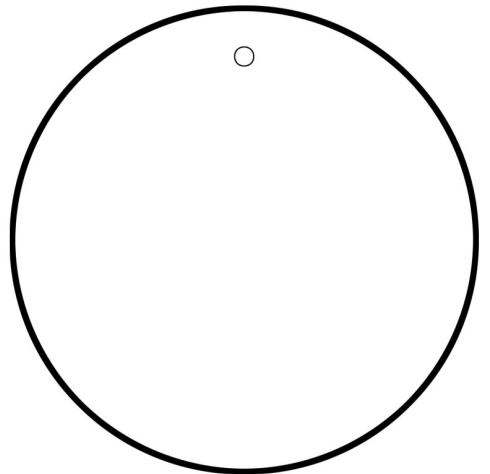
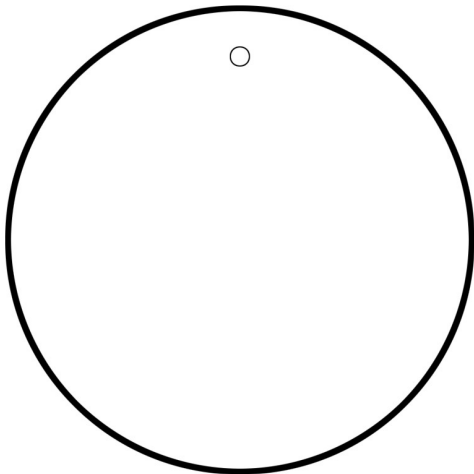
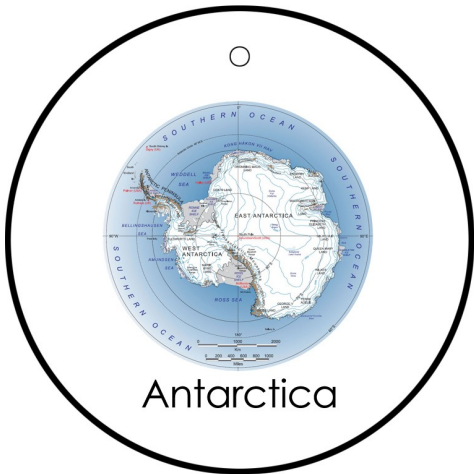
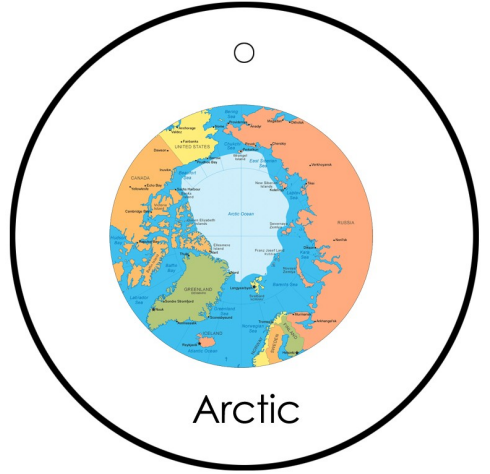


Greece



Germany





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www.wikipedia.com

Statistical data gathered from numerous public domain online reference materials,
every effort was made to be as accurate as possible.