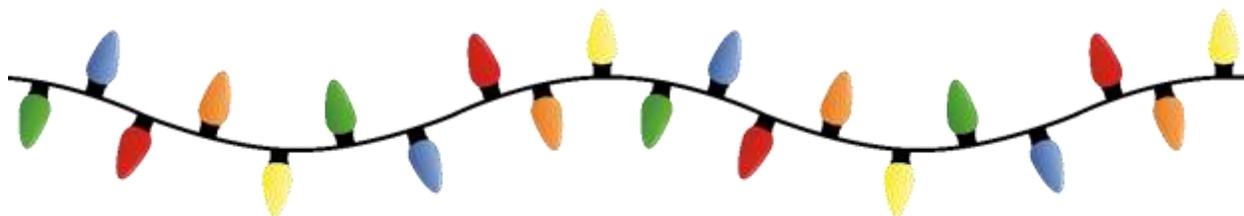


# Calming Christmas Crafts for Children



As a kid, my favourite holiday was Christmas and my favourite pass time was crafting (and still is). Imagine my delight when each year my Mom would pull out the craft case and we would make and paint Christmas ornaments. Macaroni angel, walnut mouse, felt Santa, clothes pin Rudolph, they all still hang on the tree and every time I see them a smile appears on my face and all the happy memories of Christmas crafting re-emerge.

Unbeknownst to me back then, I was using a widely effective therapeutic tool now popularized as “creative arts therapy”. Crafting is a therapeutic tool used for improving mental-emotional health and general wellness. It helps elevate mood, alleviate stress, and engage your brain in creating positive cognitive connections. For children, crafting develops focus and attention and hand-eye coordination skills. Studies have shown it to have a positive effect on self esteem and confidence, producing a sense of accomplishment and purpose. When you create you accomplish a task, boosting belief in your own ability to tackle a task presented to you. This builds not only confidence in children, but independency and crucial problem-solving skills. Also, crafting is an empowering social activity and bonding opportunity with peers and parents.

My gift for Christmas was crafting and gift-giving. Hence, my gift to you this Christmas is an e-book of different crafts for different ages that you can do with your kids (or yourself). Use the mood-boosting powers of crafting to evoke a little Christmas spirit this holiday.

With health and happiness,

Dr. Nicole (ND).

## Crafts for Babies – Toddlers

### **Break out the Finger Paints:**



Touch is the first sense fully developed in babies – it's how they discover the world. Young children are very tactile as they pick up and exam everything (those whom bring kids into a store experience this habit often!). Kid friendly finger paints are a craft necessity for any parent useful for a multitude of crafts.

Paints can be bought at a craft store or you can make your own using cornstarch, water and food dye (or natural tints such as turmeric, spinach, beets, etc.).

### The hand Wreath:



To the left is a simple example. For more colour and complexity, have children put their hands in different colour paints and paper. Cut the hands out and arrange in a circular wreath. You can create a family wreath and have all members include their hand print. For a sturdier wreath use cardboard for cut-out hands and glue gun on a foam craft circle

### The Picasso Wrapping paper:



For a constructive art project, kid-made wrapping paper is a must. You can use old wrapping paper or a brown paper roll. Kids can use glitter, ribbon, bows, glitter, finger-paints, stamps (or potato stamps). Then when you wrap gifts you can use and re-use the gift wrap.

### **Cray for Clay:**

Keeping with the tactile theme, clay is another great way to engage kids. You can use store bought clay or create your own (with flour, water and salt to make a dough). Play-dough is also an option but be cautious with children with gluten sensitivities or sensitive skin as it contains wheat (best to make your own with rice flour and water).

### **Baby's First Ornament:**



This is a great craft keep-sake to remain permanently on the tree (also make a great gift for family too). Using a coaster size of clay (you can even fit the clay over an old coaster or cut it out with a cookie cutter) make an imprint of the baby's hand. Poke a hole in the top to put through a ribbon. On the back write the name and birthdate of the child with permanent marker (or paint). Cherish for years to come.

### **Crafts for Toddlers – Tweens:**

#### **Make it rain paper crafts:**

Once kids reach the age they can be trusted with scissors and glue a whole world of paper crafting is open to them (if not, use precut shapes and double-sided tape or stickers). Paper is a valuable resource that is to be respected. Many of your paper for paper crafts can be recycled paper, magazines, newspaper, ribbons, wrapping paper, flyers, ads, etc. Cutting out shapes seems like a mundane task, but it produces a meditative-like state and helps with focus and precision.

## Holiday Pop-up Cards:



To make a simple holiday card I used card stock as the base, drew “minions” on card board, and found random old Christmas tags and foam stickers



I cut out shapes and words from the tags (which everyone has lying around) and pasted the cut-out minions on the card (you can draw them or use stickers) in a whimsical way. What results is a great card that was fun to make (see above).

## The pom-pom garland:



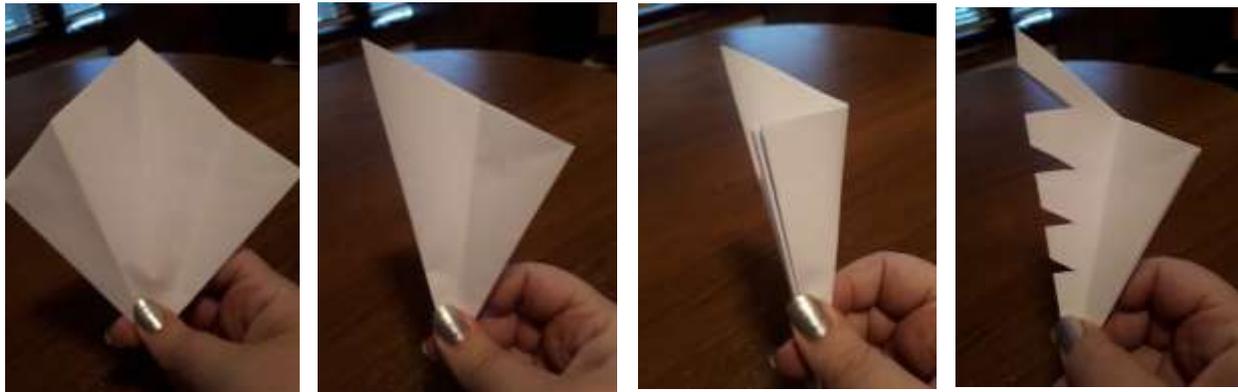
This is an easy and fun craft where you just need pompoms, string, and a craft needle (if the child is too young, let them hand you the pompoms). String the pompoms on the string like beads and hang on the tree. Popcorn also is a yummy alternative.

## **Crafts for Teens:**

### **Make it Mindful:**

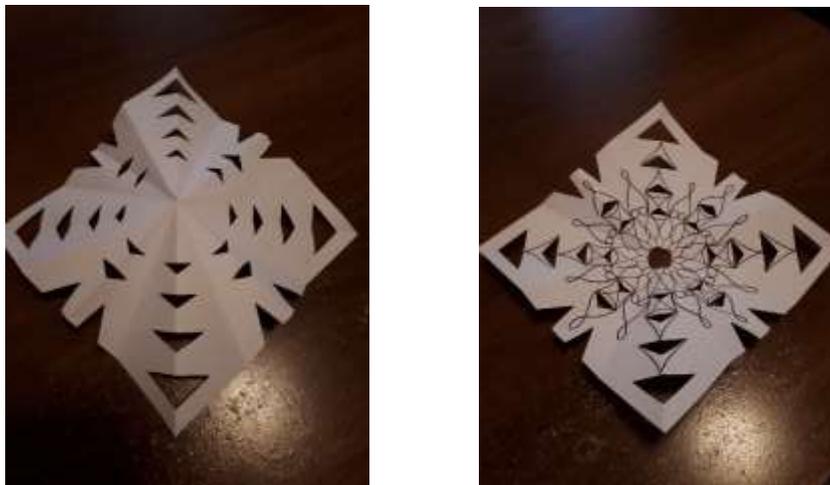
Teens tend to be the neglected craft group, yet crafts can be used as a great mindful and therapeutic tool for coping with stress and anxiety. Crafts provide an outlet to express emotions and a way to mentally escape from stressful situations. They may initially be resistant to crafting but they are grateful for the activity once involved (as it's also a great bonding exercise to craft together).

### **The Mandala Snowflake:**



We've all one time in our lives made the paper snowflake (you take square paper, fold in half, in fours, in eights, in sixteenths, then you cut-out strategic holes).

In the mandala version, you use the folds of the lines to create geometric shapes around the snowflake producing an eye pleasing and centred mandala. Colouring in is optional. Mandalas are a concentric circle of shapes and colours in a pattern and when focused on create a meditative effect.



### The Glitter Jar:



Arguable this one can be used with little kids as well, but glitter or “sensory” jars are a great calm down tool. To make, use dollar store jars or old oil bottles, add glitter/beads/sequins, glitter glue or paint, top up with water, put on lid and shake! If it’s for younger kids, make sure to glue the cap on.

### The Affirmation Ornament:



For this project you need leftover wrapping paper, pen, scissors, and glitter/sequins. Cut wrapping paper in strips, write down affirmations (“Love is all you need”, “I am beautiful”, etc.) and curl paper before putting in a clear ornament. Fill with affirmative strips and glitter. Now you have an ornament with positivity!

### The Gifting Jar:



This is a pleasing way to give a gift and a craft! Using a dollar store jar, fill with beautiful beads/crystals. Attach a ribbon to use as your stringing medium for creating a necklace or bracelet. The gifting jar can be full with ingredients to bake a recipe as well.