

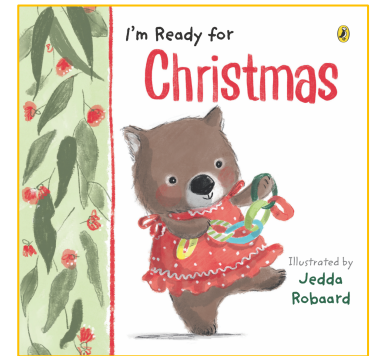
LEARNING TIME

I'm Ready for Christmas

by Jemma Robaard

Toddlers will relate to this appealing board book, which looks at the ways we get ready to celebrate Summer and Christmas in Australia. There's the joy of making traditional pudding, cricket matches at the park with friends, and the delight of family coming together. This is a sweet story about summer holidays in Australia and the magic of the festive season shared with family.

Interesting words: buzzing, cicadas, mixture, recipe, tinsel.



Key Message for Parents | The first five years matter and last a lifetime

Positive experiences in the first 5 years are essential for every young child's development and long-term outcomes. The brain is extra impressionable in early life and a remarkable 90% of brain growth happens before starting school at age 5.

Families can support healthy brain development by:

- Fostering a strong relationship with your child by being together, talking, reading, singing, playing and making.
- Using stories to help stimulate thinking
- Encouraging children to talk and share ideas
- Helping children to link their ideas with the ideas of others and ideas in books (making connections)
- Allowing your child to try new things

Australian Early Years Learning Framework | Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

We can support children to grow in confidence by reflecting on how:

- Children need to actively participate in their own learning
- Effective learning happens when children are able to activate their prior knowledge, and then transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another.
- Children have many ways of seeing the world and different ways of expressing their understandings.

Welcome

Ask carers to write nametags for themselves and their children.
Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

Welcome Song (or your preferred song)

Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher's paper for the adults to read and join in.

Good Morning

*Good morning to you
Good morning to you
Good morning everybody
and welcome to you!*

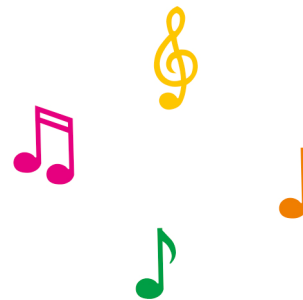


Song

Have the words displayed for families so they can join in. Maybe sing the song more than once during the session (or weekly) so that children and adults can develop confidence with the song if they don't already know it.

Aussie Jingle Bells

*Dashing through the bush
In a rusty Holden Ute
Kicking up the dust
Esky in the boot
Kelpie by my side
Singing Christmas songs
It's summertime and I am in
My singlet, shorts & thongs
OH, JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
JINGLE ALL THE WAY
CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA
ON A SCORCHING SUMMER'S DAY
JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
CHRISTMAS TIME IS BEAUT
OH WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE
IN A RUSTY HOLDEN UTE*



Before Reading

- Greet families and children warmly, ask them how they are, awaiting their responses and acknowledging them.
- Explain the format of the session, including the book you are reading, songs and activities. You may want to use a visual board to support diverse language and learning needs.
- Ask the children to sit where they can see the pictures, as you will need them to watch closely!
- Be patient with toddlers need to move, and create an interactive session to suit their needs.

During Reading

- Introduce the name of the book and the author/illustrator.
- This is a short story, decide if you want to engage your group in conversation. Ask them questions about what the little wombat is doing, have they made cookies before? What is something wonderful that has happened to them this year? Celebrate all the small things, engage parents here too – toddler years have many milestones, help your families notice and celebrate all the incredible changes their child has gone through.

After Reading

- Celebrate with a story time group party.
- Role play with play dough and create party cookies, share bon bons and have a dance party listening to Christmas carols.
- Musical statues is a fun game to play that allows toddlers to move their bodies, practice coordination and balance and to tune into auditory cues. Model how to listen to the music and when it stops – FREEZE!
- Make paper chains together to decorate the space or for families to take home. This is an engaging task that will involve both child and parent. Have a range of coloured paper strips available for children to choose their preferred colour. Give each parent a glue stick and model looping the paper strip and gluing the end together. Take a second paper strip and loop through the first, secure with glue and continue – how long will the paper chains become?

Extension Ideas

Drama/Role Play: Set up a dramatic play area for children, which has things such as Christmas placemats, napkins and tablecloths and other props such as food, plates, serving tools etc. The children may like to make artefacts to add to the setting such as paper- chains, bon-bons and cracker hats.

Fine Motor: Set up a small Christmas tree on a low table with non-breakable decorations and allow the children to decorate and redecorate over and over. The children may like to create their own decorations for the tree. Explain to the children that the tree is always changing and someone else might have a turn and change it after them.

Cooking: Christmas is a great time to invite children into the kitchen. Make a bake-free slice that they can give away as gifts. Make cookies or gingerbread. Allow children to decorate with icing and sprinkles. Biscuits can also be given as gifts or even used as Christmas tree decorations (or both!). Foods baked can be served to family and shared. Cooking uses maths (measuring), literacy (following a recipe, chatting), science (prediction, reactions, change, heat) and creativity (making something, presentation).

Song: Christmas Where the Gum Trees grow

Activities

Make your own wrapping paper

Involve children in wrapping real presents. Let them cut the paper to learn about size and area. Sometimes they may cut the paper too large or too small and this is fine – it's all part of the learning.

They will also explore shape and dimension as they wrap the gift. And finally, a sense of pride that they have achieved something useful and real. Follow children's lead as to how much they would like to be involved. They may like to wrap one present or ten! They may like a small job such as putting on the sticky tape.



Repeating Patterns

Introduce the idea of patterning and invite your child to share what they already know about patterns. Using a collection of buttons, beads, gumnuts or anything similar create repeating patterns. e.g. Gumnut, bead, gumnut, bead, gumnut, bead, gumnut, bead, gumnut, bead.

You could even use Christmas baubles or other tree decorations.

Or red, yellow, green, red, yellow, green, red, yellow, green, red, yellow, green bead, bead, button, bead, bead, button, bead, bead, button, bead, bead, button

Goodbye

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

For more stories to share, we recommend the following titles:

- **Little Bilby's Aussie Bush Christmas** by Yvonne Mes and Jody Pratt.
- **Slinky Malinki's Christmas 1 2 3** by Lynley Dodd
- **We're Going on a Sleigh Ride** by Martha Mumford and Cherie Zamazing.

An Activity Time for this book is available to download for FREE from our website. The Activity Time will extend the language found in the book and create hands on learning. This is a great resource to share with families, you are welcome to print and distribute as necessary.

Goodbye Song

Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child's name in the place of 'you' as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of (Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush) or your choice.

Goodbye

This is the way we say goodbye (wave) say goodbye, say goodbye

This is the way we say goodbye to all our library friends (or) (to our friend.....)!

