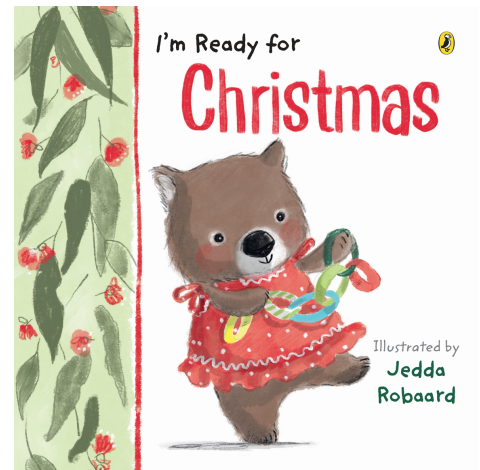


LEARNING TIME

I'm Ready for Christmas by Jemma Robaard

Preschoolers 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.



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

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) | 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 have the opportunity to develop confidence with the song if they don't already know it.

Aussie Aussie Christmas by Amber Lawrence

*At an Aussie Aussie Christmas
There's more prawns and potatoes
More flies and mosquitoes
Than presents under the tree
At an Aussie Aussie Christmas
There's more sunscreen than ice-cream
Kangaroos and BBQ's
The bush or by the beach*

*Aussie Aussie Christmas
Oi Oi Oi
Aussie Aussie Christmas
For every girl and boy
Aussie Aussie Christmas
Way too hot for snow*

*Santa's got board shorts on, zinc on his nose
And sand between his toes
Board shorts on, zinc on his nose
And sand between his toes*



*At an Aussie Aussie Christmas
There's Nona and there's Nanna
There's Grandpa and there's Opa
And everyone gets along
At an Aussie Aussie Christmas
There's water bombs and water fights
Cicadas and a cricket match
Under the big red gums*

*Aussie Aussie Christmas
Oi Oi Oi
Aussie Aussie...*

You can see and hear the song here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwmreF1VHI8>

Before Reading

Show the children the book and read the title “*I’m Ready For Christmas*”. Ask the children how they get ready for Christmas. Spend some time sharing ideas. Be aware that some families and children may not celebrate Christmas, or may celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or other celebrations. This is a good opportunity for children to share and discuss similarities and differences in a positive environment.

Then, draw the children’s attention back to the cover and ask how they think the main character might get ready for Christmas.

During Reading

Most children are going to want to talk about their experience of Christmas throughout this story so build in opportunities for them to share. Perhaps after reading each page ask children to put up their hand if the story reminds them of something they like to do. Other prompting questions might include *Have you ever done this at Christmas or another special time? What does your family do? – Is this like your family? Tell me about what you do.*

The character in the story makes decorations for their Christmas tree. Ask the children if they’ve ever made decorations for a Christmas tree and how they think they might be able to make decorations for a tree or for their house.

One page also mentions making presents. Ask the children what kinds of presents they might be able to make for their friends or people in their family. You might also like to talk about other gifts they could give people – like a cuddle or a flower.

After Reading

The last words in the book are 'Merry Christmas!' so it makes sense to sing *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* together.

(Movement: Sing Merry Christmas song a second time and the children may like to stand and copy the actions here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFbeVtPpYzQ>)

Drawing/Mark making – Refocus the children for a discussion. Draw on the children's reflections and beliefs about Christmas and celebrations – remind them of comments they made throughout the story and use the book's illustrations to extend the children's thinking about what they would draw to show 'their Christmas' or 'special celebrations'. Ask the children to draw their Christmas and title the drawing with their name. "Bronx's Christmas" "Samira's Christmas" or for those who enjoy other celebrations/prefer not to celebrate they may want to create their own picture of "My Special Day".

While the children are drawing, maybe play the audio song of **Island Christmas** by Christine Anu <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOhzrB6hZsQ>

*The colours of an island Christmas
Are as colourful as me and you
With summer in the air and there's hardly a breeze
Given me the sun and the surf and the sea
There's music and singing and dancing,
There's plenty of food and laughter
Everyone's presents are all under the tree,
greeting all my friends and family
It's that special time of the year, 365 days and we're finally here
Hey! Happy people, come together gather round now,
Its Christmas in the land of the dreamtime,
Southern cross twinkling up in the sky,
My island Christmas,
My island Christmas.
I fair dinkum love this place
The green and gold, red, black, and yellow
Are the colours of Christmas to me, in this here our sunburnt country
It's that special time of the year, 365 days and we're finally here
Hey...*



Regroup and ask the children to show and share their drawing if they feel comfortable doing so.

Extension Activities:

- **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

STEM FOCUS (for Toddler and Preschool)

Wrapping

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. Encourage your child to try something new but don't push.

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. eg. 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

Get ready to make paper chains!

Prepare the paper strips (Children may like to help with this). You may use Christmas colours or recycled Christmas wrap (provided it's not too thin). Choose three different types of paper so that the children can use it to make a pattern. Cut strips from the paper. Each strip of paper makes one link in the chain, so try to make each strip roughly the same size.

Invite children to make the first link by joining the far ends of one paper strip together into a ring using tape, glue, or staples. Once you have one ring, thread another strip of paper through the centre of the loop and join the ends to create a second link.

As you make paper chains together support your child to use the paper strips to make a repeating pattern with the links. eg. red, red, green, red, red, green, red, red, green, red, red, green.

Goodbye

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. Raising Literacy Australia suggests the following books to support learning in this area. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

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

- **The Long Way Home** by Emily Rodda and Danny Snell
- **Grug and his first Christmas** by Ted Prior
- **Just Right** by Bridie Black and Rosalind Beardshaw
- **Christmas Wombat** by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley

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.....)!

