



Inspiration Avenue

GUIDEBOOK

D.I.Y. *Decor*

Christmas Baubles

MATERIALS



METHOD

1. Wrap wool around the ball, securing the start and end with glue.
2. Decorate with buttons.
3. Use a pin to hold the hanging ribbon in place.

Felt figures

GINGERBREAD MEN AND ROBINS

MATERIALS

- Felt
- Scissors
- White, red & black wool scraps
- Sharp end tapestry/wool needle
- Buttons
- Ribbon
- Needle and thread
- Soft toy stuffing



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create a template for your gingerbread man or robin. Go online and print one out or trace around a cookie cutter.
2. Use the template to cut the felt. For the robin you will need to cut an oval shape for the red breast.
3. Cut a piece of ribbon for hanging the decoration with. Fold in two and place on top of one piece of felt. Sew in place.
4. For the Robin and the Gingerbread man, sew some black wool into the felt for eyes. You could use googly eyes if you have them.
5. For the robin, sew the red breast in place using running stitch and thread. For the gingerbread man, sew the buttons in place. Using red wool, make a mouth on the gingerbread man using running stitch.
6. Place the two sides together, making sure the ribbon is on the inside.
7. Using blanket stitch, join the two pieces together, stopping at various points to stuff it. Make sure you leave a big enough gap to do the final stuffing and then finish off the stitching. Try to finish in a place that's discreet- near the ribbon at the top or between the legs for the gingerbread man. Start to do a stitch but pull the wool through to make a knot.

Paper Wreath

MATERIALS

- Cardboard - cereal box will do
- Tissue paper
- Ribbon or string to hang it with
- Paper - can use wrapping paper, coloured paper, scrapbooking paper
- Glue gun
- Pritt Stick
- You can jazz it up with glitter or buttons etc. to your taste



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use a dinner plate to draw around on your cardboard. Draw around a side plate or saucer in the centre.
2. Cut out it out to make a wreath shape.
3. Wrap the tissue paper (or other paper if you prefer) around the wreath to hide the cardboard. Tie some ribbon or string around it so you can hang it up.
4. Cut circles out of your paper. You can do different sizes or keep them all the same size. Use something to draw around - e.g. egg cup, jam jar lid.
5. Place the circle over your clenched hand and poke the centre down to create a flower shape. Scrunch it around the sides to make it stay in that shape.
6. Place on the wreath and using a glue gun, glue it in place. Keep going until your wreath is covered. You can create lots of different looks depending on how tight you glue the circles together.

Easy Knit Wreath

MATERIALS

- 1 pair 6mm knitting needles
- 1 ball King Cole tinsel chunky wool*
- 1 Polystyrene circle*

* Available from *The Wool Shop (Bangor & Newtownards)*



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cast on 20 stitches and knit until long enough to fit round polystyrene ring.
2. Cast off.
3. Using some left over wool, sew the knitting together on inside of ring.
4. Add ribbon/ Christmas decoration to suit your taste.

Christmas Table Arrangement



MATERIALS

- Small oasis saucer
- ¼ block wet oasis
- Tape to secure (floristry tape works best)
- Candle (or 2)
- Greenery - e.g. pine, holly, ivy, skimmia or any other greenery from your garden (or a friend's garden!)
- Gold or silver spray paint
- A few flowers of your choice e.g. roses, carnations or artificial if you prefer
- You can also add a few pine cones, seed heads, berries, baubles or ribbons to your taste.

METHOD

1. Lightly spray greenery with paint and allow to dry.
2. Tape oasis in saucer.
3. Tape a few cocktail sticks around base of candle to create spikes and place in centre of oasis.
4. Begin with greenery and add around saucer. Then begin to build up and cover oasis with the various greenery.
5. Place flowers in arrangement. To add baubles, cones, berries etc., wrap some thin wire around them and stick them into the oasis.
6. When choosing materials try to think "outside the box" re colours and accessories and you will soon have your own individual table decorations.



Wool & Felt Wreath

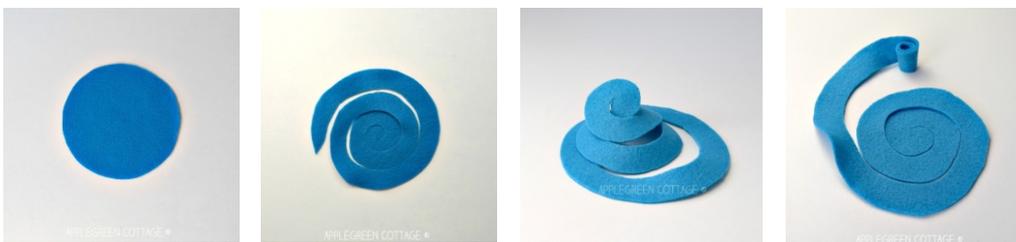


MATERIALS

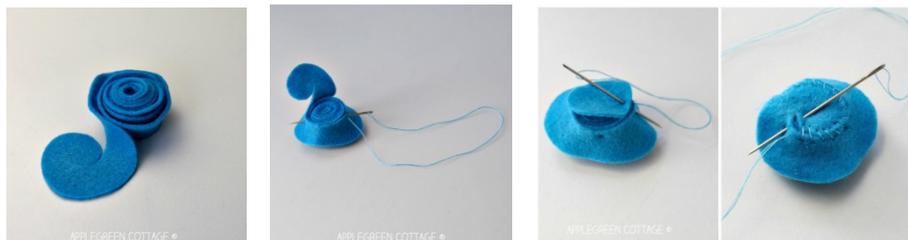
- Glue gun
- Wool
- Sellotape
- Felt
- Ribbon for hanging
- Pipe lagging (from a plumbing supplies/DIY shop. Used to wrap around pipes to keep it from freezing) or a polystyrene wreath from a craft shop (more expensive)

METHOD

1. If using the pipe lagging, cut a length and make it into a circle using sellotape.
2. Wrap the circle in wool. You will need to overlap and build it up as much as you like. When finished, tie a knot and glue the end to the back of the wreath so it is hidden. Tie some ribbon on so you can hang it.
3. To make the felt flowers, cut out a circle. Then cut a spiral. When you come to the centre, there will be a circle-like end. Leave it just like that. Grab the outer end and start rolling it up. Have the glue gun ready, or you can use a needle and thread (from www.applegreencottage.com).



4. When you've used up the whole strip, there will only be a small circle-like portion hanging off the roll of felt. Leave it like that. It's time to make a few stitches through the back of the flower to ensure it doesn't fall apart. Or cover the bottom of it in glue. In the end, attach the small circle. It will cover the back of the flower, giving it a nice finish.



There are lots of ways to make felt flowers. Have a look on Pinterest.com or Google it. I think this is the simplest but if you are a bit more adventurous, try some different ones.

Cheat's Wreath

- Buy a wicker wreath.
- Choose some Christmassy things and tie them on to the wreath with ribbon or thin floristry wire.
- Lidl currently have small lights on copper wire for £2.49 that you could wrap around.
- To hide the battery pack you could write a message on a gift tag or nice card and attach this to the wreath.



Bauble Wreath

MATERIALS

Baubles (approximately 60)
Wire coat hanger
Wire cutters
Hot glue gun or a drill
Ribbon

The baubles need to be of at least two different sizes (smaller ones help to fill gaps).

METHOD

1. Take your wire hanger and untwist the ends. Bend the coat hanger into a big circle.

2. It can be tempting to thread the baubles straight onto the hanger, but previous experience tells me you will just cause problems for yourself by cutting corners!

There are two things that need to be done first.



However firmly the cap seems to be attached to the top of the bauble it is best to remove them and then hot glue them back on, to make the tops even more secure. In the past I've given the cap a little tug and decided it was fine, only for the balls to start pinging off once the wreath is done. If you don't have a hot glue gun you can remove the metal cap altogether and drill small holes through the top of the bauble instead (the raised bit where the cap attaches). This is my preferred method.

The second thing you need to do before you start threading the baubles onto the wire is arrange the baubles into some sort of order. Believe me, this saves time in the long run because you can end up with parts of the wreath with uneven patches of colour or big/small baubles if you don't put in the proper planning. It is such a pain to have to slide 60 baubles off a wire and start again.

3. Now you can create your wreath! If you've put in the proper ground work this part is quick and easy. Once you have slid all of the baubles onto the wreath wrap the ends of the wire together to secure the hanger into a loop, and trim the ends with your wire cutters if necessary. Tie a big ribbon around the top of the wreath to hide the join and so that you can hang it up:

From <http://www.atypicalenglishhome.com/2012/12/how-to-make-bauble-wreath.html>

Fresh Wreath

MATERIALS

- 1 wire wreath ring
- Green twine or thin floristry wire
- Fir or Christmas tree branches
- For decoration:
Holly, Candy Canes, Berries, Baubles, Bows

METHOD

1. Using green twine or thin floristry wire, attach fir branches or Christmas tree branches onto the ring.
2. Build up the layers.
3. Attach holly, candy canes, berries, baubles, bows on top to your taste.
4. Tie a ribbon at the top for hanging.

If that seems like hard work, do what I did and buy a plain wreath from a supermarket or garden centre, and customise it!



Seasonal *Sundries*

White Chocolate & Cranberry Fudge



INGREDIENTS

- 410g (13 1/2oz) tin evaporated milk
- 500g (1lb) caster sugar
- 150g (5oz) butter
- 2tsp vanilla extract
- 100g (3 1/2oz) dried sweetened cranberries
- 300g (10oz) white chocolate, chopped

METHOD

1. Lightly butter an 18cm square cake tin or line with foil. Put the evaporated milk, sugar and butter into a heavy-based saucepan. Heat slowly, stirring all the time, until the sugar has dissolved and the butter melted.
2. Bring to the boil and boil stirring for 20 minutes. The mixture should become thicker, and a glossy brown colour. If you have a sugar thermometer, allow the mixture to reach 'Soft Ball' stage (115°C). If you don't have a thermometer, cook until the mixture is golden brown and thickened and then drop a little into a glass of cold water.
3. You should be able to pick the cooled drop up and roll it between thumb and forefinger. If still too liquid, cook for another five minutes and try again. Allow the mixture to continue to boil for another five to ten minutes, stirring all the time. Then take off the heat and allow the fudge to cool for five minutes.
4. Using an electric hand-held mixer, beat the mixture in the pan until it starts to thicken, loses its gloss and changes texture from smooth to slightly gritty. Add the vanilla extract, then add the cranberries and white chocolate and stir in. Pour into the prepared tin and leave to set.
5. Once set, cut the fudge into small squares. Use a piece of card to make a festive box for the fudge. Line with nonstick baking paper, decorate with ribbon, and attach a message.

Peppermint Creams

INGREDIENTS

- 225g icing sugar, sifted
- 115g Carnation Condensed Milk
- Natural peppermint extract, to taste
- Edible glitter
- 55g plain chocolate, melted



METHOD

1. Gradually mix the icing sugar into the condensed milk. Add the peppermint extract and knead until smooth.
2. Dust a clean surface with icing sugar and roll out the mixture to 5mm (¼") thickness. Cut into rounds with a small cutter. Leave in a cool place to dry (about 2-3 hours).
3. Drizzle the peppermint creams with the melted chocolate or dip to coat one half. Allow to set. Keep refrigerated in an airtight container and use within 3 weeks.
4. To give as a gift put in a paper bag or in an origami box – instructions found here: <http://www.redtedart.com/make-paper-box-tutorial/>

Snowballs

INGREDIENTS

- 2oz of Margarine
- 120 Grams of Condensed Milk
- 12 Digestive Biscuits crushed
- 2 Tablespoons of Drinking Chocolate



METHOD

1. Melt margarine in pan with condensed milk.
2. Add digestives and drinking chocolate.
3. Cover standard size marshmallow in mixture.
4. Roll in desiccated coconut and cool.

Cheats Chocolate Truffles

Makes: 40-50 truffles | Cost: around £3!

INGREDIENTS

- 16 digestive biscuits
- 6 heaped tablespoons of drinking chocolate (plus extra for dusting. You can use coconut or chocolate sprinkles in a plastic bag and drop in 2-3 at a time and roll around to cover)
- 1 can (395g) of condensed milk

METHOD

1. Place your digestive biscuits in a large bowl or a plastic bag, and bash them up with a rolling pin (or something similar) until the digestives are small powdery crumbs.
2. Add the 6 tablespoons of chocolate drinking powder and mix.
3. Add the entire can of condensed milk and stir, until thoroughly combined. Chill in the fridge for around 20-30 minutes.
4. Put a couple more tablespoons of drinking chocolate powder in a bowl.
5. Once the mixture has chilled, scoop a teaspoon of the mixture and roll in your palms until it takes the shape of a small ball. Roll the truffle in the drinking chocolate powder (coconut/sprinkles see aboveboard) and set aside.
6. Repeat!
7. These truffles are best kept in the fridge in an air-tight container until serving. If they're a gift, wait until the day you're giving them away to package them.



Easy Butterscotch Sauce

From Smitten Kitchen

Yield: About 2/3 to 3/4 cup sauce



INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons, 2 ounces or 1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup (about 109 grams) packed dark or light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (118 ml) double cream
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 grams) flaky sea salt (or 1/4 teaspoon regular salt), plus more to taste
- 1 1/2 teaspoons (8 ml) vanilla extract, plus more to taste.

METHOD

1. Melt butter in a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add the sugar, cream and salt and whisk until well blended.
3. Bring to a very gentle boil and cook for about five minutes, whisking occasionally.
4. Remove from heat and add one teaspoon of the vanilla extract, stirring to combine.
5. Dip a spoon in the sauce and carefully taste the sauce (without burning your tongue!) to see if you want to add additional pinches or salt or splashes of vanilla. Tweak it to your taste, whisking well after each addition.
6. Serve cold or warm over vanilla ice cream, roasted pears or apples or cake.

The sauce will thicken as it cools. It can be refrigerated in an airtight container for at least 2 weeks and reheated in a microwave or small saucepan.

Best Banana Muffins

Yields: Approx 24 muffins or 3 banana bread loaves

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup butter (220g)
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk
(or add 1 teaspoon of lemon juice to regular milk)
- 2 cups pureed bananas
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 cups plain flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1.5 teaspoons salt
- 3 cups caster sugar
- 1.5 cups toasted pecans (optional)



METHOD

1. Mix sugar and butter together
2. Add eggs and mix again with mixer until blended
3. Add buttermilk, bananas and vanilla and mix.
4. Combine all the dry ingredients and mix gently into wet mixture.
5. Fold in toasted pecans and pour batter into loaf tins or muffin cases.
6. Bake at 180 degrees Celcius for approx. 45 minutes for loaf tin or 22-23 minutes for muffins.

Suitable for freezing, individually wrap in cling film and microwave for a minute when required!

Vanilla Fudge

INGREDIENTS

- 4oz butter
- 2lbs sugar
- 1 large can evaporated milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

METHOD

1. Put first three ingredients in a saucepan and melt slowly
2. Bring to the boil stirring continuously
3. Boil for 25-30 minutes or until soft ball stage is reached
4. Remove from heat and beat in vanilla. Beat well for 5-10 minutes
5. Pour into tin and leave to cool overnight



Maple Cinnamon Granola

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cranberry juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 3 cups rolled porridge oats (not instant)
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or whole almonds
- 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 cup dried cranberries

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius.
2. Mix the oats, seeds and nuts and salt together in a bowl.
3. Spread over a lightly oiled baking tray.
4. In a small saucepan, combine the oil, maple syrup, brown sugar, cranberry juice, and cinnamon over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the sugar has dissolved.
5. Pour the maple mixture over the oat mixture and stir until combined.
6. Bake for 20 minutes at 180 then stir and reduce to 140 degrees Celsius for another 15 minutes or until golden brown.
7. Remove the tray from the oven.
8. Stir in the cranberries.
9. Cool completely.
10. Store airtight in a plastic container for up to 1 week or package in sealed Kraft bags or jars and give as gifts.



Cupcakes

INGREDIENTS

For the cupcakes:

- 200g caster sugar
- 200g self-raising flour
- 200g butter at room temperature
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract



For the buttercream: -

- 110g butter
- 500g Icing sugar
- Splash of milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Food colouring (optional)

METHOD

Cupcakes:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180c
2. Beat together the sugar and butter until the butter is a lighter colour and the mixture is a creamy texture
3. Add 1 egg to the mixture and sprinkle a spoon of flour over the top. Whisk the egg in to the mixture until fully incorporated and repeat with the other three eggs.
4. Mix in the vanilla extract
5. Lightly fold in the flour with a metal spoon until it is all incorporated
6. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases and fill each with the cake batter until 3/4 full
7. Cook for 18-20 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool on a rack before icing

Buttercream:

1. Whisk the butter until soft
2. Fold in half of the icing sugar with a spoon
3. Pour in the rest of the icing sugar, vanilla extract and the milk and stir until just combined
4. Whisk the mixture with an electric whisk for 8-10 minutes until the buttercream is soft and no longer has a grainy texture
5. Pipe or spread the mixture onto the cakes and decorate as desired!

** To make your cupcakes into Christmas trees, add green food colouring to your icing after step 4 and add red/white sprinkles when the icing has been piped on.

PRETTY & PURPOSEFUL

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Festive Family *Fun*

Christingle

MATERIALS

- 1 orange
- 1 small candle (a birthday cake candle will be fine)
- Enough red ribbon to go round an orange with a small overlap (or a bit more for a bow like ours)
- 4 cocktail sticks
- A few sweets or some dried fruit such as raisins or sultanas
- Small piece of foil measuring about 4cm by 4cm
- Pencil to make a hole in the orange



METHOD

1. Carefully push the pencil into the top of the orange to make a small hole.
2. Put about 3 sweets or dried fruit onto the cocktail sticks.
3. Push the cocktail sticks into the orange in four different directions slightly above the fattest part of the orange and pointing slightly upwards.
4. Take the foil and gently wrap it around the candle at the bottom before firmly wedging the candle into the hole that you had made in the orange. Once in position mould the foil into a shallow cup shape to catch drips of candle wax.
5. Tie the ribbon round the orange and fasten with a bow, or just overlap the two ends, and secure with a pin to keep it in place.
6. If you want to light the candle make sure a grown-up is there to help you as lighting candles can be dangerous.

MEANING

The orange represents the world.

The candle reminds us of Jesus who is the light of the world.

The red ribbon goes all round the 'world' and being the colour of blood, reminds us that Jesus died.

The four cocktail sticks represent the four corners of the world.

The sweets (or sometimes dried fruit) remind Us of God's gifts to the world including kindness and love.

The foil is only there to catch waxy drips from the candle!

Bible Society Advent Challenge

#adventchallenge

The Bible Society will email you three daily challenges every day throughout Advent and you choose the one that best suits you. The challenges are simple, practical, Bible-based and life-affirming. So you can show your community what true hope, love, joy and peace look like, even in the mad dash towards Christmas.

www.adventchallenge.org.uk



Foodbank Christmas Hamper Collection



Collection Sunday 4th December 2016 at Hamilton Road Baptist Church during services at 11am and 6:30pm.

Items to donate include:

- Boxes of Chocolates/Sweets
- Christmas Puddings (single person and family size)
- Mince Pies
- Christmas Cakes/Chocolate Logs
- Tins or Boxes of Biscuits/Shortbread
- Bottles of Shloer or similar
- Bottles of Coke, Lemonade, Jars of Chutney/Relish
- Tins of Salmon
- Tins of Ham

You can also donate items to the local Foodbank at Sainsbury's.

Christmas Children's Crafts

Lollipop Star

Need: 6 lollipop sticks, paint, glitter, glue, ribbon

Glue 3 sticks together at ends to make a triangle. Repeat this and glue the two triangles together to make a star shape. Paint and sprinkle with glitter. Allow to dry and attach ribbon for hanging.



Lollipop Stable

Need: 5 lollipop sticks, glue, card, glitter, picture of nativity scene

Glue the 5 sticks together in the shape of a stable outline. Glue a picture of a nativity scene onto the stable outline (this may be drawn by child or cut out from an old Christmas card). Make a small star out of card, sprinkle with glitter and attach to the top of the stable. Stick a small piece of card on the back to make the stable stand up.



Waste Not Snowman

Need: Empty 500ml clear plastic bottle, shredded white paper or white cotton wool, buttons, ribbon, 2 lollipop sticks or pipe cleaners, kitchen roll tube, black paint

Fill the bottle with paper or cotton wool. Cut a slit in each side and insert lollipop sticks or pipe cleaners for arms. Glue on googly eyes and an orange paper carrot. Wrap a piece of ribbon round for scarf and glue buttons down the front. Paint a piece of empty kitchen roll tube black for hat. Enjoy your new friend!



Glitter Bells

Need: 3 sections of cardboard egg carton, paint, glitter, ribbon

Cut out three pieces of cardboard egg carton to make the bells. Paint each bell a different colour and sprinkle with glitter whilst wet. Pierce a hole in top of each bell and thread ribbon through. Tie the 3 bells together and hang up for decoration.



Advent Wreath Plate

Need: wreath outline, paper plate, felt tips, paint, glue

Use wreath template outline or draw your own. Colour the leaves various shades of green, draw red berries and colour in the candles. Paint paper plate



and inner part of wreath. Stick wreath onto plate and hand up for decoration.

Reindeer Card

Cut out each section of card and assemble into the shape of a reindeer. Glue together and colour in. Write your own greeting on the inside.



Robin Card

Fold over a sheet of A4 card, draw a robin outline and cut out. Colour the top half brown and lower half red. Draw on black eyes. Cut out a small square of orange card, fold into triangle shape and glue onto card for beak. Write your own greeting on inside.

