

## Happiness at Christmas

The run up to Christmas is a busy and exciting time for children. The end of term can be stressful, with topics to finish off, nativity plays to perform, and Christmas fairs and sporting events to enjoy. Schools often come off timetable, however still want a structure to the day, so it is helpful to give the children a focus which they will enjoy but which will also have educational benefits.

There are several activities in Create Your Own Happy which fit well with the festive season and which encourage children to think of others and to spread happiness to those around them. It is a good idea to remind children to be grateful for what they have and to express gratitude to the people who help them.

*"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."*

William Arthur Ward (Writer and poet)

## Evaluation

What has made you happy during the run up to Christmas? What have you done to make other's happy? Has that improved your happiness too? Are there any things you will continue to do in the New Year?



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Create your Own Happy

by Penny Alexander and Becky-Goddard Hill  
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## Activity 1 - Circle Time



**curriculum Link:**

**English Speaking, PSHE**

### Objectives

English/1a listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers

English/1d articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions

## Activity

*"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."*

**William Arthur Ward (Writer and poet)**

Read the quote from William Arthur Ward and discuss what it means. Who makes you happy? What do they do that makes you happy? Have you ever expressed gratitude to that person? If so, how did it make you feel? How do you think it made the other person feel?

Find someone in the class to go and thank for something they have done during the year. When you thank them, also tell them what you are thankful for. Discuss how you felt both giving and receiving the praise. Were you happy, embarrassed, nervous, surprised, or something else?

What do you do to make others happy? Is there anything you do that makes them unhappy? Reflect on where you could make small changes to make people happier.

Is there anyone in the wider community who you think feels unhappy, especially at a time such as Christmas? What do you think it would be like to be lonely or poor at Christmas?

### Suggestion

Read or watch A Christmas Carol and discuss how Scrooge changed at the end. How did thinking about others make him feel better?



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## Activity 2 : Tree of gratitude

**curriculum Link: English, PSHE**

### Objectives

Link to grammar objective you have been studying that term e.g. Year 3 extending the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions, including when, if, because, although

### Activity

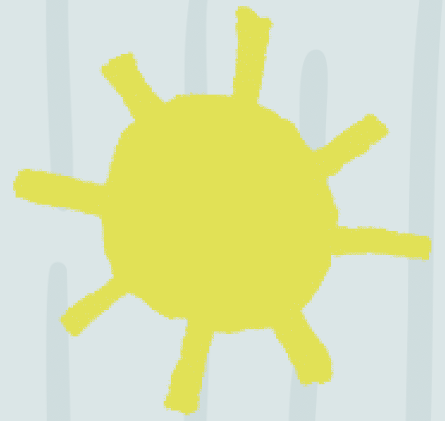
Think of two people who have done something for you, one could be a member of your family or a friend, another could be someone in the community such as a bus driver or teacher. Write what they have done and why you are grateful to them.

### Suggestions

Encourage the children to use the grammar features you have been teaching that term.

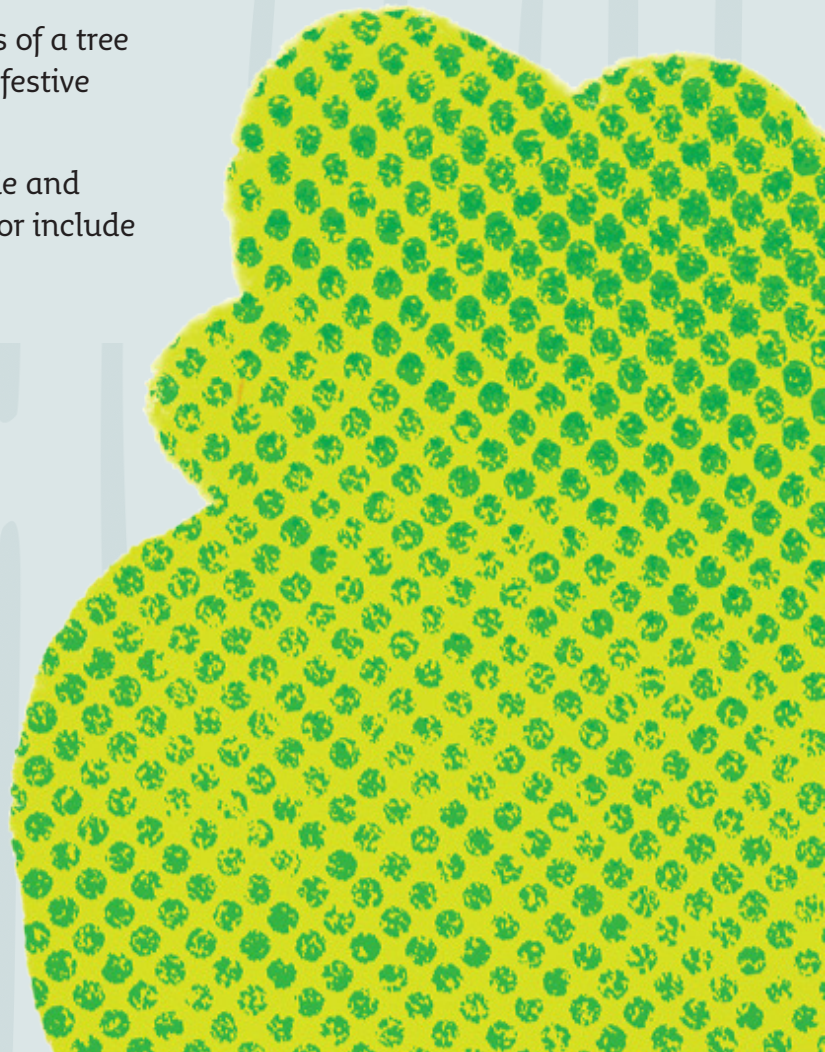
You could display the sentences on the leaves of a tree or on baubles to go on a Christmas tree for a festive display.

You could design and decorate a paper bauble and send it home with the sentence on the back, or include it on a Christmas card.



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## Activity 3 - Community Links

curriculum Link: citizenship

### Activity

Are there any older members of the community, or even a member of your family whom you don't see very often, who might be lonely? What could you do to cheer them up?

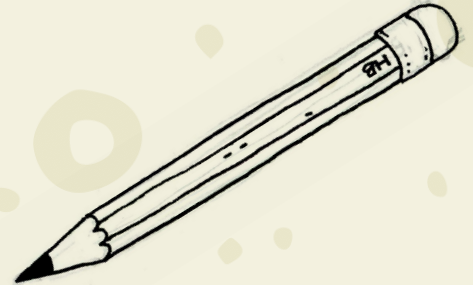
Write a letter inviting them to come to your end of term performance. Or write to a local care home asking if you could go and give them a carol concert.

### Suggestions

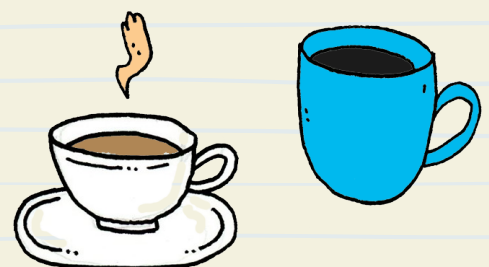
Show some of the recent Christmas adverts which encourage people to think about others, e.g. the Man on the Moon campaign by John Lewis.

Match the children with an older person and encourage them to send a homemade Christmas card.

If you get chance to visit a care home, the children could come up with some questions to ask the residents about the past. They could then write the memory down to share with the rest of the class. Encourage them to do the same thing with their grandparents at home.



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## Activity 4 - Friendship Box

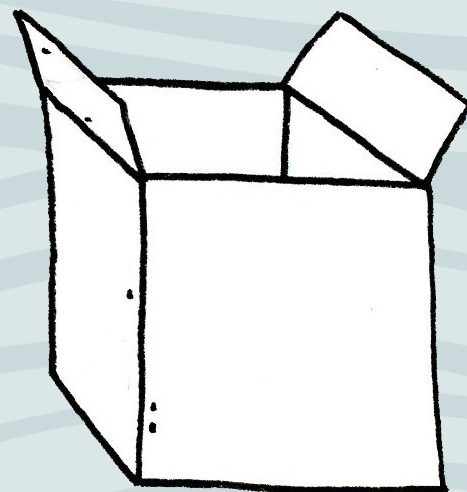
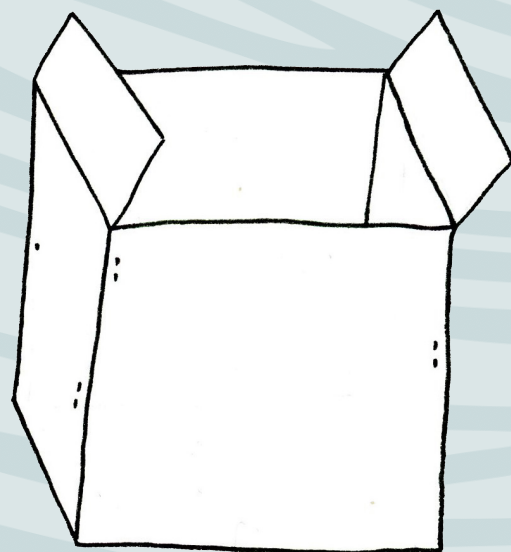
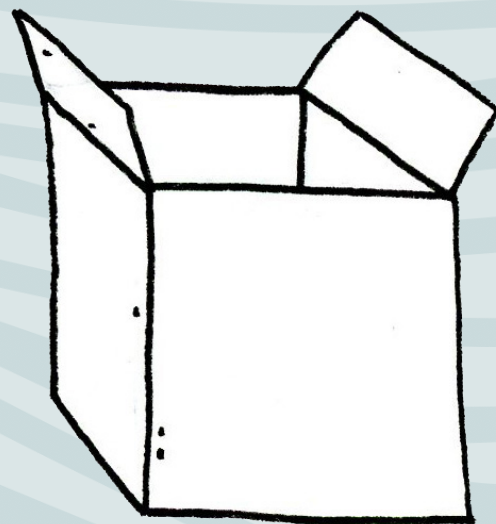
curriculum Link: PSHE

### Activity

Discuss what it is like to have a good friend and how friendship is the best gift you can give. Reflect on what makes them a good friend, and what qualities you possess that make you a good friend..

### Suggestion

Ask the children to make a 3D gift box from a net. In it they can list all the qualities which make them a good friend. They could write this on a template of a gift box instead.



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## Activity 5 - Random Acts of Kindness

# happy

curriculum Link: PSHE

### Activity

A random act of kindness is a nice thing that someone does for someone else without looking for a reward. Have you ever performed or received a random act of kindness? What was it like? How did you feel? Can you think of anyone who would like to receive a random act of kindness from you, and what that could be? Is there something you could do together as a class?

### Suggestions

Display a large version of page 94 on the notice board and ask the children to add some ideas of their own, or make an advent calendar with a different idea for every day. The children can then mark off each act of kindness as they perform it.

Alternatively, the children could choose an act of kindness to perform as a class: a Christmas-themed Flash Mob on the playground, baking some Christmas cookies for the staff room, or decorating stones to leave on the way home for someone else to find.

Photocopy page 96 several times and give one compliment to each child. Practise giving compliments in class, adding why you are giving it. You might also want to practise how to receive a compliment. Challenge them to give one compliment each day.





## Activity 6 - Thank You Letter

curriculum Link: English

### Objectives

The pupil can:

- identify the audience for, and purpose of, the writing; select the appropriate form and use other similar writing as models for their own
- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader



### Activity

Think of someone you would like to say 'thank you' to and tell them in a letter. Who has most influenced you over the year, or is there someone you have taken for granted and would like to thank at Christmas? Perhaps you could write a thank you letter to Father Christmas for the presents you received last Christmas.

### Suggestions

Discuss how the children need to adapt the form of the letter, and the language used to suit the intended audience.

Discuss the format of the letter, and what letter writing conventions should be used, e.g. questions, placement of address, whether it is formal/informal, whether to sign off with 'Love from' or 'Yours sincerely'.

Encourage children to give each paragraph a clear purpose and to write about what they are thankful for and why, and how the other person has made them feel. You could use a writing frame to support younger or less confident writers.



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## Activity 7 - Give to Charity

curriculum Link: PSHE, citizenship

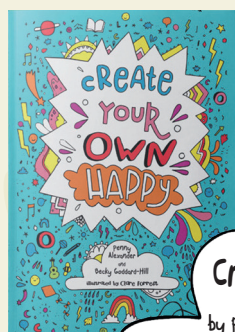
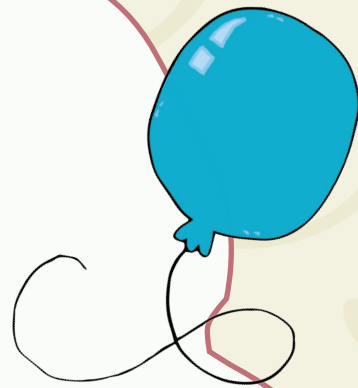
### Activity

Instead of having a class advent calendar, create a reverse advent calendar where you bring things in each day to give to charity. You could use a box to collect the items in and at the end of the term take it to your chosen charity.

As a class, decide what charity to give to. You could pick food for a foodbank, or blankets and pet food for an animal shelter. You could donate old toys to the Foundation Stage classrooms or to sell at the Christmas fair. You could even find out if the children's ward at your local hospital accepts donations.

### Suggestions

Ask the children to brainstorm other things they could do to support the chosen charity. They could hold a festive bake sale, raise money by selling programs at the school carol concert or have a sponsored sing-a-thon of festive songs.



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