



Volume 1 / Issue 9 / Dec. 2024

Happy Holidays REACH friends,

Welcome to this special edition of the REACH Guide! As the holiday season brings us closer to loved ones near and far, I wanted to create something that families can enjoy together, no matter where they are or what they celebrate. This edition is all about fostering those cherished moments of connection, whether you're gathered around the living room or connecting with "special guest readers" across the miles.

Instead of just one featured book idea, I've created a countdown from today until Christmas Eve, incorporating REACH, reading, and a little holiday fun. If you celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or any other special tradition in December, feel free to adapt these ideas to make them your own. The goal is to share the joy of reading and togetherness in whatever way feels right for your family.

You can use this guide in a few ways:

- Read each book suggestion as a family, exploring the crafts, songs, and activities that accompany each story to make your reading time extra memorable.
- Reach out to grandparents, aunts, uncles, or friends and invite them to be guest readers for specific books. A virtual storytime can create lasting holiday memories and build those precious bonds, even from afar.

I hope this special edition inspires laughter, creativity, and connection throughout the holiday season. Here's to reading together, wherever you may be. Happy Holidays and Happy Reading!

See you next month!
Donna B.


Donna Boock
REACH Editor & Concierge of Children's Book Fun





December Discussion Questions for REACH partners

Use these questions to start conversation that foster deeper connections, reflection, and shared experiences for REACH partners and promote thoughtful conversations around the holiday season.

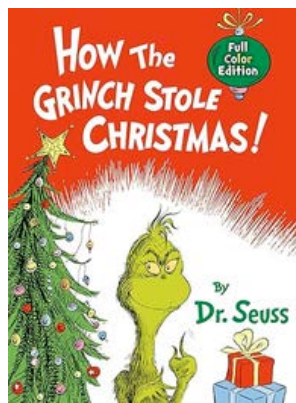
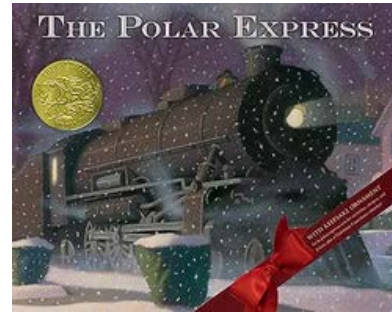
1. What special traditions do you have during the holiday season?
 2. What is your favorite holiday memory and why?
 3. What book or story makes you feel the most festive or cozy during December?
 4. How do you celebrate the winter season, whether it's snow or sunshine?
 5. What is one thing you're looking forward to this holiday season?
 6. What's your favorite holiday treat or meal to share with loved ones?
 7. What's the best gift you've ever given or received?
 8. How do you stay connected with family and friends during the busy holiday season?
 9. If you could create a new holiday tradition, what would it be?
 10. What activities or games do you enjoy doing together during the holidays?
 11. How can we bring joy and kindness to others during this time of year?
 12. What is one way you can help others feel included or loved during the holidays?
 13. What does "giving" mean to you, especially during this time of year?
 14. What wintertime activity do you enjoy the most (e.g., sledding, baking, reading)?
 15. How do you keep the holiday spirit alive even when things get busy?
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REACH, Read, & Be Merry: An Elf's Daily Holiday Countdown

Day 1: The Polar Express

Craft: Make jingle bell necklaces using string and small bells.

Elf Idea: Set the Elf holding a printed "train ticket" with a bell around its neck and a tiny toy train nearby.



Day 2: How the Grinch Stole Christmas

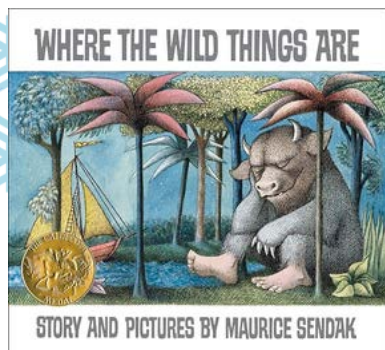
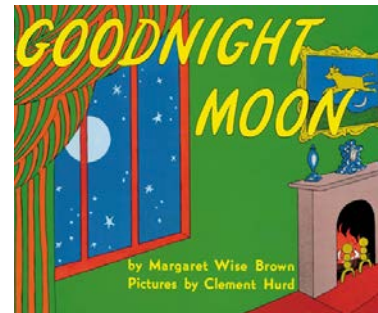
Craft: Create Grinch masks using green paper plates and paint.

Elf Idea: Dress the Elf as the Grinch using green felt (or wrapped in a small green fluffy boa), holding a small sack labeled "Stolen Christmas Treats."

Day 3: Goodnight Moon

Craft: Make a paper plate moon using silver paint or aluminum foil.

Elf Idea: Position the Elf in a cozy nook with a small blanket and mini "Goodnight Moon" book, pretending to read.



Day 4: Where the Wild Things Are

Craft: Create paper crowns decorated with glitter to become "King of the Wild Things."

Elf Idea: Dress the Elf with a tiny paper crown and surround it with small stuffed animals for a wild rumpus.



Day 5: There Was a Cold Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow

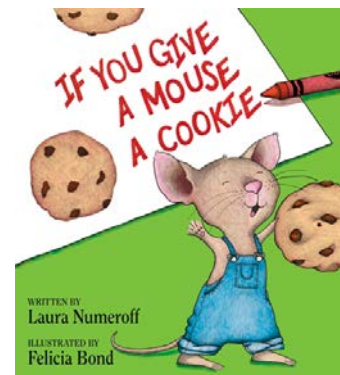
Craft/Activity: Make a Blizzard in a Jar!
[Watch first HERE on YouTube](#)

Elf Idea: Pose the Elf making snow angels of flour or powdered sugar.

Day 6: If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

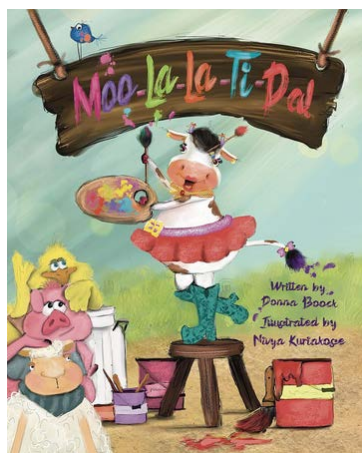
Activity: Bake mouse-sized cookies together.

Elf Idea: Make elf-sized mouse ears & tail using construction paper and tape them on your Elf, give him a note that says "May I have a cookie?" to hold.



Day 7: Moo-La-La-Ti-Da! by Donna Boock

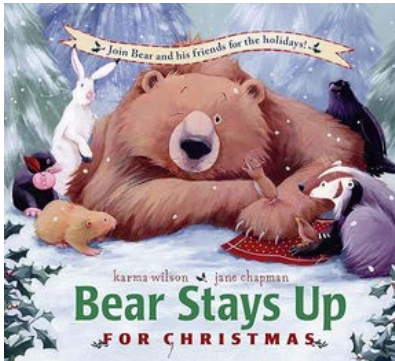
Craft: [Make paper plate hats with this fun, easy PDF guide on how to cut a hat out of a paper plate from Lindsay Boardman at Alpha Mom](#). The Star and the Tree both work well for Christmas themes, but feel free to use any design that makes your heart happy! You can even use any craft scraps you have like ribbons, fake jewels, glitter or construction paper to add flair!



Song: "Deck the Halls" (Encourage children to sing and dance in their fancy hats after completing the craft).

Elf Idea: Dress the Elf in a fancy bow and set up a "barnyard ball" scene with toy farm animals.

Day 8: Bear Stays Up for Christmas by Karma Wilson



Activity: Make this easy, adorable bear ornament from theOTtoolbox.com.



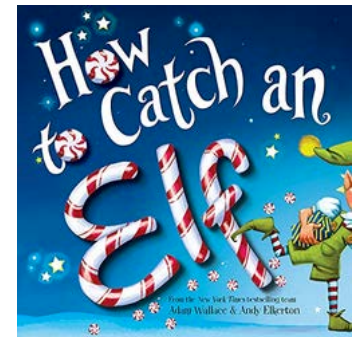
Elf Idea: Pose the Elf next to a little stuffed bear with a tiny pillow and blanket, as if they're trying to stay awake together to see Christmas morning.

Day 9: How to Catch an Elf

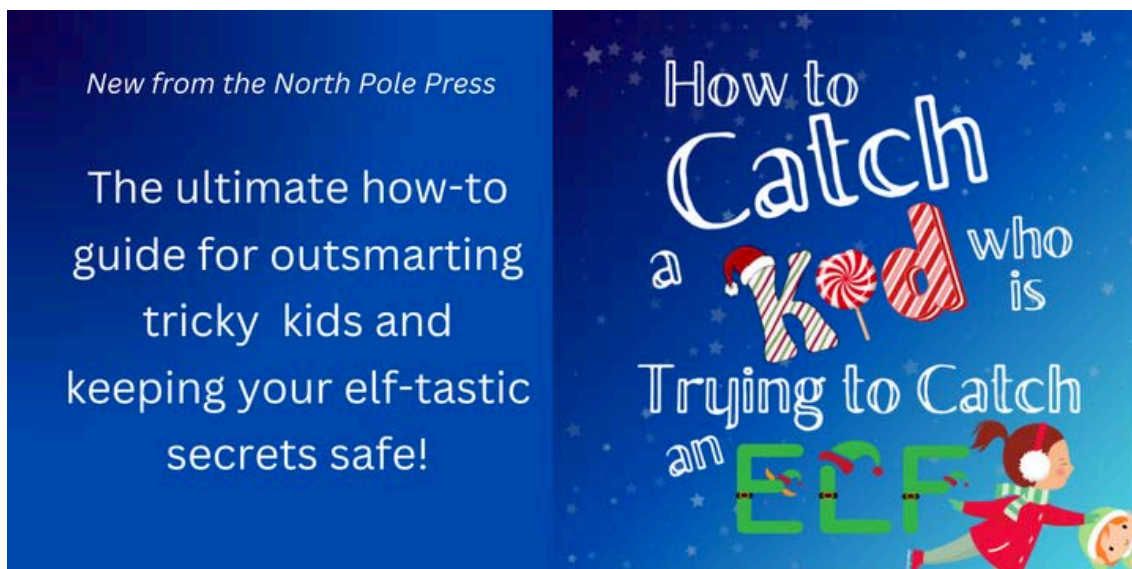
Activity: Build an Elf Trap using items you have on hand.

Song: (to the tune of Jingle Bells)

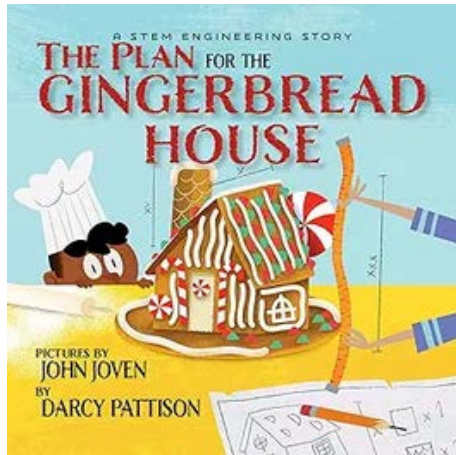
Catch the elf, catch the elf, catch that sneaky elf,
Set the traps, wait and see, will he fall for it, hee-hee!
Catch the elf, catch the elf, quick, he's on the move!
He's so tricky, full of fun, but we'll catch him soon!



Elf Idea: Make a tiny book using this fun cut & fold printable for your elf.



Day 10: The Plan for the Gingerbread House by Darcy Pattison



Activity: Make and decorate a gingerbread house. If you're a baker, you can do it from scratch, but if not, graham crackers work fine! Just be sure to use Royal Icing as the glue to hold it all together and glue your candy decorations on!

Elf Idea: The Elf could be found with this blueprint for the gingerbread house! Just print & cut! Maybe the Elf is holding a tiny pencil or ruler, looking very serious about its "plans." You can even add a few graham crackers, icing, candy wrappers, mini gumdrops, or small gingerbread pieces scattered around, as if the Elf has already begun its "work."





Day 11: The Day the Crayons Quit

Craft/Activity: Color with every crayon in the box to create a "rainbow masterpiece."

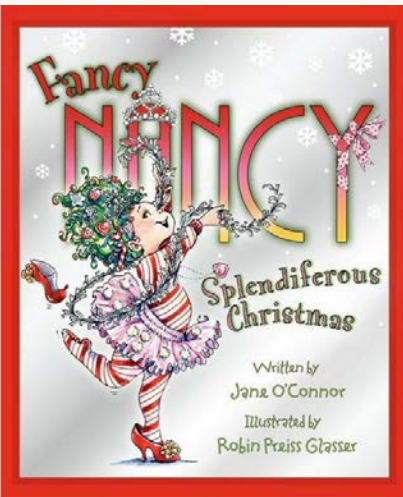
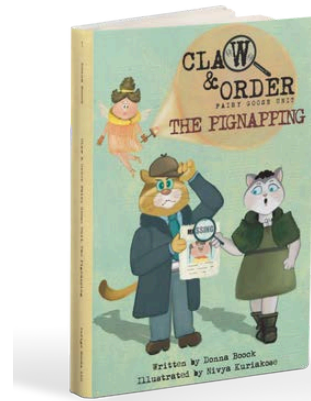
Elf Idea: Print off the Elf crayon costume and "We Quit!" sign at:

www.donnabook.com/subscriberexclusives and use Password SNOWY.

Day 12: Claw & Order: Fairy Goose Unit – The Pignapping

Activity: Make pig puppets with pink construction paper and popsicle sticks.

Elf Idea: Set the Elf with a toy pig and a tiny magnifying glass, investigating a mystery.



Day 13: Fancy Nancy Splendiferous Christmas

Activity: Get dressed up (don't forget your accessories) and have a tea party!

Elf Idea: Dress the Elf up fancy by wrapping in a tinsel boa.



Day 14: Oh, My Word! by Donna Boock

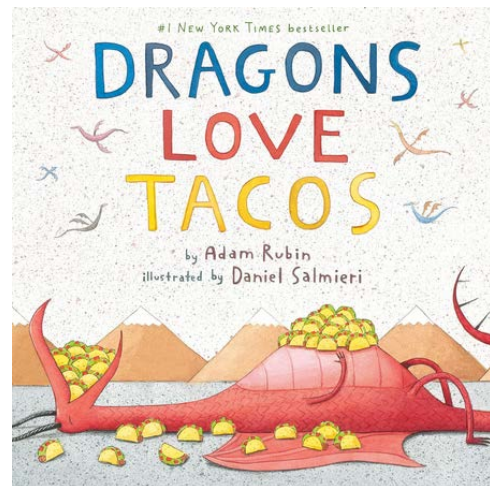
Activity: Set a timer and race to see who can make the most words from each of these words: Snowflake, Winter, Reindeer, Gingerbread.

Elf Idea: Place the Elf with Scrabble tiles that spell out festive words like "JOY" or "MERRY."

Day 15: Dragons Love Tacos

Activity: Make tacos for dinner and have the kids help too.

Elf Idea: Elf makes a sign that says "Elves Love Tacos too!", and if you want to go all out, make an elf taco by filling a taco shell with all the things elves really love - candy, candy canes, syrup and anything else that tickles your elves' sweet teeth!



Day 16:

Don't let the Pigeon Drive the Sleigh

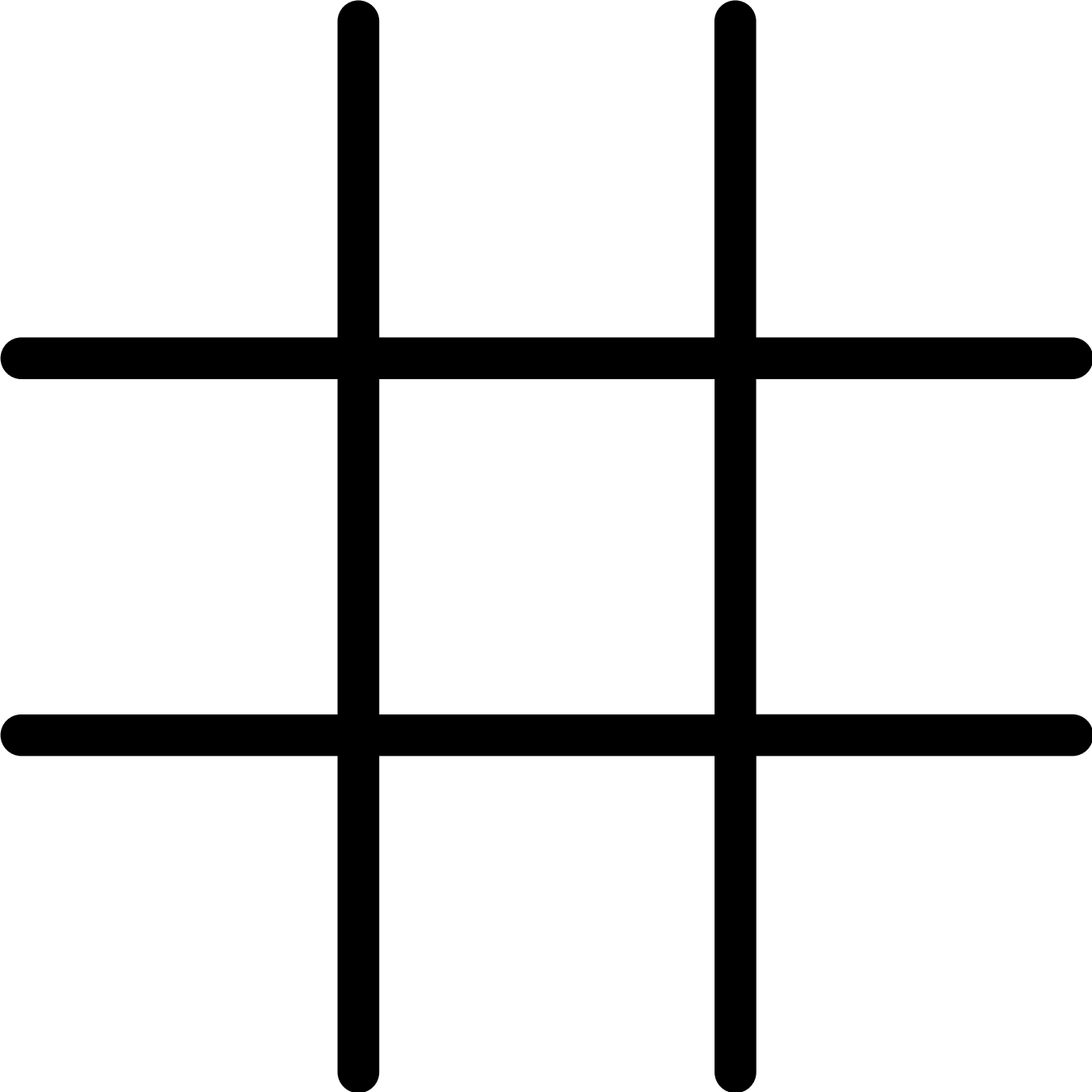
Game: Tic Tac- Don't let the Pigeons Beat the Sleighs! Print the game pieces and the game board on the following two pages and follow rules of Tic Tac Toe.

Elf Idea: Print the Sleigh Driver application out and give your elf a blue pen like he's been making notes on the Pigeon's application.



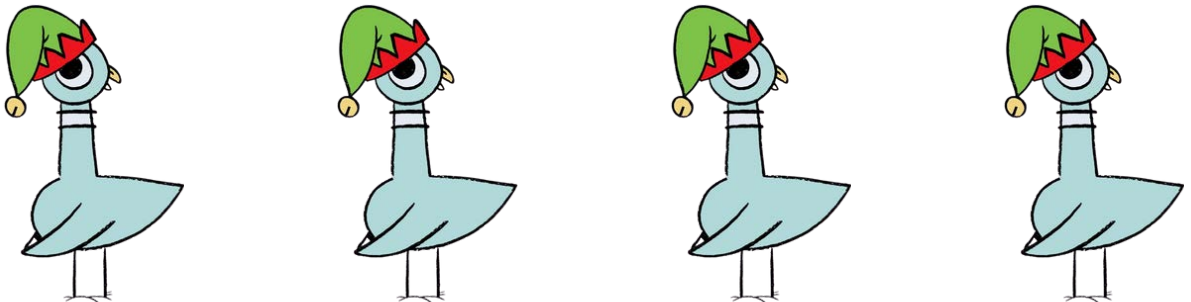
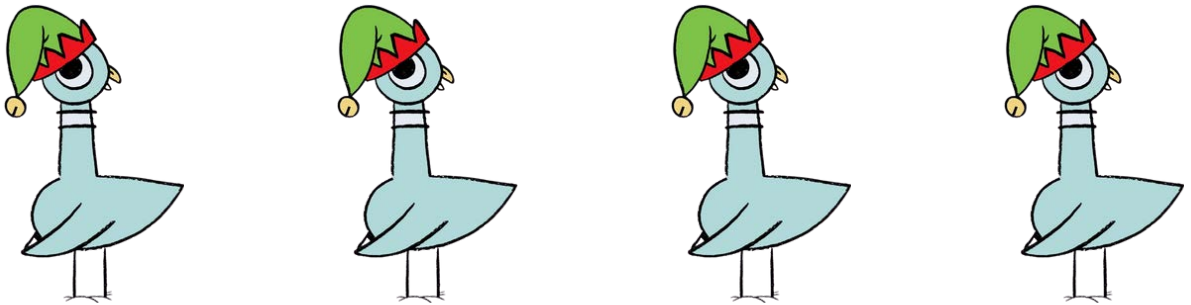
words and pictures by mo willems

**Tic Tac -
Don't Let the Pigeons Beat the Sleighs!**





Cut each shape out to use as game pieces for Tic Tac -
Don't let the Pigeon Beat the Sleigh!



Sleigh Driver Application

Thank you for your interest in becoming a certified Sleigh Driver!
Please complete the application below.

1. Full Name: _____ The Pigeon _____

2. Are you a pigeon? (circle one)

Yes No

3. Do you have sleigh-driving experience? (circle one)

Yes No

4. Can you guide reindeer safely through snowy skies? (circle one)

Yes No

5. Do you promise not to honk at other sleighs or reindeer? (circle one)

Yes No

6. Describe your prior experience flying through the air (if any):

_____ The Pigeon can fly! _____

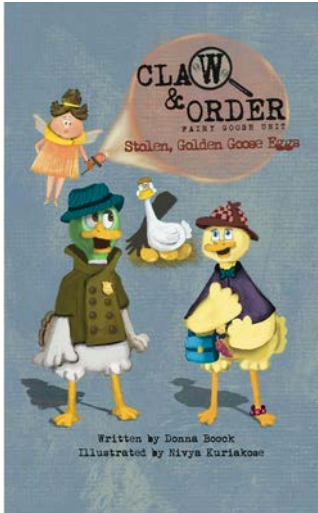
7. If you are not allowed to drive, what other fun task could you do?

_____ The Pigeon can eat hot dogs. _____

Elf Review Notes (Official Use Only):

The Pigeon is known for throwing tantrums and should not be allowed to drive the sleigh. Not now. Not ever. Absolutely do not let the Pigeon Drive the Sleigh!

Thank you! Your application will be reviewed by the Head Elf.



Day 17: Claw & Order: Fairy Goose Unit – Stolen, Golden Goose Eggs

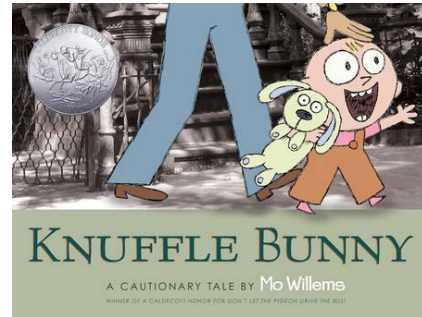
Activity: Detective Training Course

Create an obstacle course where kids "train" to become fairy goose detectives. Include challenges like crawling through "laser" strings, decoding a secret message, and finding hidden items.

Elf Idea: Leave a note: "Fairy Goose Detectives! I need your help solving The Case of the Missing Elf! Can you find where I've gone?"

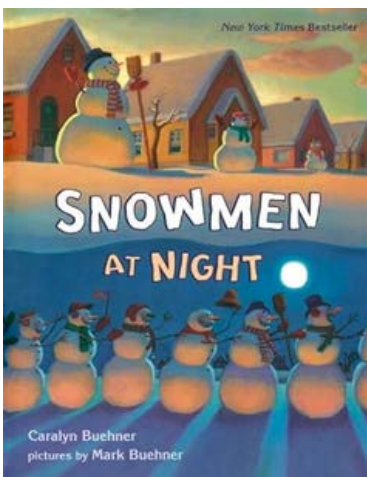
Day 18: Knuffle Bunny

Activity: Make this No-Sew Sock Bunny craft from FeelingNifty.com! A perfect way to use up those unmatched socks!



Elf Idea: Place the Elf near a pile of laundry with a note saying,

"I helped Trixie find Knuffle Bunny! Can you help me fold these clothes?"



Day 19: Snowmen At Night by Caralyn Buehner

Activity: Snowman Dance Party Freeze Dance Style
Play some snowman-themed songs and let the kids dance around like snowmen. You can make it fun by having them "freeze" whenever the music stops, just like snowmen who "pause" in the night.

[Click here for the Snowman Playlist on Spotify](#)

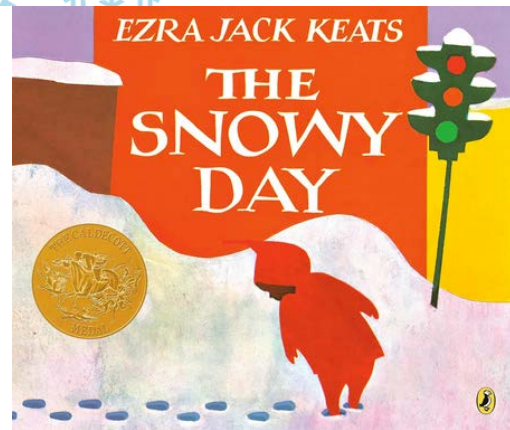
Elf Idea: Next to the elf, place two twigs, three chocolate chips, two raisins and a baby carrot in a few inches of water in a bowl with a note that says, "Tried to bring you back a snowman, but he melted!"



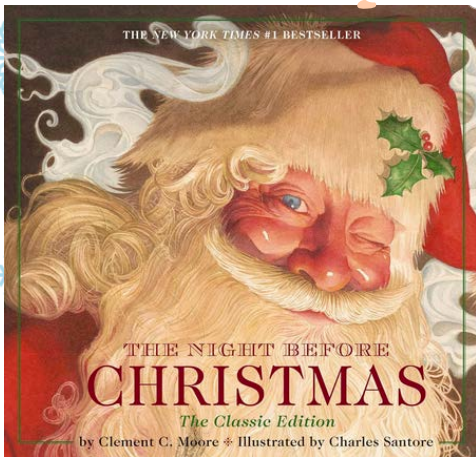
Day 20: The Snowy Day

Activity: Make Snow Dough

Elf Idea: Elf brings the ingredients for snow dough and the signs the note on the next page.



Christmas Elf



Day 21: 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

Activity: Make Reindeer Food (recipe on a following page)

Elf Idea: Elf brings the recipe and ingredients for Reindeer food.

Hi there!

I've brought everything you need to make your very own snow—indoors! It's soft, moldable, and so much fun to play with. Here's how to make it:

Ingredients:

2 cups of cornstarch

1 cup of white conditioner

Instructions:

Pour the cornstarch into a large bowl.

Add the conditioner a little at a time, mixing as you go.

Keep mixing and kneading until your Snow Dough feels soft and holds its shape—just like snow! You can make snowballs, tiny snowmen, or anything you imagine. Have fun, and let me know what you create!

P.S. Don't forget to clean up so we both can stay on Santa's nice list. 😊

Love,

Pssst... Wanna Know a Reindeer Secret?

Okay, I wasn't supposed to tell you this... but since it's my LAST day here before I fly back to the North Pole on Santa's sleigh tonight, I'm spilling the beans (or oats!). 🧑🏻‍🎅

🌟 I know the ultimate, top-secret, super-magical recipe for Reindeer Food! 🦌 It's the snack that makes Rudolph's nose glow extra bright and gives the reindeer their turbo speed! Wanna make some? Here's the scoop (literally):

Reindeer Food Recipe

1. Grab some oats—they're like reindeer pizza! (Okay, maybe not, but they LOVE it.)
2. Sprinkle in edible glitter—it helps them find your house from MILES away! 🌟
3. Add a pinch of sugar or crushed cereal because reindeer deserve dessert, too. 🍓
4. Toss in some raisins or cranberries for Rudolph, who swears he's "fancy."

Mix it all up and sprinkle it outside tonight! When the reindeer see it sparkle, they'll think it's their own personal runway snack station. 🛩️🌟

I couldn't leave without sharing this with you. Santa's sleigh is FAST, but I'll be thinking about you while I zip through the sky. Remember to look for the sparkle when you wake up—it's your reindeer magic at work!

Your (not so good at keeping secrets) Elf 🎄

You did it!



Start here



Read for 20 minutes each day,
mark one space, and race to the finish to win!
Get more game boards at www.DonnaBook.com/for-kids.