

ART LESSONS NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2011

MRS. MILLER

**Buon Natale! Christmas in Italy**

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**Italian Christmas Traditions During Christmastime, Italian children write letters to tell their parents how much they love them. The letter is normally placed under their father's plate and read after Christmas Eve dinner has been finished.**

**Italians have also adopted some of the northern European traditions as well. Nowadays, especially in northern Italy, a fair number of families decorate an evergreen tree in their home. Here are some other rituals, customs, and traditions practiced by Italians during the Christmas holidays:**

**Ceppo: The *ceppo* is a wooden frame several feet high designed in a pyramid shape. This frame supports several tiers of shelves, often with a manger scene on the bottom followed by small gifts of fruit, candy, and presents on the shelves above. The "Tree of Light," as it is also known, is entirely decorated with colored paper, gilt pinecones, and miniature colored pennants. Small candles are fastened to the tapering sides and a star or small doll is hung at the apex.**

**Urn of Fate: An old tradition in Italy calls for each member of the family to take turns drawing a wrapped gift out of a large ornamental bowl until all the presents are distributed.**

**Zampognari and Pifferai: In Rome and surrounding areas bagpipers and flute players, in traditional colorful costumes of sheepskin vests, knee-high breeches, white stockings and long dark cloaks, travel from their homes in the Abruzzi mountains to entertain crowds of people at religious shrines.**

**La Befana: Kindly old witch who brings children toys on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6. According to the legend of La Befana, the Three Wise Men stopped at her hut to ask directions on their way to Bethlehem and to invite her to join them. She refused, and later a shepherd asked her to join him in paying respect to the Christ Child. Again she refused, and when night fell she saw a great light in the skies.**

**La Befana thought perhaps she should have gone with the Three Wise Men, so she gathered some toys that had belonged to her own child, who had died, and ran to find the kings and the shepherd. But La Befana could not find them or the stable. Now, each year she looks for the Christ Child. Since she can not find him, she leaves gifts for the children of Italy and pieces of coal (nowadays *carbone dolce*, a rock candy that looks remarkably like coal) for the bad ones.**

**Holiday Season:** On the Italian holiday calendar December 25 isn't the only special day. Throughout December and January there are a number of religious holidays to mark the season.

**DECEMBER 6: La Festa di San Nicola** - The festival in honor of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of shepherds, is celebrated in towns such as Pollutri with the lighting of fires under enormous cauldrons, in which *fave* (broad beans) are cooked, then eaten ceremoniously.

**DECEMBER 8: L'Immacolata Concezione** - celebration of the Immaculate Conception

**DECEMBER 13: La Festa di Santa Lucia** - St. Lucy's Day

**DECEMBER 24: La Vigilia di Natale** - Christmas Eve

**DECEMBER 25: Natale** - Christmas

**DECEMBER 26: La Festa di Santo Stefano** - St. Stephen's Day marks the announcement of the birth of Jesus and the arrival of the Three Wise Men

**DECEMBER 31: La Festa di San Silvestro** - New Year's Eve

**JANUARY 1: Il Capodanno** - New Year's Day

**JANUARY 6: La Festa dell'Epifania** - The Epiphany

### **November Art Activities**

#### **GR.1**

**Lesson:** “Native American style, Shield”; \*symbols outlined in sharpie, \*beads, feathers, raffia weaving \*history of art and spiritual reference

**Lesson:** “Fall Tree” silhouette; tree shape with line, painted background, fall color mixing

**Lesson:** clay; “Nativity Scene”, shapes, form, process, Religious history

#### **GR.2**

**Lesson:** “Paper mache Turkey”; paper cup body, egg carton cup- head, poster board shape- feathers, brown paper pieces

**Turkeys are native to the Americas. The birds were part of harvest celebrations many years before Europeans arrived on the continent. Sarah Hale, a 19th century magazine editor, campaigned for 40 years to make Thanksgiving a national holiday.**

\*tape pieces together, name on back with sharpie \*paper mache with directions lay to dry on wax paper

**D2 paint Turkey” , colorful, with wiggle eyes**

**Lesson: “Christmas Angels”, clay; form, technique**

**Lesson: “Nativity scene, drawing”**

**Lesson: wrapping paper for “angel”**

**Lesson: Yarn Scrap Ornament \*history of the Christmas Tree**

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### **Gr.3**

**Lesson: “Hand Print Wreath”**

Have the children place their hands in paint and arrange green hand prints in a wreath pattern on the fabric.

Then when the green dries, have them add red fingertips as berries around the wreath.

**Lesson: “Christmas, Winter Collage”; clay relief, glaze process**

**Lesson: “flowers for the Priests” (Mrs. Dooley’s class)**

**Lesson: Stitchery; Winter Day**

**Key Concept-Goal: The student will be able to do a running stitch**

**Vocabulary: Cross stitch, running stitch, yarn, needle,**

### **Gr.4**

<http://syrylynrainbowdragon.tripod.com/clwreorn.html>

**Lesson: Clay Wreath Christmas Ornament**

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**Key Concept-Goal: The student will be able to work with clay and be able to form a clay wreath ornament and then paint it to take home**

**Essential Skills-Objectives-Art Aims: After showing the student how to form the clay wreath and decorate it, the student will make one of their own.**

**Lesson: printmaking; Collograph, Glued shapes depicting scene from Nazareth, the Nativity Scene**

**\*Cross Curricular with Mrs. Kraus**

**Lesson: "Nativity Scene"; silhouettes in the stable, watercolor, cut paper**



**Lesson: Puzzle Wreath Ornament**

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**Gr.5**

**Lesson: recycled CD; "ornament", pattern ideas from cool dog project, sharpie shapes on white paper covering paper side of disc \*glitter between shapes, \*string**

**Lesson: Clay "Santa Bowl ", \*form, process, Christmas History**

## **Lesson Elf Comic Strip**

\* Students will have a fun way to practice writing dialogue in this lesson. They will create a comic strip based on two elves who are working in the toy factory.

Explain to your students that they are going to create a comic strip about two elves that are working in the toy factory and having a conversation. Review the rules for writing dialogue and then let them work on their comics. If students are struggling to come up with ideas suggest some starters. The elves could be having a debate about which toy is better, who broke the machine, or who gets to load Santa's sleigh.

## **GR.6**

### **Lesson: "Italian olive branch style, Ornament"**

A number of **peace symbols** have been used in various cultures and contexts, one of the most ancient being the olive branch. The dove and olive branch was used by early Christians and was later adopted as a secular symbol. It was popularized by Pablo Picasso in 1949 and became widely used in the post-war peace movement.\*cut two flat slabs inside of mask tape roll size\*roll out clay, cut branch, leaf olive shapes out, attach with scoring clay, one side of slab

\*score inside edges of disc shapes

\*roll thin layer of newspaper and put inside shapes, attach shapes together



\*add hole near top of clay, Name, grade symbol, on back



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### **Lesson: Cross Curricular with Mrs. Clappier**

Printmaking a cover for written assignment, "compare/contrast"

\*artist referenced; Pop Art, Andy Warhol printmaking images



\*color and design; compare/contrast

Printmaking, contrast/compare

### Gr.7

**Lesson:**



**Ceppo:**

Italy is an exciting place during the Christmas season. Italian Christmas customs are as varied as the Italian people. One of these varying customs is called the "Ceppo." For some Italians the Ceppo refers to a Yule log. The log was burned in the fireplace during the Christmas season and it had many significant meanings. Some of these included the purification of the fire, the image of the sun and the symbolic burning away of the accumulated evils of the old year. Sometimes the children would be blindfolded and given a long stick to strike the burning log. This would cause sparks to fly up the chimney. Once the children removed the blindfolds they would find a small gift. The ashes from the log were kept so they could be sprinkled on the fields during the spring as a sign of good luck for the new crops.

Not all Italians associate the Ceppo with a log burning in the fireplace. For those Italians the Ceppo refers to a pyramid shaped structure made of wood. This tiered tree was believed to have started in the Tuscan region of Italy. The tiered tree would contain three to five shelves and the frame would be decorated with fringe or fancy paper. On the bottom shelf the family would display their treasured "Presepio" (crèche or Nativity scene). The remaining shelves would contain greenery, fruit, nuts and presents. The presepio would represent the gift of God, the fruit and nuts would represent the gifts of the Earth and the presents would represent the gifts of man. The top of the Ceppo would be adorned by an



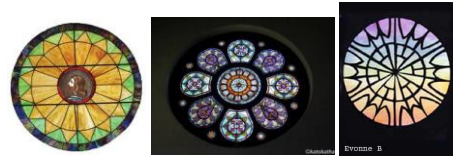
Angel, star or a pineapple, which represents hospitality. Some families would attach candles on the outside of each shelf and light them. This is why the Ceppo is often referred to as the "Tree of Light."

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**Clay Relief, added clay shapes; triangular tree shaped, \*3 tiers divided \*Manger, bottom \*"Tree of Life or Christmas Tree, center \*Angel, top \*glaze fired clay**

### Gr.8

**Lesson:** glaze "Radial, Snowflake" design; clay plate, line designs, glaze colors



Radial Symmetry --rotating around a center point

**Lesson:** wrapping paper; draw winter landscape, color with crapas blending



**Lesson:** Winter species Bird on snow covered Tree Branch; paint, color mixing