

## Make "Stained Glass" Holiday Stars

Whatever a family's customs, the holidays are almost always an exciting time for first graders. The holidays are also part of the core social studies curriculum, which aims to help young children identify key helpers in their community, and highlights of the community year. Here's a craft project you can do at home to send goodwill into the neighborhood ... and practice math and writing skills while you're at it.

### What You Need:

- Lightweight white paper
- Wax paper
- Bright colored construction paper
- Scissors



### What to Do:

1. Ask your child: how many kinds of stars can you make? By this point in first grade, many children may have learned to create a five-pointed star; some may know how to make a six-pointed Star of David; but there are also "pom pom" stars made by crossing x's several times. There are a multitude of possibilities. Practice with your child, and pull out a ruler to demonstrate how you can measure out straight lines.
2. Invite your child—and a friend or sibling—to trace at least five types and sizes of stars onto lightweight white paper, 3" to 5" or so across, and then cut them out with child-safe scissors. Go ahead and help if asked ... but try to let your child do as much as she can on her own.
3. Meanwhile, heat up a regular household iron, and roll out a window-length sheet of waxed paper. Lay your child's stars on the wax paper, making sure that there is plenty of space around each one. Lay another sheet of wax paper on top, and then run a hot iron over the "sandwich." You end up with a striking white-on-white "stained glass" star panel to hang in your window as the winter light streams in. For an extra finished look, you can also add a "frame" piece of bright construction paper at the top and at the bottom.

With this activity, you reinforce the social studies learning of your child's classroom, but you also provide important practice in small motor skills that lead to success in handwriting as well as in math. Finally, although she won't identify terms for several years yet, you're providing early geometrical thinking activities that will prove invaluable later on. All this—and a lovely holiday window dressing, too!