

Bead Craft: Holiday Necklace

Make a one-of-a-kind necklace this holiday season that will warm the heart of whoever receives it! This Christmas bead craft combines colorful clay and a few tricks of the jewelry-making trade to create a festive holiday necklace. Once your child learns the basics of bead-making, she'll want to make one for any occasion.

What You Need:

- Oven-bake or Air-dry clay in green, red and white
- Small gingerbread man cookie cutter
- Needle
- String or jewelry twine (approximately 18")
- Rolling pin
- Craft wire
- Jewelry closures
- Paint and paintbrush (optional)



What You Do:

1. Have your child roll out a small amount of clay to 1/2" thickness.
2. Using the cookie cutters, let your middle-schooler cut out a miniature Christmas shape. This will be the center bead of the necklace. Help your child to include any extra details they may want.
3. Ask your child to poke a hole at the top of the gingerbread man and then set it aside.
4. Use remaining clay to create smaller beads. Have your child experiment with combining colors for a more detailed necklace.
5. Poke holes through the beads using the sewing needle; wiggle the needle a bit to widen the holes enough for your string to easily fit through.
6. Thread the beads onto the craft wire and leave them there to air dry completely, or back them in the oven, as suggested by the manufacturer.
7. When the beads are done, remove them from the wire and encourage your child to paint on any details she may want. She can use glitter paint for extra sparkle.
8. Cut length of craft wire about 2 feet long, and attach a jewelry closure to the wire by threading it through the hole and bending the end with pliers to secure it.
9. Have your child thread beads onto the string in the order she likes, with the gingerbread man in the middle of the necklace.
10. Attach the other end of the jewelry closure on the end of the wire in the same way as step 8.
11. Help your child put the necklace on and model it for the family!

These holiday necklaces also make great Christmas gifts! Your child can also use the same technique to make matching bracelets.