

Simple Ways You Can Bring Joy to the Classroom This Holiday Season!

Read the Full Article Here: <https://www.modelteaching.com/education-articles/classroom-management/simple-ways-you-can-bring-joy-to-the-classroom-this-holiday-season>

As your semester approaches the holidays, you may find yourself balancing academic demands with the desire to create a warm and joyful classroom environment. As December approaches, it can be a magical, if not also a chaotic time, so here are some simple and meaningful ways to bring the cheer of the holiday to your students, and to yourself and your family!

Start each day in December with a “Merry Moment”. Help foster cheer and joy in the classroom and engage in the enthusiasm for the holidays with some small daily sharing that if focused on Christmas-themed ideas. You can provide students with holiday-themed “would you rather” prompts, like “would you rather drink hot cocoa for a week or eat candy canes for a week,” or “would you rather have a snowball fight or go sledding with your class?” You can also provide some mindful breathing exercises to start of the day on a festive and calm note, using classical holiday music in the background. Perhaps you ask students to share something they are grateful for this holiday season. Choosing simple mindful moments connected to the holidays can create calm and warmth, helping maintain excitement for the season ahead. For additional calming classroom strategies you can modify for the holidays, check out calmclassroom.com for ideas for your classroom.

Create a culture of giving in your classroom without spending any money. Help students get into the spirit of giving this holiday season by incorporating simple activities that can inspire students to be kind to others. You can build a class gratitude garland. Allow students to write something they are grateful for on strips of green, red, or white paper, then connect the strips into a chain and use it as a decorative holiday display in your classroom. You can also implement act-of-kindness countdowns, asking students to record an act of kindness someone performs each day. You can write the act of kindness down on a tracker each day, and on the last day, students can celebrate their good deeds with a short holiday-themed party, coloring sheet, or game. If you need some ideas for

fostering acts of kindness, randomactsofkindness.org/for-educators can help you easily incorporate a culture of giving into your classroom.

Use seasonal themes to reinforce concepts students are learning in class.

Create activities, word problems, or lectures that center on a holiday theme. In math, you might create holiday store sales problems to teach multiplication, percentages, or addition and subtraction. You can use winter or holiday-themed reading passages to get students into the mood for the season. In history classes, you might even allow students to analyze the various holiday traditions of different cultures. This link provides some cute templates and activity ideas to incorporate Christmas and holiday-themed activities into your classroom: <https://teachersfirst.com/holiday/christmas.cfm> You can use these ideas and others to incorporate more festive fun into your regular classroom lessons!

Plan out your giving to your friends and family to keep the holiday cheer up and stress down

Your calm and contentment matter, too! When you are low-stress and enthusiastic about the holidays, your students will be too! If you struggle to find meaningful gifts, worry about your gift budget, or feel you don't have enough time to meet all the holiday-related "requirements" like gift-giving, you should use the tools you have to make your life easier. Teachers are naturally giving, and finding ways to allow you to enjoy giving without stress can impact your mood and improve your classroom, too! Sign up for a free gift reminder and suggestion service like <https://neverforgetgifts.com/> and get gift recommendations for all your friends and family within your set budget, so you can experience the joy of giving without the stress.

Close out the semester before your holiday break with reflection and celebration

Allow your students a month in December to reflect on all the great work they accomplished this year and plan ways they can improve next year. Celebrate successes and get students enthusiastic for the spring semester. You might offer some reflections for students, like "what did we learn about ourselves this semester? What are we excited to do next semester?" or "What is one thing we hope for in the new year?". You can use your social-emotional learning strategies and adapt them to a New Year's or holiday theme, allowing students to reflect on the year so far. You can get some ideas for general social-emotional strategies in our article <https://www.modelteaching.com/education->

[articles/social-emotional-learning/three-daily-practices-to-promote-social-emotional-learning-in-the-classroom](#), and modify them to fit a holiday or New Year reflection theme.

A Final Holiday Thought

The approaching holidays can be chaotic and jam-packed with last-minute assignments and activities before the holiday break. But it can also be a reminder to slow down, connect, and find joy in the small moments that give excitement to the holiday season. Using some of these ideas in your classroom can help you instill peace and joy into your classroom for a restorative winter break.