

# 10 Quick Crafts for the New Year

• **Keep 'em Reading** •

by | Kathy Ross

Grades  
K-2, 3-5

## Lunch Bag Shaker

Invite students to decorate the lower two-thirds of a lunch bag with markers, crayons, seasonal stickers, or cut-paper shapes (glue these on). Then, drop a small amount of rice, pony beads, or a couple of jingle bells inside. Fold over the top of the bag twice and punch a hole through each side. Tie the bag shut with one or more pieces of yarn, trim, or ribbon, and knot the pieces together. The decorations for this bag can be adapted to the season or a theme.

Sing a few favorite songs with the children accompanied by the shakers. I always start the New Year with this project and sing this simple song to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

*Now we have a brand new year,  
Brand new year, brand new year!  
Now we have a brand new year,  
It's 2012!*

*Happy New Year!* (Shout with lots of enthusiastic bag shaking!)



## Greeting Card Bookmark

Provide a 2-inch circle of a picture cut from a greeting card or other source, a second 2-inch circle cut from construction paper, and an 8-inch piece of ribbon for each child. (Older children can use a circle pattern to trace and cut their own circles.) Glue the two circles together with one end of the ribbon hanging down from the bottom of the picture.

Older children can cut a 2 x 4-inch rectangle from a greeting card. Fancy-edge scissors add interest to the rectangle edges. Cut two small slits at the top and the bottom of the rectangle. Weave an 8-inch piece of ribbon through the slits so that the rectangle is positioned at the middle of the ribbon. The bookmarks make nice gifts for grown-ups.



## Triangle Dog

I love this easy project and I don't want it to be forgotten! Cut a triangle for each child that is 14.5 inches across the base and 10.5 inches on each side. Fold the two side points down to form floppy dog ears. Have children use a marker to draw a nose at the point and two eyes. It always amazes me how different each child's dog looks.



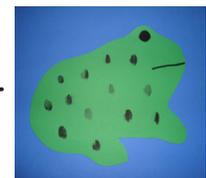
## Plant Gem Fish Magnet

The glass gems for this craft can be found in the plant department and most hardware/home stores. Cut a tiny fish shape from craft foam. Provide each student with a glass gem to glue to the body of the fish shape. They can also glue a tiny wiggle eye to the front portion of the gem, and press a piece of sticky-back magnet to the back of the fish. I like to use this craft with *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni (Dragonfly Books, 1973).



## Fingerprint Frog

Copy the frog outline on page 4 onto white construction paper for students, or pre-cut the frogs for them, depending on their skill level. (For very young children, you can cut the frogs from green construction paper.) Students can color the frogs with crayons, and give the frog a mouth and eye. Use a washable black ink pad or washable black marker to ink their fingers, and invite them to print the spots on the frog. Rabbit!



## Bottle Cap Clickers

These work well as rhythm instruments or as counting aids for a number-themed story time. I spray paint the bottle caps ahead of time.



Cut a 6.5 x 1.5-inch rectangle from poster board or shirt cardboard for each student. They may decorate the cardboard with stickers or crayons. Markers will work if the cardboard is uncoated.

Have students use tacky glue to secure a bottle cap to opposite ends (but the same side) of the cardboard strip. When the glue has dried, the cardboard can be folded and the caps can be clicked together.

## Balloon Flowers

This activity is a good one for older students. Have them cut the neck off a round balloon, and cut a 2-inch pipe cleaner for the flower stamen and a 6-inch pipe cleaner for the stem. They can fold one end of the stem over the center of the stamen and tip the ends up. Then, have them cut a tiny slip in the top of the balloon. Next, they can push the bottom of the stem through the slit at the top of the balloon, and slide the balloon up to the stamen. It will fold in on itself to form a flower. A green balloon can be slipped on the stem for a leaf by cutting off the neck of the balloon and cutting a tiny slit through both sides of the cut end. Two or three balloon flowers tied together with a ribbon make a nice bouquet or corsage.

**Note:** Save the necks cut from the balloons to make finger puppets another day. Slip the neck over two fingers to stretch it open enough to slip in a pom-pom for hair. Glue on wiggle eyes and a tiny pom-pom nose. A red permanent marker can be used to draw a mouth, but they are fine without one.



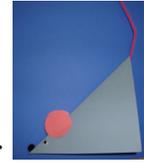
## Jack-in-the Box Puppet

Turn a square tissue box upside down and cut three sides of the bottom to make a hinged flap that will open and shut. Glue a square of construction paper over the flap to cover the writing. Children can make a simple sock puppet by gluing on large wiggle eyes and a pom-pom nose. They can then put on the sock puppet and push it through the original opening of the tissue box (what is now the bottom of the box). The puppet can then be pushed up to open the flap and pop out of the box.



I whisper the first three lines of this rhyme, and shout the last line as the puppets pop out of the box:

*Jack in the box  
Sitting so still,  
Won't you come out?  
Yes, I will!*



## Folded Square Mouse

Cut a 6-inch square from construction paper for each student. Have them fold the square in half from corner to opposite corner to make a triangle, and glue a tiny pom-pom to the left tip of the triangle for a nose. Next, instruct students to glue a wiggle eye on each side above the nose, cut two round ears from construction paper, and glue one ear on each side of the head above the eyes. A 6-inch piece of pipe cleaner glued into the fold at the opposite end of the head makes a tail!

**Note:** This cute mouse can be turned into a hat by stapling a paper band to each side of the back of the mouse, sized to fit the wearer.

## Old Man Snoring

This is a quick craft that you can do that will result in lots of laughter. Turn a paper bowl over so it forms a dome. Poke a tiny hole in the center of the bottom of the bowl. Draw two eyes above the hole.

Next, cut a nose from construction paper. Glue the top of the nose above the hole so the hole is covered, but NOT blocked. Draw a mouth below the nose. Glue cotton ball hair on each side of the face. Poke the neck of a balloon through the hole so it is under the nose. Inflate the balloon and hold the neck of the balloon behind the face so that the air escapes slowly, making a snoring noise. This might take a couple practice tries, but it isn't hard to do and it will have your students howling!

*It's raining, it's pouring . . .*



*Kathy Ross was a teacher and director for nursery school programs in Oneida, New York, for thirty years. She is the author of more than fifty craft books including the Holiday Crafts for Kids series and the Crafts for Kids Who are Wild About series. Her craft projects frequently appear in Highlights magazine.*



# Fingerprint Frog

