

# the Night before Christmas

## Teacher Resource Pack



A Polka Theatre and Royal & Derngate,  
Northampton production

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Directed by  
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Dear Teacher/Parent/Carer,

We are so pleased that you came to visit us at Polka Theatre for The Night Before Christmas. We hope you enjoyed seeing the production and visiting our venue.

Here are a few activities to do with your children and young people after you have seen the performance. These creative activities are designed to support curriculum learning at Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

The drama focus is good for developing speaking and listening skills, as well as expanding concentration and imagination, while festive crafts create opportunities to consider different traditions celebrated within our communities.

We look forward to seeing you again soon,  
**Polka Theatre's Creative Learning Team**

## Key Curriculum Links

### EYFS

- People, Culture & Community
- Expressive Arts & Design
- Communication & Language
- Self-Regulation
- Building Relationships

### KS1

- Spoken Language
- Animals and their Habitats
- Everyday Materials
- Measurement



Amber is six and loves reindeer! It's Christmas Eve but Grandad is feeling tired and Amber's favourite snow-globe gets broken. Then her world is turned topsy turvy by a surprise visit from none other than Blitzen the Reindeer. Soon, Amber embarks on a journey she'll never forget as, together, she and Blitzen search for their lost Christmas Spirit.

### Characters



#### Amber July

Played by Victoria Chen  
Amber is six years old and loves reindeer. She has a special snow globe that belonged to her mother.



#### Grandad

Played by Jack Kelly  
Grandad is looking after Amber, and wants to make sure she has a really special Christmas.



#### Blitzen

Played by Jack Kelly  
Blitzen is one of Santa's reindeer. He flies at the back, next to Donner.



## Stuck in the Chimney!

This activity is great for increasing energy and focus at the beginning of a lesson. It's also a useful way to help children remember and recap some of the events of the play.

### How to lead the activity:

- For this activity, you'll need a large, clear space. Start with everyone spread out.
- Explain that, when you call out an action, everyone has to do it as quickly as possible.
- Introduce each action one by one, giving time to practice and recap before moving on to another.

#### **Actions**

##### **Broken Snow Globe**

Hold out your hands, as if holding a snow globe, and look sad.

##### **Magical Thinking Place**

Go to the edge of the room or play space.

##### **Reindeer**

Make antlers on your head with your hands.

##### **Stuck in the Chimney**

Give yourself a really tight hug.

##### **Santa's Workshop**

Get into pairs. One person pretends to paint the other.

##### **Christmas Spirit!**

Everyone gathers together in the centre of the room.

- Once you've had a few practice runs, you can begin eliminating players who are too slow, or do the wrong action.

### Extension:

- At the end of the game, see if the class can work together to put the actions in the order in which they appeared in the play.

## Snow Jars

Amber loves her precious Snow Globe! This fun craft is a great way to create simple sensory toys for small ones, or a beautiful gift for a friend or family member. It also provides opportunities to practice measuring out ingredients.

### You Will Need...

Clean, empty jars with lids (one per person)

Water

Glitter in different colours

Sequins or small snowflakes

Food colouring

Teaspoons

### How to make your Snow Jars:

- Give each child a jar. For very small children, you may wish to use plastic jars.
- Scoop two teaspoons of glitter (in a colour of choice!) into the jar.
- Next, add a teaspoon of sequins or tiny snowflakes.
- Now fill the jar up with water (remember to leave a little room at the top).
- Add two drops of food colouring to the mixture.
- Lastly, screw the lid back on, nice and tight!
- Now give your snow globe a gentle shake to watch swirling, sparkly snow!



## North Pole Rescue

Blitzen and all the other Reindeer live in the North Pole, where it's really cold. Tonight is Christmas Eve, the busiest night of the year, and disaster has struck! A cold snap has come in and all the Reindeer are stuck in the ice! Can you rescue them?

This activity is a great way to teach children about states of matter, and encourage them to explore freezing and melting.

### You Will Need...

- A plastic bowl
- Reindeer toys
- Water
- Salt
- Warm water
- A towel
- Jugs, pipettes and measuring spoons

### How to prepare the activity:

- The night before, put your reindeer toys in the plastic bowl, and fill with water. If you have a large group, you may need to prepare several bowls. Make sure your bowls aren't too big, or children may lose patience.
- Place the bowls in the freezer, and leave to freeze solid.

### How to run the activity:

- Lay your towel on the table or workstation, and place your bowl on top. This will stop it from slipping.
- Give each child, or small group of children, a selection of jugs, pipettes, measuring spoons, salt and warm water.
- Explain that Santa's reindeer are trapped in the ice, and they have to use their amazing science skills to get them free!
- They can experiment with using different mixtures of salt and water to melt the ice, and free the reindeer!



## My Festive Spirit

Amber and Blitzen find their Christmas Spirit where their loved ones are gathered together. For Amber it's with her family, and for Blitzen, it's with the other reindeer.

This exercise is a great way to get children talking about different family structures, as well as sharing their own traditions and holidays.

### How to lead the activity:

- Start with everyone sitting in a circle.
- Ask everyone to close their eyes, and think of their favourite holiday celebration. They could pick Christmas, Diwali, Lunar New Year or any other holiday. Try to dissuade them from choosing their birthday - these should be days that everyone celebrates together.
- Now, ask them to think of where their Festive Spirit is on that day. It could be eating a special meal, giving gifts, lighting candles or visiting a special place. Ask them to imagine who is there with them, what they can see, smell, hear and feel.
- Now, they can open their eyes.
- Ask for a volunteer. Ask them how many people were in their Festive Spirit moment. Pick that number of people to go to the centre of the circle.  
**e.g. if they were thinking of eating a meal with their mum, dad and grandma, four children would go to the centre.**
- Now ask them to say, in no more than five words, where their Festive Spirit is.  
**e.g. "playing charades" or "eating apple slices and honey"**
- The children in the middle have to now try and mime the activity with no more help from the person whose Festive Spirit it is. How close can they get it? Are some more recognisable than others?
- Repeat this, trying to encourage as many children as possible to share their Festive Spirit and/or act in the middle.

### Extension 1:

- To make the game more challenging, ask a second volunteer to leave the room before each round. They must then try and guess what the children in the centre of the circle are acting out.

### Extension 2:

- Children can draw, paint, or create collages of their Festive Spirits,

## The Magical Thinking Place

Why not create a festive chill-out space this Christmas?

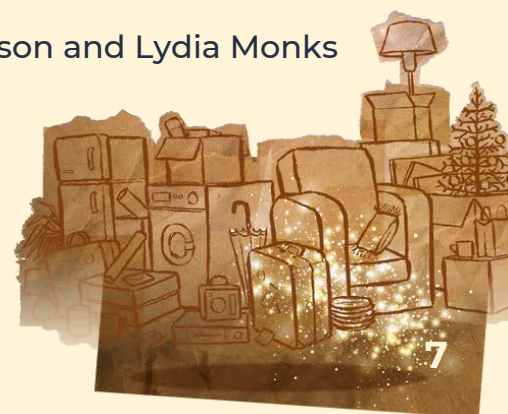
Creating a Magical Thinking Place together can empower young children to consider their own Mental Health and Wellbeing, as well as building skills in emotional literacy and regulation.

### How to set up your Magical Thinking Place

- Choose a corner of your classroom, house or play space to act as your Magical Thinking Place. It should be somewhere out of the way, without a lot of footfall.
- Demarcate the space - for example with bookshelves or tape - but leave it as empty as possible.
- Show your children the space. Explain to them that this will be their Magical Thinking Place.
- Ask every child to draw a picture of what their ideal Magical Thinking Place would look like. They should try to include:
  - 1 thing that helps them to feel happy when they get sad
  - 1 thing that helps them to calm down when they get angry
  - 1 thing that helps them to think when they get confused
- Collect all their drawings, and try to include as many of their ideas in your space. You could get your class to craft or create things to go in the Magical Thinking Place, such as posters, sensory boxes or a basket of encouraging notes.
- Encourage your group to go to the Magical Thinking Place any time they feel sad, angry or overwhelmed.

### You may wish to include some festive books in your Magical Thinking Place. Here are some suggestions:

- 'The Night Before Christmas' by Clement C. Moore and Eric Puybaret
- 'I'm a Reindeer' by Mallory Loehr and Joey Chou
- 'Stick Man' by Julia Donaldson
- 'WOW! It's Snowing' by Tim Hopgood
- 'Merry Christmas, Gus' by Chris Chatterton
- 'Teeny, Tiny Santa' by Rachel Matson and Joey Chou
- 'What the Ladybird Heard at Christmas' by Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks





## Thank You!

We hope these activities have helped to bring a little bit of Reindeer Magic back to your classroom or home!

We can also provide plenty of opportunities for follow-up activities. Polka's experienced team of actors, directors, storytellers and puppeteers are on hand to deliver a range of workshops in your school. We can create tailor-made workshops for you and your pupils based on any theme you like, including exploring the themes and production elements of the performance you have just seen!

For more information, please visit our website:

[www.polkatheatre.com/schools](http://www.polkatheatre.com/schools)

Or contact Lizzie, Polka's Schools Relationship Officer:

[lizzie@polkatheatre.com](mailto:lizzie@polkatheatre.com)

We look forward to seeing you at Polka Theatre again soon!

Best Wishes,  
Polka Theatre's Creative Learning Team

