

# Learning Links

Helping parents, caregivers, and early childhood professionals make the link between media and learning

December 2003

## Celebrate the Season! Recommended Book List for the Holidays From: PBS Parents

### Christmas

#### Christmas Is ...

*Author/Illustrator: Gail Gibbons*

Simple informational overview emphasizes the importance of love and generosity during the Christmas season. (Preschool - Grade 2)

#### Dragon's Merry Christmas

*Author/Illustrator: Dav Pilkey*

This popular author/illustrator has created several wonderful early readers about Dragon. Here, in four short chapters, Dragon shares Christmas with his friends. (Grades 1-3)

#### Jan Brett's Christmas Treasury

*Author/Illustrator: Jan Brett*

Collection of 7 of Brett's Christmas and winter stories, including *The Mitten* and Clement Moore's *The Night Before Christmas*. Festive colors permeate the wintry paintings. (Preschool and up)

#### The Polar Express

*Author/Illustrator: Chris Van Allsburg*

Haunting story of a boy who meets Santa himself and asks for the gift of one silver bell from Santa's sleigh. Caldecott Medal winner. (Grades K-4)

#### Too Many Tamales

*Author: Gary Soto*

*Illustrator: Ed Martinez*

Maria is sure she's lost her mother's diamond ring in the batter for the Christmas corn tamales. The only way to find it must be to eat all the tamales! (Grades K-3)

### Kwanzaa

#### The Story of Kwanzaa

*Author: Donna L. Washington*

*Illustrator: Stephen Taylor*

Learn about the origins of this holiday in the context of the history of African-Americans in the U.S. (Grades 2-5)

### Ramadan

#### Celebrating Ramadan

*Author: Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith*

Readers follow a fourth grader as he celebrates the

month-long Islamic holy days. (Grades 2-5)

#### Magid Feasts for Ramadan

*Author: Mary Matthews*

*Illustrator: E.B. Lewis*

Eight year-old Magid wants to join the fast, but his parents believe he is too young. (Grades 2-

### Hanukkah

#### Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins

*Author: Eric Kimmel*

*Illustrator: Trina Schart Hyman*

In this humorous story, Hershel helps a village outwit the Goblins who are preventing the townfolk from celebrating Hanukkah. Illustrated by a Caldecott Medal winner. (Grades K-3)

#### Latkes, Latkes, Good to Eat: A Chanukah Story

*Author: Naomi Howland*

Funny story about a poor family who receives a magic frying pan that cooks latkes until it hears the magic word. (Preschool - Grade 1)

#### The Story of Hanukkah

*Author: Amy Ehrlich*

*Illustrator: Ori Sherman*

Brightly colored paintings enrich this telling of the Hanukkah story. (Preschool - Grade 2)

### Holiday PBS Kids Episodes:

#### Sunday, Dec 7 at 12:30 PM

**Arthur's Perfect Christmas** Plans are under way in Elwood City for the best holidays ever as Arthur, D.W., their family and friends make preparations for perfect gifts, perfect parties and perfect family traditions for Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and even "Baxter Day" (Buster and his mom's special celebration). The only problem is, just like in real life, perfection is hard to attain, and things start to fall apart.

#### Sunday, Dec 21 at 9:30AM

**Elmo's World: Happy Holidays** Kelly Ripa helps her new fuzzy red friend rejoice in the spirit of the holidays in ELMO'S WORLD: HAPPY HOLIDAYS!, the first-ever "Elmo's World" holiday special. Ripa delivers a shining performance as Letter Carrier Kelly, lending a hand - along with the colorful SESAME STREET cast - to teach Elmo about Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa and the common traits these holiday celebrations share.



## Turn your Kids' Chores Into Fun with Reading and Writing!

Helpful Hints from *Between the Lions*  
[www.pbskids.org/lions](http://www.pbskids.org/lions)

1. Help them write a To Do list of things they have to get done.
2. Help them write a Ta Da list of things they did get done. Ta da!!
3. Create a calendar or write on a regular one. Note their regular chores, and offer stickers as each task is completed.
4. Write grocery lists together, then look for the matching words on labels and receipts when you're out shopping.
5. If they have special or one-time chores to do, take some time to make a Special Helper certificate on colored paper. Write their name, what they did, and make it look like a fancy certificate.
6. Read some of our adventures stories online ([pbskids.org/lions](http://pbskids.org/lions)), like "Pecos Bill Cleans up the West," or a pirate story like, "To The Ship! To The Ship!" Then make up a chores list for Pecos Bill or the pirates. What's on their To Do lists? What would be on their grocery lists?
7. Combine kids' duties with a reading reward. If they clean their room, read them an extra story at bedtime.
8. Use a list format to spark their imaginations. What ten things would monsters do on a weekend? What ten things would pilgrims buy to take back home if they time-traveled to today? What ten things would change if you were the new President of the World?
9. Talk about any chores they've done. Do they like the responsibility? Did anything surprise them? Was it too hard? Remember to praise effort.
10. Read books about kids doing chores. Curious George, Madeline, Toot and Puddle, George and Martha, and the Berenstain Bears all have chores to do and errands to run in their adventures. So do many others.

*Between the Lions* airs weekdays at 3:30 on WPBS-TV.