

Galt

MUSEUM
& ARCHIVES

stories unfolding...



CHRISTMAS

Past, Present & Future



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TEACHER'S MANUAL

CHRISTMAS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE TEACHER'S GUIDE

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This teacher's guide offers background information and ideas for classroom activities designed to complement a visit to the Galt. It contains information to assist you in planning your visit, information and activities for both before and after your visit, and outlines what you can expect from your education program.

The Galt's Mission

The Galt Museum & Archives engages and educates our communities in the human history of Southwestern Alberta by preserving and sharing collections, stories and memories that define our identity and guide our future.

Program Overview

Christmas is an event we remember. The traditions from our childhood are cherished and passed on to our own children. Southern Alberta's Christmas customs combine sacred and secular customs brought from many parts of the world. As immigrants moved to southern Alberta, their traditions were adapted by the southern Alberta climate and the North American culture. This program introduces students to some of the activities and presents that children in the past would have known and helps students learn about Christmas of the past.

Program Length

Christmas Past, Present and Future runs throughout the end of November and December and is designed to be 75 minutes in length. Groups wishing to remain for longer time period, should make arrangements with the Museum Educator.

Curriculum Connections

This program complements the following areas of the curriculum:

K.1 I Am Unique

Understanding their own culture in order to understand how it contributes to their identity.

K.2 I Belong

Highlights shared traditions within the community.

1.2 Moving Forward with the Past: My Family, My History and My Community

Appreciating how this celebration contributes to their sense of identity and belonging.

Recognizing how Christmas might have been different in the past than today.

2.2 A Community in the Past

Appreciates how understanding the past help make connections to the present.

Confirmation, Cancellations, and Contact Information

Your program has been scheduled as per the information on your confirmation sheet. If you have any questions about your booking or the program, please contact the Museum Educator at tours@galtmuseum.com or (403) 320-4248. If you must cancel or reschedule a program, please let us know as soon as possible. We will try to fit your class in at another time as time permits.

Payment

Payments can be made in advance of the program or on the day of the program. The Galt accepts VISA, MasterCard, debit, cash, and cheques. Cheques should be made out to the Galt Museum & Archives or City of Lethbridge. If payment is made in advance, receipts will be available on the day of the program. Otherwise, receipts will be mailed out to the school. The payment amount is \$45 per class per program.

Expectations for Visitors

- There should be one or two adult supervisors per class (this may include yourself). More adults are always welcome and there is no cost for adult supervisors. Younger siblings accompanying the class with their parents are also most welcome to attend the program.
- Running is not permitted in the Galt. There is green space to the south of the Galt if the class requires a space to stretch their legs.
 - In order to protect and preserve the artifacts, drinks, food, and chewing gum are not permitted in the galleries or Archives. Drinking and eating are permitted in the Viewing Gallery.
 - Because they are fragile and irreplaceable, artifacts on display should not be touched or handled.
 - It is requested that there be no flash photography in the galleries. Light can, over time, damage the artifacts. Flash photography can be taken in the viewing gallery and programming areas (i.e. classroom).
 - Visitors are not required to whisper in the Galt. Indoor voices are preferred.
 - Washrooms are located on the main floor in the old portion of the building.

The Role of Adult Supervisors

Adult supervisors are an integral part of the Galt's programs. The following suggestions are provided to help make their role clearer and easier to manage. Some teachers find it useful to photocopy these suggestions for their adult supervisors.

- ✓ Float around and assist during the activities.
- ✓ Maintain the focus of the activities as you assist students through the activities. Remind students of what they are trying to discover and help them troubleshoot problems they may encounter.
- ✓ Depending on the activity, supply the students with answers to questions and additional information. Your Museum Education Volunteer (Docent) or Museum Educator will answer any questions you may have. If a question cannot be answered during the program, it will be recorded and more information will be forwarded to the school.
- ✓ Assist in keeping students together.
- ✓ Ensure that students do not: run in the galleries, touch the artifacts on display, or drink or chew gum in the exhibits.
- ✓ Ask any available staff for assistance if there is an emergency.
- ✓ Encourage the students to ask questions and get involved.
- ✓ Enjoy your visit.

Your Arrival at the Galt

- The Galt has a parking lot north of the building with bus and vehicle parking.
- Buses and vehicles may drop off and pick up students at the north east corner of the building (using the east entrance). This is a fire access road so please do not leave vehicles here once they are emptied.
- Please enter through the east entrance. There is a coat room down the hallway to your left as you enter. Please leave all coats and backpacks here. Students do not need to remove boots. This coat room is solely for the use of programs and is not for general visitors.
- Galt staff will meet you at the east entrance.

Background Information for Christmas Past, Present and Future

Christmas traditions go back thousands of years and are from many different cultures. It is not possible to cover all of the traditions here, so we focus instead on those most familiar to North Americans.

As Christmas evolved in North America, new customs were adopted and many old ones were reworked. The legend of Santa Claus for example, had origins in Europe and was brought by Dutch settlers to New York in the early 18th century. Traditionally, Santa Claus—from the Dutch Sinter Klaas—was depicted as a tall, dignified, religious figure riding a white horse through the air. Known as Saint Nicholas in Germany, he was usually accompanied by Black Peter, an elf who punished disobedient children. In North America he eventually developed into a fat, jolly old gentleman who had neither the religious attributes of Saint Nicholas nor the strict disciplinarian character of Black Peter.

Santa's transformation began in 1823, when a New York newspaper published the poem “A Visit from Saint Nicholas,” which Clement Clark Moore had written to amuse his daughter. The poem introduced many Americans to the story of a kindly saint who flew over housetops in a reindeer-drawn sleigh. Portraits and drawings of Santa Claus by American illustrator Thomas Nast further strengthened the legend during the second half of the 19th century. Living at the North Pole and assisted by elves, the modern Santa produced and delivered toys to all good children. By the late 19th century he had become such a prominent figure of American folklore that in 1897, when Virginia O'Hanlon wrote to the New York Sun newspaper asking if Santa were real, she received a direct answer: “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.”

Christmas Tree

While Santa Claus became increasingly familiar to North Americans, the German Christmas tree also acquired popularity in North America. As early as the 17th century, Germans had transformed this pagan symbol of fertility into a Christian symbol of rebirth. According to legend, the Christmas tree tradition began with the founder of German Protestantism, Martin Luther. While walking through the forest on Christmas Eve, Luther was so moved by the beauty of the starlit fir trees that he brought one indoors and

decorated it with candles to remind his children of God's creation. In 1841 Prince Albert of Germany gave his wife, Queen Victoria of England, a gift of a Christmas tree. This was reputedly the first Christmas tree in England, but the custom spread quickly. German immigrants took the Christmas tree to other parts of Europe and to the United States and Canada, where it soon became a popular tradition. Blown-glass ornaments, tin angels, paper chains, candles, cornucopias filled with sugarplums, and other decorations made the simple evergreen tree into a beautiful parlour centrepiece at Christmastime.

Early immigrants to southern Alberta could not have the Christmas tree they had enjoyed back east or in Europe. Evergreens were rare in southern Alberta and those that could be found were scraggly specimens. Christmas trees in those times were made from whatever was handy and one thing that was readily available was tumbleweeds. Trees would be formed out of the prickly weeds, which when shaped and decorated were good stand-ins for the real thing.

Christmas Cards

The practice of exchanging Christmas cards also became a widespread custom in the nineteenth century. Europeans had distributed wood prints of religious themes for Christmas during the Middle Ages (5th century to 15th century). In 1843 English illustrator John Callcott Horsley created the first modern Christmas card. The card depicted a family celebration and its caption read, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." In the United States, German-born printer Louis Prang made advances in colour lithography that enabled him to mass-produce a colourful Christmas card in 1875. The card sold extremely well, and soon the custom of exchanging Christmas cards spread throughout the country.

Pre- and Post-Activities

These activities can be done prior to your visit to the Galt or after you have returned to your classroom.

HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

Have every student write down his or her favourite part of Christmas and have the students discuss what they do at home to celebrate Christmas. Does everyone celebrate the same way?

MY PARENTS...

Ask each student to go home and ask his or her parents and/or grandparents how Christmas when they were young is different from Christmas today. Have the students share this information with the class.

TOYS THEN AND NOW

Draw some of the toys/gifts that a pioneer child or a child in the past might get for Christmas. Then draw some of the toys/gifts that a child would get for Christmas now.

PIONEER DECORATIONS

Draw a large Christmas tree and illustrate on the tree the decorations that a pioneer family would make to trim the tree. Label the ornaments.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Have students write a story, draw a picture, or journal about what they think Christmas might be like 100 years from now. What types of gifts will children get? Will Santa be riding a rocket instead of a sleigh? What food will people eat?

Your Galt Program

ACTIVITY 1 : WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Students will be welcomed to the museum and will review what a museum is and the expectations of visitors to the museum. Students will be introduced to Christmas and the idea that Christmas has changed over time.

ACTIVITY 2: TOY

Students will make a traditional pioneer toy that they will be able to take home with them.

ACTIVITY 3: PRESENT/STOCKINGS

Students will be introduced to the presents a pioneer child would have received by opening a Christmas stocking and discussing each present.

ACTIVITY 4: ORNAMENT OR DOLL

Students will either make a traditional Christmas ornament or will make a yarn doll.

ACTIVITY 5: FOOD

Students will decorate a cookie.

ACTIVITY 6: CONCLUSION

Students will review the activities of the program, will have the opportunity to eat their cookies, and will be invited to visit the museum and Archives again.

Evaluation

An evaluation form was sent out with your confirmation. Evaluation results allow us to offer the most effective and highest standard program that we can. Your feedback and suggestions are greatly appreciated. Please fax the form back to us at (403)329-4958 or mail to the Museum Educator at 910 4 Ave S, Lethbridge, AB T1J 0P6.



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