



**KIRK O' THE VALLEY**

~ A SCHOOL COMMUNITY SINCE 1961 ~

**The Best Gifts to Give Our Classmates and Family During the Holidays (and Always)**

Before Halloween was even over, stores began packing their shelves with holiday decorations and beefing up their toy aisles with the latest and greatest drool-worthy toys. The fat Target toy catalogue arrived in ample time for perusing, its pages stuffed with everything from My Little Ponies to Marvel and Mandalorian, LOL Surprise Dolls to Legos, Bluey and Blippi to Barbies and Beyblades, Pokémon to Paw Patrol, Roblox Nerf Blasters to Rainbow High. It's easy for kids and parents alike to get wrapped up (pun intended) in the rush of it all, but it's also just as easy to think about all the \*invisible\* gifts that we already have around us: the kind things that others do for us, the ways others share their talents with us, our own talents, and the fun, friendship, good times, and love we have with our family and friends. So, as Thanksgiving and the holidays approach, we can remind ourselves and others how grateful we are for all those non-material things that make our lives so wonderful and rich beyond what money can buy. One very fun and sneaky way to do this is with what the second graders in Miss Idolor's class call "Compliment Cards." Simply think of someone you would like to give a special compliment to, grab a small piece of paper, write a note complimenting them, and then give it to that classmate, friend, or family member. For example, if a classmate found your favorite sweatshirt on the playground and returned it to you, you could write the following compliment to them on the little paper saying: "Thank you for being a thoughtful friend and returning my shirt to me. I thought it was lost forever, but you found it, and I'm so relieved. You always look out for friends." These little notes are the best type of surprises and are guaranteed to make your friends and family smile just as much as those brand new toys and presents. And the great thing is, it's so easy to continue doing this even after the holidays, so that our friends and family are always reminded of how very special they are to us and how much we appreciate and love them. Happy Thanksgiving!



**Sweater Pumpkins - Table Décor for Thanksgiving**

**1. Measure and Cut Sweater Fabric**

Measure a pumpkin from the center top to the center of the bottom. This is the halfway-around measurement of the pumpkin. To this measurement, add about 4 inches.

**2. Cover the Pumpkin**

Turn the cut sleeve piece inside out. Tie off the cut end with a rubber band. Turn the sleeve inside out again. Pull the sweater over the pumpkin. Secure the opening with another rubber band or twine.

**3. Make a Twine Pumpkin Stem**

Place a dot of hot glue on the rubber band, then start wrapping the twine around, keeping it tight. Add a dot of hot glue to every other wrapped row. Once you're happy with the height of the stem, cut off the extra fabric.

**4. Decorate with leaves, voila!**

**Tips:**

- No pumpkins lying around? Try filling up the sweater with beans at Step 2.
- Try neutral tones of sweaters
- Try an old cable knit sweater - that texture!



FALL

This Or That

Bonfire	or	Hayride
Cozy Scarf	or	Cozy Socks
Pumpkin Pie	or	Apple Pie
Cyber Monday	or	Black Friday
Halloween	or	Thanksgiving
Rake Leaves	or	Bake Pies
Corn Maze	or	Haunted House
Hallmark Movie	or	Horror Movie
Apple Picking	or	Pumpkin Patch
Candy Apple	or	Caramel Apple
Sweet Potato	or	Mashed Potato
Hot Cocoa	or	Apple Cider
Parade	or	Football

Q: What do you call a frog hanging from the ceiling?

A: **Mistle-toad**

Q: What is a snowman's favorite food?

A: **Brrrrrrrr-itos.**

Q: Which one of Santa's reindeer has the best moves?

A: **Dancer**

Q: How good is Santa at karate?

A: **He has a black belt**

Q: How does Darth Vader enjoy his turkey?

A: **On the dark side**

Q: What do you get when you cross a bell with a skunk?

A: **Jingle smells.**

Q: A ginger man went to the doctor with a sore knee.

**The doctor said, "Have you tried icing it."**

Q: What kind of car do elves like to drive?

A: **A Toy-ota**

Q: How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?

A: **Nothing. It was on the house.**

Q: Where does mistletoe go to get famous?

A: **Holly-wood.**

Q: What kind of music does elves like best?

A: **Wrap music**

Q: Why was the snowman looking through the carrots?

A: **He was picking his nose.**

Q: Why are Christmas Trees so bad at sewing?

A: **They always drop their needles.**

# FAMILY LIFE

## Family Life: Keeping the Season Simple

This time of year is always a blur, isn't it? Between Halloween and the New Year, we hop from one holiday to the next with very little time to stop and reflect upon what just happened. Add COVID-related complications to the mix, and things feel even more hectic.

Now consider that as chaotic and exhausting as the holidays are for the grown-ups, it's even harder on our kids. For them, the holiday season is essentially an endless stream of sensory overload, and they're still developing the coping skills we take for granted as adults.

The smart people at the Child Mind Institute offer four suggestions for helping our kids enjoy the fun so we can avoid the inevitable meltdowns:

- 1. Shift the focus away from receiving gifts and instead, involve them in the giving. Let them help with the process of deciding what to give and where to find it. That helps them to be more invested in the act of giving so that they'll be more likely to experience the joy in giving.**
- 2. Let the kids help out. They don't care if everything is perfect. They're far more likely to warmly remember helping to make the holidays festive.**
- 3. Don't give into the temptation to ignore the usual routines, and pay attention to early signs that the kids need to tap out.**
- 4. Remember that they're still kids, and keep your expectations in line with their age. Be sure there's room in the schedule for both physical activity and downtime.**

You can read more about the Child Mind Institute's recommendations for happy holidays with kids here: [shorturl.at/mnzA3](https://shorturl.at/mnzA3)

# PTF LIFE



# KIRK LIFE

This month we are excited to get to know Miss Zinnia of Room 4 better! Miss Zinnia came to Kirk as a volunteer working on her early childhood education degree a dozen years ago, learning from the infamous Miss Becky and Miss Donna. Her favorite part about working at Kirk is the people and the children. "Kirk is home and you feel loved by everyone and you know everyone. I never have a moment where I don't want to be here. I love Kirk."

She loves being a Pre-school teacher because everyday is different. She gets to face new challenges and new experiences everyday. She also loves the honesty of four and five year olds, "you never know what comes out of their mouths." As seasoned preschool educator her favorite children's book is "The Ugly Pumpkin" and all the "Elephant and Piggie" books.

When not being a teacher she is a mommy to her son, Noah. She loves reading with him and playing on the trampoline. But when she gets some much deserved alone time, she loves to read books and watch her favorite shows. She also loves shopping and spending time with her family. Her family includes, two dogs Turtle and Coco and three turtles that have Pokémon character names that she can only remember half of the time.

Her favorite movie is "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" because it's a classic and funny. You can enjoy watching it with anyone. "It was also a movie I enjoyed with my grandmother. It reminds me of her." Miss Zinnia loves chicken, chicken soup, and chicken Alfredo. If it has chicken in, she will eat it!!

This year's Scholastic Book Fair and BOOFest was extra special to many of our families, as this was an opportunity for new Kirk parents to be on campus beyond the blue gate for the first time. The PTF was overjoyed by the participation of our entire student body from the Tot Center to 5th Grade, and to see our



community come together IN-PERSON once again for these two fun-filled events.

We hope you'll join us in sharing the joy of the season with low income and homeless families through Family Rescue Center's November Thanksgiving Food Drive and December Toy Drive. Through donations of all kinds, the Kirk community continues to support the incredible work done by the Family Rescue Center and their mission to serve homeless and low-income families in our community.

**As the months of November and December bring loved ones together, the Kirk PTF wishes a healthy and happy holiday to our extended Kirk Family.**

*Pictured are: Miss Melanie, Tot Center students and Clifford the Dog at the Book Fair; and 5th Graders Scarlett Stephens, Roxy MacMillan, Eleanor Amagor and Keeley Cross at BOOFest.*

