



FUNDA DAY TIMES



We wish you
Peace and Joy
this Christmas!



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ONLINE



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Christmas Art



Esandi Ranasinghe (11 years)
Musaeus College, Colombo



Geethavi Saubhagya (12 years)
C.W.W. Kannangara C. C., Mathugama



Shadrach Fernando (15 years)
La Petite Fleur Academy,
Dehiwala



Thenuki Dharmaratne (11 years)
Buddhist Ladies' College, Colombo



Nemiah Thambimuttu (5 years)
Ladies' College Nursery



Rasandi Ranasinghe (9 years)
Musaeus College, Colombo



Krishmi Fernando (9 years)
Holy Family Convent, Colombo



Suganthan Labisashan (8 years)
Harvard Int. School, Matale



Saqeef-ul-Haq (11 years)
Matale Int. School

Happy Birthday



Haya and Hanfa Nafas
11 years on December 25



Rehan and Reshana Ismail
Birthdays on December 18

Photographs of members and non-members between 4 – 15 years, for the birthday page, should reach us at least ten days before the birthday, along with a letter from a parent giving full details.



Compiled by Cecilia Hewavitharana

Christmas is celebrated annually on December 25 to mark the Birth of Jesus. Despite being a Christian holiday, it is celebrated by non-Christians around the world and is arguably the most celebrated holiday.

Christmas is celebrated on December 24 in some countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Iceland.

The Birth of Jesus

Around 2000 years ago, Mary and her husband Joseph, travelled to Joseph's hometown Bethlehem, because the Roman Emperor had decreed that a census be taken, which meant that everyone had to return to their hometowns. Upon reaching Bethlehem, they could not find accommodation as many people had travelled for the census, so they are believed to have taken shelter in a cave.

That night, Mary gave birth to Jesus and had to lay Him in a manger (a long trough for animal feed), as she had nowhere else to keep Him. The Baby's first visitors were shepherds who were informed by angels of His Birth. A few days later, three Magi (wise men) followed a bright star (the Star of Bethlehem), which guided them to where Jesus was, and brought Him gifts.

According to the Bible, Jesus is a descendant of King David and the Son of God, but circumstances led Him to being lain in a manger after He was born, with His first visitors being poor shepherds.

This was to emphasise the importance of humility.



Advent

Advent (which is derived from the Latin word, 'adventus', meaning 'arrival') is the season leading up to Christmas, which begins on the Sunday closest to November 30 and ends on Christmas Eve (December 24).



Christmas Markets

Christmas markets are open-air markets held during the Christmas season, which feature seasonal food and drinks, artisanal crafts, as well as a variety of festive activities such as Christmas carols and ice skating.

Christmas markets originated in Germany and are predominantly found in Europe but they are also held in countries such as Singapore, China, the USA and Canada.

Christmas Market at Dome Square, Riga, Latvia, 2025
(Photo credits: Taka Tanabe)



Lucia

Lucia is a Swedish celebration observed on December 13 that involves festive treats, singing and candles. Also known as Lucia Day and Saint Lucy's Day, it is the commemoration of St. Lucia of Syracuse (in Sicily, Italy), who had come bearing food for Christians hiding in the Roman catacombs and had

worn a wreath adorned with candles on her head to light her way.

The seasonal treat made by Swedes for Lucia and Advent is an S-shaped, sweet saffron bun called 'Lussekat' (which, when translated directly, means 'Lucia's cat'), which they never eat at any other time of the year. Other seasonal treats include gingerbread and glögg (mulled wine).



Lussekat, glögg and gingerbread
(Photo credits: Emelie Asplund/imagebank.sweden.se)

Although Christmas is mainly associated with decorations and celebrations, the true meaning of Christmas lies in giving to those less fortunate.

Secret Santa

By Manoshi De Silva

Savith didn't feel as excited as he usually did during Christmas time. This year things were different. Heavy rains had caused floods and landslides all over the country. Although the town where Savith lived was safe, towns and villages not too far from his house had been badly affected.

Savith turned thirteen years old this year and he had been planning on throwing a grand Christmas party for all of his friends who turned into teenagers this year. But now, he was no longer interested in it.

"I wish I could do something to make Christmas at least a little bit better for those who lost their homes," Savith told his elder brother Suven. "We did donate water bottles and distributed lunch packets the past few days," reminded his brother. "I wish I could do something especially for the children," Savith sighed.

Savith pulled out his savings. There was a lot of money, as he had been saving up for almost a year for his party. "I can buy some stuff for the kids who are at the temporary camp," he thought. He also had a lot of toys that he no longer played with, especially soft toys from his childhood. Savith also had a huge collection of toy cars that he loved dearly. But he decided to donate those as well.

Savith together with his brother went shopping to buy clothes and school stationery for the kids, with the money that he had saved. His brother and the rest of his family also contributed money to buy these things. Even some of Savith's friends contributed for this worthy cause.

By that evening Savith's living room was full of toys, clothes and other items suitable to be gifted to small kids. "The day after tomorrow is Christmas," said Savith, "Ayya, can you drive me with all of this stuff to the camp on Christmas Eve?" Savith's brother turned eighteen and had his driving licence, so he agreed to take his younger brother to the camp.

"Let's put these items into smaller bags, making sure that each pack has a toy, a piece of clothing and some stationery," said Suven.

Savith nodded. "Let's categorise them according to different age groups. Then we can give the right pack to each kid."

"But some of these kids are from the nearby villages and they know us. They might feel shy to take these from us," said Savith feeling concerned. "I wish we could give these without the kids knowing that the gifts are from us."

"According to the Bible, it is said, 'what the right hand gives, the left hand should not know'," said Suven. "If we go in the night, the kids will be sleeping. They will get their gifts on the morning of Christmas Day. We can hand them over to the person-in-charge. As the packages are arranged according to the age groups, he shouldn't have a problem in distributing them!"

So Savith and Suven put all the packages into their van. As darkness fell, the weather turned cold.

"The road to the camp is muddy after the floods," said Suven. "Here, take my rubber gumboots so that you don't get stuck in the mud."

"It's cold too," said Savith wearing his red-coloured hoodie jacket to keep himself warm in the cool December air. "I think it's better if you bring a sack as well. You can stuff a lot of packs into it!" said Suven, handing Savith a large, reddish-brown sack.

After arriving at the camp, Savith carried his huge sack on his shoulder and walked along the muddy track that the vehicles couldn't go on. It was heartbreaking to see how damaged the roads and houses were. After talking with the authorities at the camp and handing over the parcels, he headed back to their van.

A few parents who saw what Savith had done, followed him to the van. They thanked the two boys a lot. They had been very sad because they had nothing to give their kids on Christmas Day. But thanks to the two boys, the kids would now have gifts for Christmas. Savith and Suven felt very happy after hearing this.



The next morning, on Christmas Day, the two boys and their family went to church for Christmas Mass. The priest who conducted the sermon preached that Jesus was known as the 'light of the world' and how each and everyone can become a light to this world by doing good and helping others.

After the Holy Mass, everyone wished each other and prepared to leave. There were some people and children who were from the camp, who had joined the mass. One of the kids who came from the camp, lifted the teddy bear she was carrying and told another kid, "This is what Santa brought for me last night!" It was a toy that had been donated by Savith and Suven, the previous night.

"You won't believe this but I saw Santa last night!" said the little boy who was near her. "I got up to go to the bathroom last night and I saw Santa near the entrance door. He was wearing his red coat and a black pair of boots. He was even carrying a huge sack full of gifts on his shoulder!" said the boy widening his eyes.

"Really?" gasped the little girl. "Yes, you were all sleeping at that time," said the small boy.

Savith and Suven looked at each other and tried to control their giggles. "I did see one small boy staring at me when I was handing over the packages," smiled Savith, "but I never in my wildest dreams thought that he'd think that I was Santa Claus!"

"I'm not surprised though considering what you were wearing," laughed Suven, "You were their 'Secret Santa' and I am very proud of you!" he said patting his younger brother lovingly.



Win super books from



Age: 9 years and below

Word Count: 150

Topic: A Christmas concert

Win: More Wishing-Chair Stories by Enid Blyton

Mollie and Peter are home for the holidays and their wonderful Wishing-Chair is ready to whisk them away to magical lands.



Best of all, a certain jolly somebody needs help delivering presents or Christmas might not happen!

Will Mollie and Peter be able to save the day?

Age: 10 – 12 years

Word Count: 150 – 200

Topic: Home-made Christmas gifts for family

Win: Street Child by Berlie Doherty

Jim Jarvis is a runaway. When his mother dies, he is all alone in a workhouse and desperate to escape. He faces a constant battle to survive. Just as Jim finds some friends, he is snatched away and made to work for cruel Grimy Nick.



Jim's gripping adventure is based on a true story.

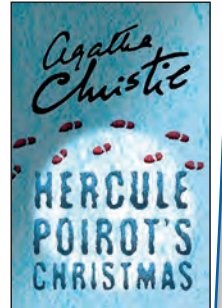
Age: 13 – 15 years

Word Count: 200 – 250

Topic: Your plans for Christmas

Win: Hercule Poirot's Christmas by Agatha Christie

Christmas Eve and the Lee family's reunion is shattered by a deafening crash and a high-pitched scream. Upstairs, the tyrannical Simeon Lee lies dead in a pool of blood.



When Hercule Poirot offers to assist, he finds an atmosphere not of mourning but of mutual suspicion. It seems everyone had their own reason to hate the old man...



or

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Write at the top of your Essay

■ Book Competition ■ Essay Topic

Bizzy Minds Publishing



'READY TO ORDER?'

Holiday Challenge

Can You Prepare Santa's Order?

Scan the code to listen and play



Stand a Chance to Win 'The Ready To Order?' Sticker Book



SANTA'S TREAT HOUSE MENU

<p>Apple Pie</p>	<p>Cookie Plate</p>	<p>Love Cake</p>
<p>Reindeer Carrot Sticks</p>	<p>The Elf Slice Mini Pizza</p>	<p>Kringle Lasagne</p>
<p>Candy Cane Shake</p>	<p>Mug of Milk</p>	<p>Hot Milo</p>

Waiter's Order Sheet

Restaurant:
 Customer:
 Order Taken By.....
 Paste the items below & write the quantity

Quantity.....	Quantity.....
Quantity.....	Quantity.....

Please include your Full Name, Date of Birth, Home Address, Telephone Number and Email when sending in the Order Sheet clipping to enter the competition. Send the completed cut-out by post to: Funday Times, 'Ready to Order, Holiday Challenge', No. 8, Hunupitiya Cross Road, Colombo 2 or scan and email the clipping to fundaytimes1@gmail.com
Send your entries by Dec. 31, 2025

Pom-Pom Christmas Tree

What You Need:

- Printable template (optional)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Coloured paper (green, pink, yellow and brown)
- Pom-poms (different colours)
- Black marker

Method



Pick a colour for the background (construction paper is best). Take a sheet of green paper (print paper is OK).



Fold the green paper in half and draw an outline of the tree, well half the Christmas tree. This will make sure the Christmas tree cutout you make is symmetrical. Cut along the pencil line.



Unfold the tree. Apply glue on the tree and stick it on the background.



Cut out a brown rectangle for the trunk and glue it on the tree.



Draw a smiling face.



Cut a star from yellow paper and glue it to the tree's tip.



Glue colourful pom-poms around the tree's shape and two pink ones as cheeks.



Your colourful pom-pom Christmas tree craft is done!

Source: Easy Peasy and Fun

Northern Hemisphere winter begins on December 21

December 15, 2025

As days grow shorter and temperatures drop, it may feel like winter has already arrived. However, the astronomical start of winter in the Northern Hemisphere is not until December 21, 2025. Called the winter solstice, it marks the shortest day and the longest night of the year. At the same time, people in the Southern Hemisphere will celebrate the summer solstice. They will enjoy the longest day and shortest night of 2025.

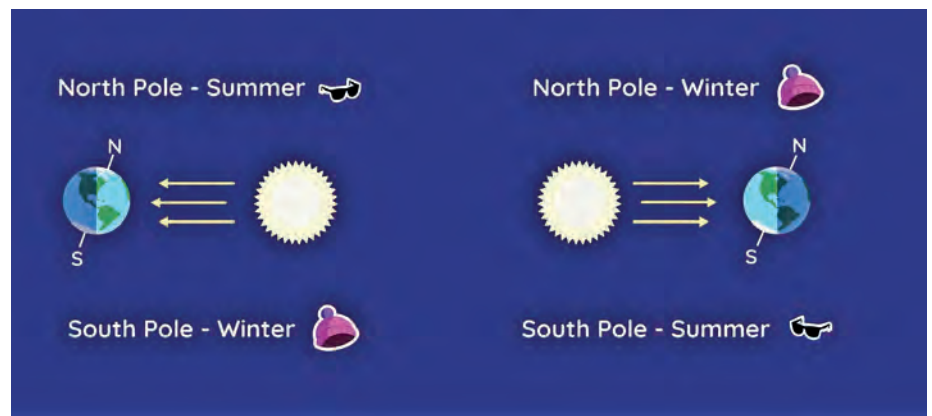
The different seasons result from Earth's orbit around the Sun and the 23.5-degree tilt of its axis. During the December solstice, the Northern Hemisphere tilts farthest from the Sun. It receives less sunlight, resulting in shorter days and winter. Meanwhile, the Southern Hemisphere is tilted most toward the Sun. Hence, it enjoys longer days and summer.

The winter solstice was very important for ancient cultures. Once it passed, the days became increasingly longer. Though many months of cold weather remained, the people knew that the Sun had not left them. The Sun's "rebirth" was marked with elaborate ceremonies. Many of these were performed at structures specially built for the occasion.

One of the most famous is Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England. This prehistoric religious site comprises a circle of stones that align with the Sun's movements. Visitors from around the world gather there every winter solstice to see the spectacular sunrise between the stones.



The Northern Hemisphere winter starts on December 21.



The seasons are caused by the Earth's rotation around the Sun and its tilt.



Winter solstice sunrise at Stonehenge.

Newgrange in Ireland's Boyne Valley is also a popular solstice destination. The 5,000-year-old stone structure is designed to receive a ray of sunlight in its central chamber at dawn on the winter solstice. As the Sun lights up the dark room, it reveals numerous intricate carvings on the walls. The event lasts 17 minutes from start to finish. Because of its popularity, only a few dozen people chosen by lottery are allowed in at dawn from December 19 to 23. Afterward, visitors without tickets are allowed in groups of 20.

Many cities have established their own traditions to celebrate the winter solstice. In Japan, people take baths with yuzu. The small citrus fruit's scent is believed to bring good health and drive away winter colds. In Norway, some towns light large bonfires. In Sweden, people honour the day with candlelit processions.

Source: DOGO News

The reindeer that thinks it's a dog

December 16, 2025

Most reindeer grow up outside with their herd... But not Lars.

The six-month-old reindeer was raised inside a house with pet spaniels on a farm in the Midlands.

Although he now lives with other reindeer, Lars still enjoys coming indoors to visit his dog friends, where he curls up with them and feels at home.

"He drinks from the dog's water bowl. That's normal for him. Being in the house is normal with him," says owner Angie Nelson.

She has owned reindeers full-time for 18 years at her farm between Market Harborough in Leicestershire and Corby in Northamptonshire.

Source: CBBC Newsround



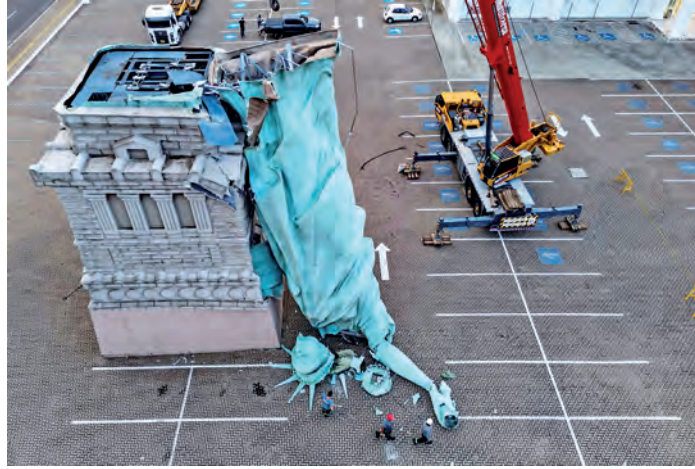


December 16

News in Pictures

**Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Aircrafts fly past as Bangladesh Air Force team performs an aerobatic display to mark the 54th Victory Day of Bangladesh.

**Guaíba, Brazil**

Strong winds topple a replica of the Statue of Liberty made by the Brazilian retailer Havan.

**Sydney, Australia**

Mourners attend a vigil for the victims of the Bondi Beach terrorist attack. Fifteen people were killed in the attack, considered as Australia's worst mass shooting in nearly 30 years. Australia's Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, has vowed to introduce tougher gun control laws.

**St. George Hospital in Sydney, Australia**

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visits Ahmed al Ahmed, the bystander who charged at one of the gunmen and seized his rifle during the deadly shooting at Bondi Beach.

**Caracas, Venezuela**

A member of the Bolivarian militia lifts up a girl during a rally marking the 26th anniversary of the Venezuelan constitution.

**Uvira, The Democratic Republic of the Congo**

A Congolese trader arranges fabric for sale at Maendeleo market as calm returns after clashes between members of the Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC) and the M23 Movement, who took control of Uvira from the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), in Uvira on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, South Kivu province.

**Beirut, Lebanon**

Retouching work is carried out on a Christmas tree made from two tonnes of soap, in Roumieh, north-east of the Lebanese capital. Carved by one of Lebanon's most renowned soap makers, it is thought to be the first of its kind in the world. After Christmas, the tree will be dismantled and the soap donated to Christian and Muslim orphanages.

**Thammasat, Thailand**

Mavia Wong Weng Qin of Malaysia takes part in the rhythmic gymnastics qualification and team final at the 2025 SEA Games in Pathum Thani province.

Bethlehem, Palestinian Territories

A person dressed as Santa Claus greets a child during a Christmas parade in Bethlehem, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.



Sources: The Guardian & Reuters