

Auriel's Light Festivals December

December 2023

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Welcome!

I'm so glad you decided to download our December content guide. My aim with this content is not to make things harder for you this season, in fact I want to release you from all the "shoulds" and remind you to focus on what fills your cup and only that. I've kept the projects short but also given you some ideas to cultivate peace and love this season.

December is busy! It is your job to enjoy it and to truly focus on the meaning so you can bring that to your children. For deeper content, please join us for our live gathering this month or catch the replay & short audios so you have support as MOM through this month, plus don't miss the children's story.

Festivals:

Advent

Saint Nicholas

Santa Lucia

Solstice (Summer or Winter)

Christmas

Christmastide (12 days between Christmas and Three Kings/Epiphany)

Much love,

The Auriel's Light Team

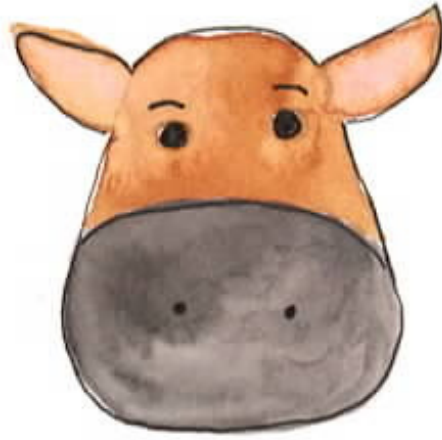
Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

Simple Felt Ornaments

You can use the characters on the next page as a template to cut out your ornaments or you can just use them as fun cut outs for your nature table.





Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

Super Sam Holiday Story

Super Sam started his day with warm pumpkin bread and eggs. His hens were laying fewer eggs now that the cold was here. The fire was always going in the fireplace of the little mushroom house. Super Sam always had socks on his toes and a scarf around his neck. Winter was almost here. Super Sam had different chores in the winter. He still fed the animals, but now he also had to make sure they were also warm and he had wood to chop for his own warmth. Super Sam spent the morning chopping wood for his wood pile and stacking it into place. While he was outside he filled up his bird feeders but noticed that he could use some more. He spent some time building a few new feeders to take care of the birds that had become his friends. When Sam came in for a lunch break, he reached for the butter and noticed how low his supply was. "I should go to the farm and look for Bessy after lunch," he thought. After lunch he put on his coat and headed toward Papa's house so they could walk to the farm together.

Super Sam and Papa walked to the farm. They were greeted by Sunbun the big orange cat, and after a few licks to make sure they were clean, Sunbun told them to ask the farmer about Bessy.

"The farmer is milking the cows," said Sunbun. The two gnomes and the cat walked to the milking barn. Super Sam wondered if maybe Bessy was in there, he didn't see her out in the field.

The farmer saw his little's friends coming into the barn and stopped milking Frieda the cow. Frieda was a pretty brown jersey cow but she wasn't very keen on gnomes. She started to stomp and the farmer patted her behind and told her to settle down.

"Hi there my small friends, what can I do for you? Did you just come to say hello?" asked the farmer. Papa held out his hand and shook the farmer's finger. His hands were so small compared to the humans. "We were wondering if you knew where Bessy was," said Super Sam. "I haven't seen her in a long time and I was a little worried."

"Oh Sam," said the farmer, "don't worry Bessy is OK. She is resting, she is getting older and right now she needs her rest. You will see her again soon. Don't you worry. Here take some of Frieda's milk." Frieda stomped and let out a loud "Moooooo" in protest. The farmer patted her behind and reminded her that the gnomes were indeed friends. "Come into the house, the Misses will have some wonderful bread for our lunch about now, I am sure Sunbun has told her you are here."

Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

The two gnomes followed the farmer into the house and enjoyed a wonderful lunch with the farmer and his wife. Sunbun lapped a bowl of milk in the corner of the kitchen and everyone enjoyed the warmth of the kitchen fire. When it was time to go, the Misses put together a tiny basket of treats for Super Sam and Papa.

Sunbun walked to the edge of the forest with them, licked them clean and told them goodbye. "I still wonder where Bessy is," said Super Sam, "you don't suppose she is sick do you?"

"I think you must trust the farmer," said Papa. When the gnomes got to Papa's house, they split the milk and the treat basket and Super Sam headed home through the forest. As he passed the clearing, he saw something odd. There were large stones laid out in a spiral and at the center the light of the moon shone.

"Curious," he thought.

Super Sam finished the walk home, patted his dear hibernating friend Lola on the shell and climbed into bed. As he lay there trying to fall to sleep, he said a prayer for Bessy.

The next day was the Winter Solstice, it was one of Super Sam's favorite festivals. The gnomes often gathered in the clearing for a special reverent evening while they celebrated the coming of the Sun. This year, the forest looked strange. The large stones were still in the clearing only now they were joined by pine bows and straw in the center. The gnomes all whispered, not understanding what was to come. Soon the gnomes noticed that the clearing was filled with animals. The deer came quietly to nuzzle at the edge of the spiral, the rabbits and the fox sat near each other. The hedgehogs and the squirrels sat at the base of a nearby tree. The mama bears brought their spring babies to the spiral.

Soon there was a hush in the group and all the gnomes turned to see what quieted everyone. Super Sam was surprised to see the hush was caused by his lost friend Bessy! Slowly, Bessy moved to the center of the spiral and lay down on the bed of straw. Super Sam ran to her and hugged her around the neck, she gave him a big lick on the face.

Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

"It won't be long now," said Bessy. "Soon the farmer will come and help us."

"I don't understand," said Sam, "what do we need help with?"

"You will see Super Sam, soon," assured Bessy.

The night was dark and the gnomes gathered at the spiral and held their celebration in near silence, they fed the animals and quietly spoke to the angels that had come. Something was about to happen, they could all feel it in the air.

The forest was quiet and one by one each gnome and animal walked the spiral to greet Bessy at the center. Snow began to quietly fall. Soon the farmer entered the clearing and walked the spiral to check on Bessy.

"How are you feeling dear one?" he asked as he patted her on the head. Then the farmer did something that Super Sam didn't expect. The farmer began to feel her belly. "Come here, Super Sam," he said. "Feel here," he said as he placed Sam's tiny hand on the belly of the large cow. Sam felt something he didn't expect - movement in her belly, then Sam finally understood. A baby. A calf.

"Calves don't usually come in the winter," said the farmer, "so I am here to help her."

The snow calmed and a warm breeze entered the forest. The gnomes brought more straw and blankets. The gnomes built a fire near Bessy to keep her warm. The farmer and Super Sam rubbed Bessy's belly and soon Bessy was pushing out her tiny baby. The farmer checked the straw and stoked the fire. He went back to the farm to gather supplies for camping out and he settled in near Bessy and her calf. Super Sam decided to camp with him. The two sat near the fire.

"What should we name her?" asked the farmer.

"Bessy already gave her a name sir," said Sam, "her name is Sunshine. Born on the first day of winter." Sam stroked her face and pet the tiny calf.

"Sunshine it is!" exclaimed the farmer. "It is a perfect name."

Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

The farmer and Super Sam settled in for the night. Sunshine nursed and the forest was quiet. All the forest animals slept near the clearing too. As the sun rose on the new day, all the animals had returned home and Super Sam looked at the clearing. Where the spiral lay, there was no snow, just a warm space for Bessy and her baby. Outside the clearing the snow had fallen in the night and had gotten deep. The angels had protected them from the cold. Bessy's calf was safe and warm. Sunshine was excited to see the new day. One day old and already she had many friends. She licked Super Sam and let the farmer pick her up. The farmer carried Sunshine to the farm with Bessy walking as his side.

Super Sam was so happy. He felt so blessed to be there for the birth of Sunshine. He couldn't wait to visit her next week, he loved the farm. He walked home. When Super Sam arrived home, he was surprised to see his old friend Nicholas there waiting for him. He was so excited to tell Nicholas all about Bessy's baby and his night in the forest and he was excited to hear all about Nicholas' travels this year delivering gifts to the children of the world.

Super Sam invited the old man into his little mushroom house and something magical happened. Just as Nicholas walked through the doorway, he became small like Sam! Sam put a fresh log on the fire to keep them warm and he also started a pot of tea.

Nicholas smiled and listened to Sam talk about Bessy and then he told Sam all about his adventures this year, then he got quiet and said, "Sam, I've come to help you prepare for Advent and the coming of the Child of Light."

Sam puffed up his chest a bit trying to impress his old friend. "I am all ready!" He exclaimed. "See, I have my tree decorated, my baking is well underway, I've gotten all my gifts sorted for my friends and family, I'm in good shape!"

Nicholas' face frowned a bit but then he pulled a smile. "I see you are ready in all the ways that are so important to humankind, but are you ready for Him?" This preparation is different."

Super Sam was stumped. How could it be different? He knew it was Jesus' birthday, but he thought Christmas was all these things, the presents and the decorations that were so lovely to look at and of course the yummy cookies and candy. "I'm confused." Said Sam.

Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

Nicholas put his arm around the little gnome and said, “Sam, do you know why I come each year at the beginning of Advent? It isn’t just to bring gifts to children and help sailors when they are sinking. My coming is to prepare all for the coming of the Child of Light. I come to testify of Him and to teach about Him.”

“I know a lot about Jesus,” said Super Sam, “but how do I prepare each year for His birth?”

Nicholas picked up the Bible that he had given Sam long ago and opened it to the book of Luke, “Sam, let’s begin here. Why don’t you read it out to me.”

Sam cleared his throat and began, “She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Sam stopped and took a moment. “It must have been hard for Jesus’ parents to stay in a barn.” He said, thinking of his animals and his little barn. “I keep my barn clean, but I’m not sure I’d want Jesus to be born there. He should have been born in a palace. He is the king of kings.”

Nicholas smiled, “yes but in a palace his birth would have been much different. Jesus came for everyone, not just those that live in the palaces. Jesus came for those that also live in the barn. And for sure those that live in a little mushroom house in the forest.”

Sam smiled and said, “I think I know what it means to get ready for Him to come. I can read these stories and I can really think about the people. I can think about Him. I bet he was a cute tiny baby.”

Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

Nicholas smiled at Sam as he continued to read out loud. He read of the Wisemen and the angels singing and the shepherds. When Sam got tired, Nicholas read while Sam knitted. In the days before Christmas and the birth of Jesus, Super Sam read the stories and thought about the people. "This is how you get ready for the Child of Light in your heart," he thought as he went about his other tasks of baking cookies and wrapping gifts.

What about you?

What are the family traditions you have as you approach this season? We thought we would share some of ours.

Melanie & her son love to play board games through Advent as they prepare for Christmas.

Melisa & her family love to spotlight a different family member each week of Advent and focus on things they love and their family contribution. We also write little notes to each other during Advent.

Ideas for your family:

Set your shoes out Saint Nicholas on the night of December 5th.

Find ways to serve those in need on Saint Lucy's day, December 13th.

Care for the animals by making simple pinecone bird feeders for the Winter Solstice, December 21st.

Spend time reading the scriptural accounts of Jesus' birth and childhood in the book of Matthew & Luke.

Make a birthday cake for Jesus.

Draw pictures for family members that are far away.

Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

Quiche Lorraine

Melanie's family is French Canadian and this is a favorite in their house.

Into an already prepared 9" pie crust, crumble into pie shell, 6 slices of crisply cooked bacon, cover with 3 ounces of grated Swiss style cheese. In a bowl beat together 4 eggs, 1 ½ cups milk, ½ tsp. salt, and a pinch of pepper. Pour into pie shell.

Bake in a 400° oven for 25-30 or until set. Garnish with more bacon!

Hot Cocoa

This is a simple Nielsen house favorite. All the little gnomes love a mug!

Mix together in a big bowl, 3 ½ cups of sugar, 2 ¼ cups good unsweetened cocoa and 1 tablespoon of salt.

We like to keep this in a canning jar and use it all winter. To make cocoa simply warm your milk and add 2 tablespoons of your cocoa mixture. Top with sprinkles or marshmallows and enjoy!

Jesus' Birthday Cake

This is another Nielsen house favorite. It began as a cake Melisa's mother made for her each year on her birthday and when Melisa had a family, she began to make it each year as a birthday cake for Jesus.

This cake is simple, start with a good sponge cake, THIS one is good. Then preroll it while it is still warm in a clean towel and set aside. For the filling we like to put whipped cream (the REAL stuff, whipped nice and fluffy) in a layer and then top it with mandarine oranges before you roll it up. Don't worry if you have some crakes, .Cover the cake with more whipped cream and decorate with oranges.

Don't like oranges? As an alternative you can add some Nutella to your whipped cream before rolling it and then decorate it like a Yule Log. Use marzipan to create some little mushrooms and you are set!

Chicken in Cider

Another Canadian favorite!

Preheat your oven to 350°. This recipe can be made with a whole chicken cut up or with just portions of the chicken. The original recipe calls for a five pound bird. Brown the chicken in 4 to 5 tablespoons of butter. Remove the chicken from the pan and set aside. Add 1 cup of cider or apple juice to the warm pan and let it simmer while you peel, core and slice 2 pounds of tart apples. (About 6 medium apples.) In a baking dish, put a layer of sliced apples and cover with a layer of chicken, salt and pepper. Repeat with another layer. Cover the layer with a final payer of apples. Pour the warm cider over the top. Cover the dish while cooking.

Cook for 1 ½ hours at 350°.

Auriel's Light Festivals - December

December 2023

Resources

Here are some favorite resources for this time of the year. There are so many stories that we often save some for the Holy Nights between Christmas and Three Kings day.

Books:

[Saint Nicholas by Jakob Streit](#)

[The Light in the Lantern: Stories for Advent by Georg Dreissig](#)

[The Three Wise Men by Loek Koopmans](#)

[The Yule Tomte and the Little Rabbits by Ulf Stark and Eva Eriksson](#)

[Sinterklaas by Charlotte Dematons](#)

[The Festival of Stones: Autumn and Winter Tales of Tiptoes Lightly by Reg Down](#)

[The Gnomes' Yuletide Advent Mystery by Melisa Nielsen](#)

[Nine Gnome Nights: Tales of the Limindoor Woods by Sieglinde de Francesca](#)

And for those of you in the land of snow:

[Trouble with Trolls by Jan Brett](#)

For handwork supplies we love:

[A Child's Dream](#)

Much love to you all! Love, the team at Auriel's Light