



**GreenTip**  
How Do You Measure Up?



## Green Holiday Projects for Kids

If you want to involve the whole family in making your holidays green, try some of these green holiday projects for kids. We've got some fun ideas for green decorating and green wrapping, and even green gifts that kids can make. Remember, the key to keeping it green is to reduce, reuse, recycle!

### **Kid-Friendly Decoration Ideas:**

To provide your kids with lots of interesting materials to make holiday decorations with, recycle all of the trim, ribbons, bows, and buttons from old clothing before you discard it. Natural elements also make ideal decorating materials, and kids can help you gather them from around the yard. Small evergreen boughs from pine, fir and spruce trees are the perfect size for kids to handle. Sprigs of holly and boxwood are also pretty – just be sure to caution your children about the prickly parts! Grab some pine cones and nuts as well, if you can find them. Of course, if you don't have access to these things at home, you can find discards and cuttings at local farmers markets, Christmas tree lots and nurseries in your area. Old baskets, platters and bowls can be used to create table decorations with the greenery, or tie sprigs together with raffia or fabric ribbon to make a door hanging or wall art. Reuse sparkly or brightly colored buttons from old clothing to add festive accents to baskets and centerpieces.



Kids can produce great green decorations for the Christmas tree too! Pop some popcorn and string it together to make a garland. Use a crewel or embroidery needle, so there's no sharp point, and thread it with a double strand for added strength. To add some pizzazz to the garlands, add beads and brightly colored paper cut into seasonal shapes (stars, candles, stockings) in between the popcorn pieces.

Let the kids create holiday "ornament" pictures frames to hang on the tree. Have them trace an ornament shape from a cookie cutter or a paper pattern onto two pieces of leftover wrapping paper and on one piece of chipboard (from a cereal box or tablet back), then use safety-tipped scissors to cut out the pieces. Next, they can trace a circle onto the center of one of the wrapping paper pieces and cut it out. Gather up some family photos and allow each child to choose a photo and cut it to fit behind the gift wrap "frame, gluing the photo in place onto the chipboard backing. Finally, glue the gift wrap "frame" on top of the photo and chipboard piece, then glue the remaining gift wrap piece to the back of the chipboard. Trim the finished frame with ribbon to form a hanger.

### **Green Kid-Created Gift Wrap:**

Recycle brown paper grocery bags by cutting them into sheets for your kids to decorate with colorful holiday designs of their own creation. Provide a variety of non-toxic markers, crayons, paints and rubber stamps for the kids to choose from, and use the decorated sheets as gift wrap for special presents for family and friends. Let them reuse ribbons and discarded scarves and

neck ties to tie up packages with festive bows. Provide buttons, buckles, artificial greenery and costume jewelry for your kids to recycle into distinctive package decorations, and have them make gift cards and tags out of old holiday cards.

Remember, wrapping paper, ribbon and bows are not recyclable, so eliminating them from your holiday routine you will reduce the amount of waste your household produces this holiday season by a surprising amount. Your family will see first hand how much of a difference their green holiday efforts can make.

### Green Gift Projects:

This project is an easy one for kids of all ages. Start by giving each child a fresh orange. Have them press whole cloves into the skin of the orange (like thumb tacks onto a cork board) until most of the surface is covered with cloves. Allow the child to choose a brightly colored piece of raffia and attach it to the orange with a clove, so that the raffia forms a loop. The finished ball makes a wonderfully scented pomander or ornament to hang in the house during the holidays. Grandmas, aunts and moms will love them!



Recycle empty plastic soda bottles to make bird feeders. Remove the label and screw the bottle top in place. Cut a ¼" hole or ½" slit into each side of the bottle, approximately 2" past the neck; punch a small hole on each side of the bottle near the bottom. \*\*Parents, be sure to do the cutting and punching steps yourselves as a safety precaution. Slide a wooden dowel or popsicle stick through the openings near the bottle neck to serve as a perch for small birds. Thread some twine or string through the small holes near the bottle bottom and tie into a loop to use for hanging. Unscrew the bottle cap and fill the feeder with birdseed. These birdfeeders are a quick, easy project for kids, and make great gifts for gardeners and nature lovers that can be used over and over again.

Here's another easy gift idea for kids to craft. Collect chipboard tubes from paper towel and toilet tissue rolls and cut them into 2" – 3" lengths. Recycle colorful old clothes, scarves or fabric by cutting into 7" or 8" squares. Choose prints that reflect the holiday season. Using non-toxic paste or glue, attach the fabric to one of the small tubes by rolling it over and around the tube to cover the unfinished surface. Fold the unfinished edge of the fabric under before gluing it down. You now have a fabric covered tube with approximately 2" of fabric sticking out past either end of the chipboard roll. Use ribbon, lace or strips of fabric to tie the fabric at each end of the tube, forming what looks like a giant piece of hard candy. Use different lengths of chipboard to form different size tubes. Kids can tuck little treats, presents or notes into the "candy" before closing up the ends of the tubes, and give them as presents or party favors.

### A Few Green Shopping Tips:

Provide your kids with ribbon, twine, fabric, sprigs of leftover greenery, buttons and trim, old holiday cards and gift wrap. A table filled with all these goodies, plus a little water-based white glue and some craft scissors can produce hours of creative fun as your kids use their imaginations to create amazing holiday crafts.

For more eco-friendly holiday projects for kids, check out these websites:

<http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/season/feature/ff0108-happy-green-holiday/>

<http://craftingagreenworld.com/2008/11/25/handmade-holidays-fun-rolling-pin-art-projects/>