



## Gingerbread Activities for the Whole Family

- Read the story of the Gingerbread man here:  
<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/stories/GingerbreadMan.aspx>
- For some great gross motor skills activities, reenact the story of the Gingerbread Man. Who will be the Gingerbread Man, the Farmer, the Pig, the Fox?
- Practice jumping out of the oven, running through the forest, swimming across the river. You can set up a mini obstacle course with household items for the Gingerbread Man to run around or jump over.
- Try this movement activity, it is similar to going on a bear hunt. You lead your child through acting out the different places and actions you must go through to try and catch the gingerbread man.

### Can You Catch the Gingerbread Man?

There was once a little Gingerbread Man.  
 He would always say, "catch me if you can!"  
 Where he was running to no one ever knew,  
 But they tried to catch him and you can too!  
 First he jumped down on the floor  
 (everyone jumps -then lays down on the floor)  
 Then he went right out the door  
 (pretend to open a door and walk through)  
 On a bumpy path that led to town (walk like it is really bumpy)  
 Where there were people all around (look around the room)  
 Then he ran down a curvy trail (walk around in circles)  
 To the river and the Fox's tail (jump on the Fox's tail)  
 Now don't let that Gingerbread Man get away  
 (put your hands out like you are trying to catch him)  
 Grab him quick before the Fox has his way  
 (make a grabbing action with your hands)  
 Oh he smells so good and yummy (rub your tummy)  
 I'd like to have him in my tummy!  
 (Pretend to eat him up - then brush the crumbs off your hands.)

### Make a Gingerbread Graham Cracker House

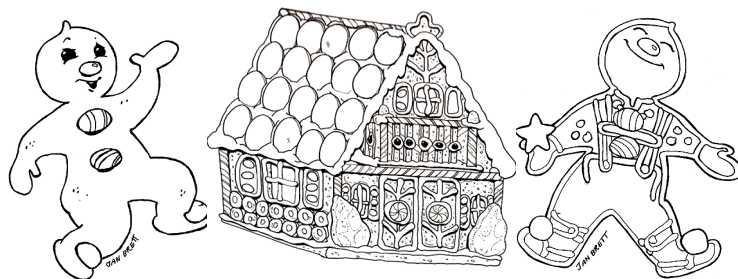
Need: Graham crackers, cardboard milk carton, frosting. Decorations: gumdrops, raisins, chocolate chips, Life Savers, cereal, etc. Use frosting to cement graham crackers to the sides of a cardboard milk carton. Children can do the spreading with a plastic knife. Children can then place the graham crackers on the frosting cement. Use frosting as "glue" to decorate with yummy decorations.



## Fine Motor Skills FUN Coloring - Cutting - Gluing

Make a Gingerbread Friends mural. All you need is a large sheet of mural paper about 3 feet by 6 feet, paints or crayons, scissors and glue sticks PLUS your imagination! Follow the link and download the characters.

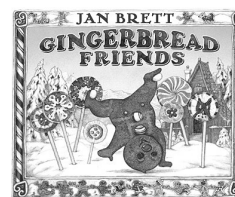
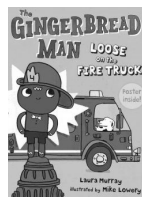
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## Help your Child's Imagination Take FLIGHT! READ A BOOK!

Visit your local Library to find these  
 and other books about

### GINGERBREAD



**The Gingerbread Man Loose on the Fire Truck** by Laura Murray. Guess who gets to go along on a field trip to the firehouse? The Gingerbread Man! But when he falls out of his classmate's pocket, Spot the Dalmatian comes sniffing around. Luckily, this Gingerbread Man is one smart cookie, and he races into the fire truck, up the pole, and all through the station, staying one step ahead of the hungry dog the whole time.

**Gingerbread Friends** by Jan Brett. That popular little character is back looking for friends, in an adventure he'll never forget. Confident and cocky, the Gingerbread Baby happens upon a bakery, where he dances and prances in front of a sugar cookie girl, trying to make friends. But she just stares and doesn't say a word, like all the other sweet treats he tries to meet.

**The Gingerbread Girl** by Lisa Campbell Ernst. After their first gingerbread disaster, the lonely old woman and the lonely old man gather their courage to bake again. They decide to make a girl this time, figuring she will be too sweet to leave home. But when they open the oven, it's all too familiar. You see, this smart cookie overheard the old woman and man talking about that dastardly fox, and she has a plan. Will it work? Let's just say that the ending is sweet for everyone.

**Get Out There and READ!**

## De-Stressing the Holidays

By Emma Sterland

[www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/](http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/)

While most children live for the holiday season, it can be an extremely stressful time of year for children with autism and other forms of learning disabilities. The disruption to their routine, unfamiliar sights and smells, the house full of noise and people – it can all prove too much. Holidays are all about the family, but it can be hard keeping everyone happy. The following tips for surviving the holiday season may be helpful. The general consensus seems to be to plan ahead. Whether that's creating a visual story for your child, preparing them with what to expect, or giving relatives a heads-up in advance about your child's particular needs – preparation is key.

**1. Reduce The Stress** Try to find ways to reduce the stress – both on your child and you. Schedule in quiet times and create chill-out zones in your home. Remember, your child will pick up on your stress levels, so try not to over-stretch yourself.

**2. Ask For Help** Friends and family may not know how they can help unless you tell them. Give them a list of things they can do to support you – from looking after your child while you spend quality time with your other children – to pouring you a glass of champagne!

**3. Wrap Up Familiar Toys** If your child is not keen on opening presents because they're new and unfamiliar, try wrapping up some favorite toys. Sometimes unwrapping something familiar is very reassuring.

**4. Give Your Child A Job And A Schedule** I always give my children, who have ASD, 'jobs' to do at family gatherings – take coats, offer nibbles round, etc. Giving them something to do reduces their stress of having people in the house. I also give them an itinerary so they understand, for example, that people stand around and chat a lot, and that is part of the occasion.

**5. Manage New Smells** Add cinnamon to your child's playdough to gradually introduce new smells. One thing that people with autism complain about during the holidays is the many different perfume smells coming from visiting adults. Ask your family and friends to hold off on the perfume.

**6. Work On Gift Giving** Help and encourage the person you are caring for to give gifts. This provides an excellent opportunity to work on social skills, like thinking of other people's needs and interests, and being kind and helpful. I help my daughter make simple gifts for her family and friends. She also looks forward to giving out the presents as well.

**7. Reserve Some Special Time For Your Child** It's easy to get overloaded with festive preparations at this time of year, so plan daily activities to make some special time for your kids – i.e. 5 to 10 minutes of undivided attention. Let your child take the lead, tune into their world and see it through their eyes.

**8. Create A Weekly Calendar** Print off a week-to-view calendar page from your PC or the internet and add a picture of your planned activities during the holidays (divide into morning, lunch, afternoon etc.) and this will help put your child at ease about the week ahead.

**9. Prepare Your Family** Talk to family members ahead of time. Discuss your child's specific needs, and gently but firmly tell them what your plans are. Be sure to let them know that this will make the whole experience better for everyone. Ask for their support.

**10. Prepare A Bag Of Activities** When you are visiting friends or relatives, fill a backpack with things your child finds comforting or enjoys playing with – toy cars, a stuffed animal, a CD and CD player, or a few books. If your child gets over stimulated, find a quiet corner or a back room and pull out the backpack.

**11. Prepare With Pictures** Our daughter loves looking at pictures and we have found it a great way of explaining different events to her. We have a holiday season book we've made with pictures of her and the family doing things in the holidays. We've included pictures of her in the school play, relatives coming to visit, etc. It helps her not to get overwhelmed with what's going on.

**12. Create an Alternative Experience** I run a group for kids who have an autism spectrum disorder. Instead of having a party at this time of year, we arrange an experience for them. For them and us, as their parents, it's much more enjoyable as there is no pressure to conform to the demands that a social occasion puts on them.

**13. Easy To Open Presents** My son has trouble with fine motor skills so I 'doctor' his cards and presents to allow him to open them easily. Makes for a much happier time for all and gives him a sense of satisfaction that he can complete tasks.

Check out the Friendship Circle's Blog Page

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/>

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