



A to Z of Christmas

Budget friendly Christmas activities



One Parent Families Scotland

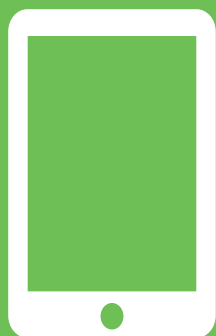
Ho! Ho! Ho!

Christmas can be a magical time for families but it can also be stressful and expensive. That is why One Parent Families have put together this guide of budget friendly Christmas activities.

We hope that these ideas may help to spark joy for you and your kids and show that you can have some festive fun with very simple ideas.



#AtoZofChristmas



@oneparentfamiliescotland
@OPFS

We'd love to see how you're using our Christmas tips please use the hashtag and tag us.

A-Z of Christmas

Budget Christmas activities

Christmas Recipes

Christmas Crafts

Budget Baking

Festive Printables



A**Arts & Crafts**

Christmas Arts & Crafts can be so much fun. Get out those paintbrushes and get creating!

B**Baking**

Our budget friendly festive baking recipes are delicious and fun to make. See them over the next pages!

C**Crackers**

Go Crackers!

Making your own Christmas crackers is easy and you can use a lot of the stuff you have around your home too!

You'll need:

leftover thick wrapping paper
empty toilet rolls
scissors
glue stick
cracker snapper strip
sticky tape
string or ribbon
small gifts or sweets, to fill

STEP 1

Cut out a 30 x 20cm rectangle of wrapping paper. Flip the paper over so the unpatterned side is on show with one of the longer ends closest to you. Place a toilet roll, vertically, midway down one end. Mark the paper at either end of the toilet roll, then set the toilet roll aside and fold the paper in at the marks. Snip into the folds using scissors. Unfold the paper and stick the toilet roll in its original position with glue. Fold in the ends to just beneath snipped parts, if you want to hide the reverse of the wrapping paper. Put a cracker snapper strip through the toilet roll and trim, if you need to. Attach each end to the paper using sticky tape.

STEP 2

Roll the paper around the toilet roll and stick it in place with glue. Scrunch the paper around one end of the roll, being careful not to tear the cuts you've made, then secure with string or ribbon. Tip in jokes you have written (try our suggestions, below) and sweets, or other treats, through the open end of the cracker, then secure that end with more string or ribbon.

**D****Deck the halls**

Decorating your house for Christmas can be such an exciting activity for children. Why not make some of our Christmas crafts at the back of this guide and spruce up your home this festive season?

H



Hot
Chocolate

Hot Chocolate Stirrers!

Ingredients

sunflower oil, for greasing
300g dark, milk or white chocolate (or a mixture), broken into squares



To decorate:

Chocolate buttons, hundreds and thousands, mini fudge pieces, mini marshmallows or smarties.

You'll need:

6 cupcake cases, pencil, pastry brush, 6 small yogurt pots (washed and dried), 6 wooden lolly sticks, cellophane and string or ribbon for wrapping, 6 gift tags



STEP 1

You will need:

6 cupcake cases, pencil, pastry brush, 6 empty 47g fromage frais pots (washed and dried), 6 wooden lolly sticks, cellophane and string or ribbon for wrapping, 6 gift tags
Push a small hole in the middle of the cupcake cases with a pencil and put aside for later.

STEP 2

Dip the pastry brush in the sunflower oil and paint a very thin layer of oil over the insides of the fromage frais pots.

STEP 3

Put the chocolate in a bowl and heat in the microwave in 30-sec bursts until runny, stirring after each blast. Or melt it in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water (get an adult to help you). If you're using different types of chocolate, you should melt them separately.

STEP 4

Carefully pour the melted chocolate into the pots. Put a lolly stick in the middle of each and sprinkle your chosen decorations around it.

STEP 5

Sit a cake case on top of each pot so that it covers the chocolate and the stick pokes through the hole. Put them in the fridge to set overnight.

STEP 6

The next day, carefully pull the chocolates out of the pots.
Wrap each in cellophane tied with string and write a tag to read:
'Simply stir into hot milk' or print out our tags in this guide!



E



Elf

Make your very ownb cheeky Christmas elves! Have an elf your self day and build the excitement as the Christmas aproches. Simply cut out our template below and add a photo of your child. These make great gifts for family and friends too. Why not glue onto some card and keep as a decoration for the Christmas tree?



Elf yourself!

Cut out and add your photo!



F**Family**

Christmas can be a time for family. Big or small, families come in all shapes and sizes. Happy families seem to be everywhere during the festive period and pictures of the idyllic family Christmas can trigger feelings of inadequacy for those that don't have contact with their family. Remember, be kind to yourself, whatever your situation is.

G**Gingerbread men**

Mrs Claus' Ginger Bread Recipe

Ingredients:

100g salted butter, 3 tbsp golden syrup, 100g dark muscovado sugar, ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda, 1 tbsp ground ginger, 1 tsp ground cinnamon, 225g plain flour, 50g icing sugar.

STEP 1

Heat the butter, syrup and sugar together in a small pan until melted, stirring occasionally. Set aside to cool slightly.

STEP 2

Mix together the bicarb, ginger, cinnamon and flour in a large bowl. Pour in the buttery mixture and stir to combine, then use your hands to bring together to form a dough. Add up to 1 tbsp of milk to combine if needed. The dough will be soft at this point, but it'll firm up in the fridge.

STEP 3

Put the dough on a sheet of baking parchment, shape into a rectangle, and lay another sheet of parchment on top of it. Roll the dough out to a thickness of ½cm. Transfer to a baking sheet to keep it flat, leaving the parchment in place, then chill in the fridge for 1 hr.

STEP 4

Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5 and line a large baking sheet with more baking parchment. Remove the dough from the fridge and cut out shapes using a cookie cutter. We used 9cm stars, but you can choose any shape. We also made some with smaller stars cut out of the centre to thread ribbon through and hang from a Christmas tree.

STEP 5

Place the shapes, spread apart, on the lined baking sheet, and bake for 10-12 mins. (Depending on the size of the cutters you use, they might need a few minutes more or less cooking in the oven). Leave to cool completely on the baking sheet.

STEP 6

Mix the icing with 1-2 tbsp of water then when the biscuits are cool, ice your designs. You could add smarties or gum drops for buttons!



I Iced Biscuits



Iced biscuits are a yummy treat you can make without even touching an oven! Shop bought digestive biscuits taste great with some icing on them. Many supermarkets also sell ice your own biscuit sets, but these can be expensive. Icing digestives or shortbread is fun, creative and you can add a range of toppings!

J Jokes

Ha! Ha!



Knock Knock!

Why not write down your best festive jokes to add to your DIY crackers? Sure, they can be cheesy! But that's half the fun! Here are some of our favourite Christmas jokes:

“What is green, covered in Christmas lights and Christmas bulbs, and goes ribbit?” A mistle-toad.

“What kind of money do elves use?”
Jingle bills.

“What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?”
Frostbite.



K Kindness



The real message of Christmas is kindness. One of the best things you can teach your children is how to show kindness to others. Maybe there is a neighbour or elderly relative that you could run errands for? Or donate unwanted Christmas gifts to charity? Small acts of kindness can teach your children a lot.

L Lights



Christmas isn't Christmas without lights. It can be tough with the cost of electricity to keep them on. Why not see if your local area has a light display? Even better take a wander round your neighbourhood and count how many light displays you see!

M Movies



We love a Christmas Movie! From Elf to It's a Wonderful Life! Draw the blinds, grab some popcorn, make some hot chocolate and choose one of your favourite Christmas films! “Merry Christmas Ya Filthy Animal!”





The Nutcracker

Make your own nut crackers decorations. You'll need empty toilet roll tubes and some pens, paint or craft stuff! Get creative with your kids too.

Why not add cotton wool for his beard?



O



Ornaments

DIY salt dough tree ornaments



*4 cups Flour
1 cup Salt
1.5 cups Water (maybe a little more)
Christmas Cookie Cutters
Acrylic Paint*

- 1. Preheat the oven to its lowest setting and line a baking sheet with baking parchment.*
- 2. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. Add the water and stir until it comes together into a ball.*
- 3. Transfer the dough to a floured work surface and shape into your chosen model. You can roll it out and cut out shapes, numbers or letters using biscuit cutters, or make any kind of model you can think of. We made some fruit and veg shapes plus cupcakes for a teddy bear's picnic.*
- 4. Put your finished items on the lined baking sheet and bake for 3 hrs or until solid.*
- 5. Leave to cool and then paint.*

P



Pinecones

Painted pinecones!

Painted pinecones look great for decorating the house. It's fun collecting them. Simply collect some pinecones from your local park, make sure to wash them! and paint with paint or add some glitter. You could try using the glue gun to glue them together.



Q



Quality Time

Christmas is the perfect chance to spend quality time with your children. Just spending time making memories and talking is special.



R



Reindeer Games

Reindeer food recipe

Raw uncooked porridge oats
Sugar sprinkles
Glitter (optional)
Plastic sandwich or snack baggies
Christmassy ribbon or string
Paper for the printable tags
Mix together and place in clear bags.



*Sprinkle this reindeer food outside tonight
The moonlight will make it sparkle bright
As the reindeer fly and roam
This will guide them to your home!*



S**Stocking**

Our stocking pattern at the back of this guide will show you how to make your own Christmas stocking!

T**Track Santa**

Track santa with NORAD. See, in live time, his journey around the world on Christmas Eve.
<https://www.noradsanta.org/en/>

U**Unwrapping**

Christmas pass the parcel! Have some fun and play pass the parcel with christmas music. Wrap a selection box or small gift in layers of paper and get the Christmas party tunes started! When the music stops, the person holding the gift takes off a layer of paper. The winner is the one who unwraps the final sheet!

V**Voices**

There is nothing better than singing Christmas songs! Have a Christmas concert with your children. Teach them your favourite Christmas songs. Why not encourage them to put on a Christmas show? "Jingle bells, Jingle bells...!"

W**Wreath**

DIY Christmas Wreath

You'll need:

Green plastic bags (or colour of your choice)

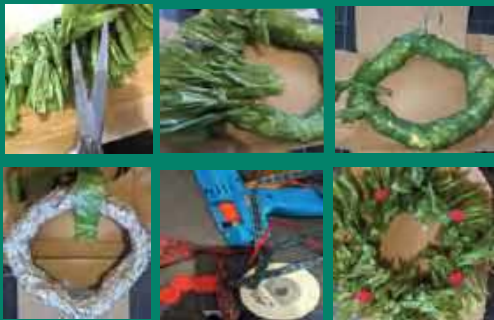
Wire coat hanger

Tin foil

Ribbons and Buttons to decorate

Glue gun or strong glue

Scissors



Start by bending the hanger into a circle shape, the hook will be at the top to help you hang your wreath.

Cover the wire coathanger in tin foil to give it shape

Cut your bags into 5cm wide strips and start to knot them round the coathanger to create leaves.

Once you have created your leaves, you can start to cut into them to create a 'fringe' in the leaves.

Add a ribbon to the bottom and a ribbon to the top hook and add buttons, and other decorations. You could even add pine cones or glitter.



X

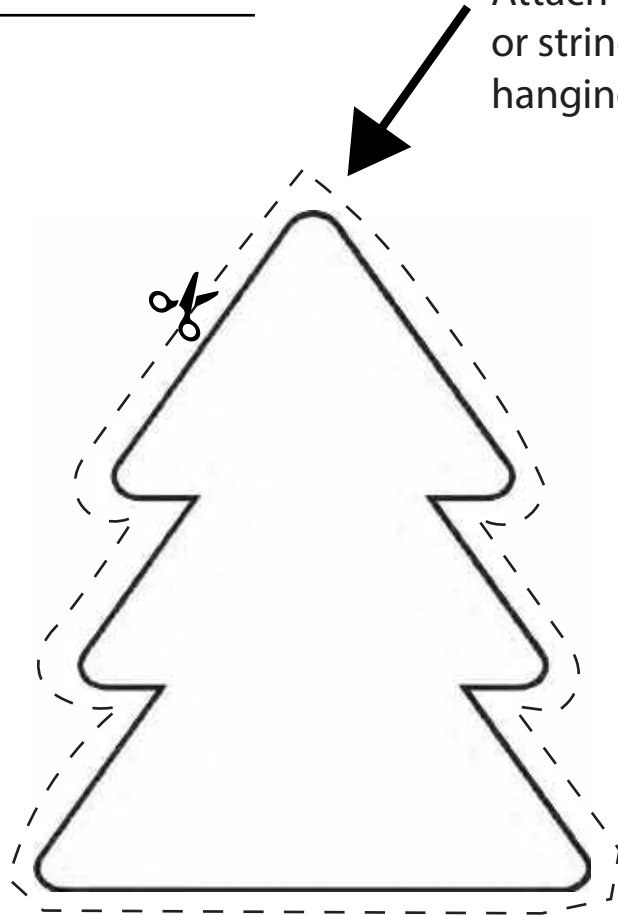
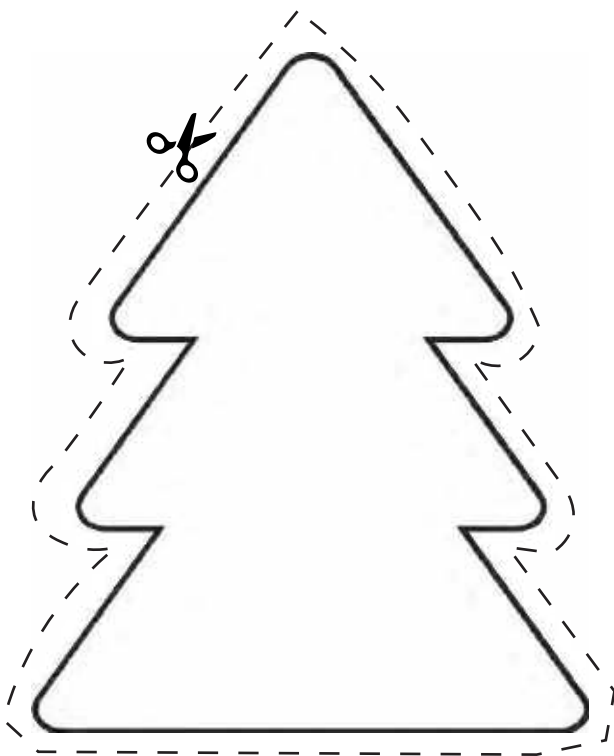


Xmas Tree

Make your own felt tree decorations. They are cheap and easy and your children can help out too!

You'll need:
scissors, needle and thread, felt or other scrap material, stuffing (cotton wool works well), ribbon, glue gun or glue (optional)

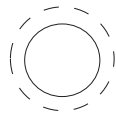
Christmas tree felt decoration



Optional decorations:



Star



Bauble

Method:

Cut out the template above, place it on top of your felt or fabric and carefully cut out, leaving a small margin to sew.

Place both halves of the tree on top of each other and line them up. Using a whip stitch, sew around the edges leaving a gap at the top to stuff.

Fill with cotton wool or fabric scraps and sew up. Attach a ribbon or string to hang on tree.

Y

Yule Log

Mrs Claus' Yule Log Recipe



Ingredients:

FOR THE CAKE

6 large eggs (separated)
 150 grams caster sugar
 50 grams cocoa powder
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 5 teaspoons icing sugar (to decorate)

FOR THE ICING

175 grams dark chocolate
 (chopped)
 250 grams icing sugar
 225 grams soft butter
 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/gas mark 4/350°F.

In a large, clean bowl whisk the egg whites until thick and peaking, then, still whisking, sprinkle in 50g / ¼ cup of the caster sugar and continue whisking until the whites are holding their peaks but not dry.

STEP 2 In another bowl, whisk the egg yolks and the remaining caster sugar until the mixture is mousse like and thick. Add the vanilla extract, sieve the cocoa powder over, then fold both in. Lighten the yolk mixture with a couple of dollops of the egg whites, folding them in robustly. Then add the remaining whites in thirds, folding them in carefully to avoid losing the air.

STEP 3 Line a Swiss roll tin with baking parchment, leaving a generous overhang at the ends and sides, and folding the parchment into the corners to help the paper stay anchored.

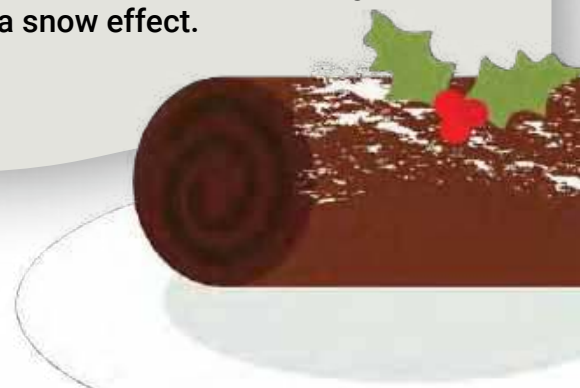
STEP 4 Pour in the cake mixture and bake in the oven for 20 minutes. Let the cake cool a little before turning it out onto another piece of baking parchment. If you dust this piece of parchment with a little icing sugar it may help with preventing stickage, but don't worry too much as any tears or dents will be covered by icing later. Cover loosely with a clean tea towel.

STEP 5 To make the icing, melt the chocolate – either in a heatproof bowl suspended over a pan of simmering water or in a microwave and let it cool.

STEP 6 Put the icing sugar into a processor to remove lumps, add the butter and process until smooth. Add the cooled, melted chocolate and the tablespoon of vanilla extract and pulse again to make a smooth icing. You can do this by hand, but it does mean you will have to sieve the sugar before creaming it with the butter and stirring in the chocolate and vanilla.

STEP 7 Sit the flat chocolate cake on a large piece of baking paper. Trim the edges of the Swiss roll. Spread some of the icing thinly over the sponge, going right out to the edges. Start rolling from the long side facing you, taking care to get a tight roll from the beginning, and roll up to the other side. Pressing against the paper, rather than the tender cake, makes this easier.

STEP 8 Spread the yule log with the remaining icing, covering the cut-off ends. Create a bark like texture by marking along the length of the log with a skewer or somesuch, remembering to do circles, as in tree rings, on each end. Dust with icing sugar for a snow effect.



Z

Catch some
Zzz

Snuggle down, get into your PJs and read this enjoy sharing this Christmas poem to your children.

'Twas the night before Christmas,

when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Dunder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle,
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,

*"Happy Christmas to all, and to all
a good-night!"*

Hot Chocolate Tags



Christmas Colouring



One Parent
Families Scotland

DIY Christmas stocking template

Ribbon
attached
here

Cut out two pieces
keeping a seam.

Cut out top, toe and
heel of stocking in
different colour.

Sew the top, toe and
heel onto each of the
two sock parts

Turn inside out and
sew together leaving
top open.

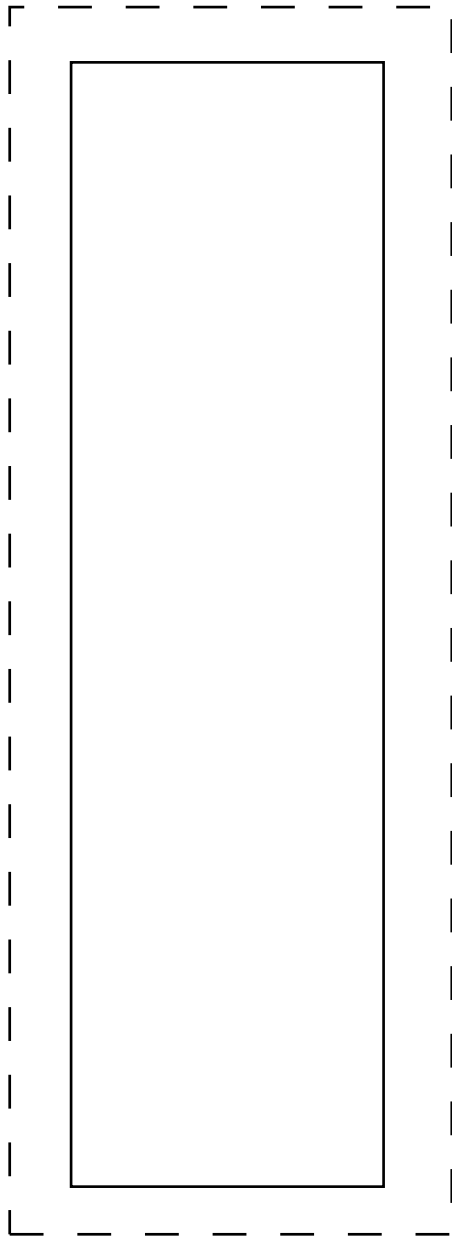
Cut out two pieces
keeping a seam.

x2

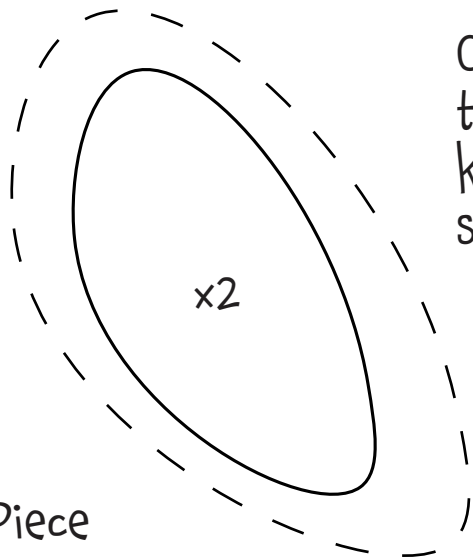
Turn back in the right way and attach a ribbon to
the back to hang

DIY Christmas stocking template part 2

Top of stocking

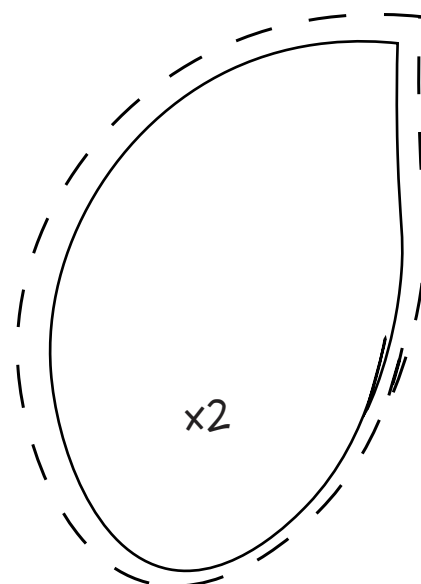


Stocking should be sewn in two parts. Adding the toe and heel parts before sewing together. Add a ribbon to the edge to hang.



Toe Piece

Cut out two pieces keeping a seam.



Heel piece