



Starry Night Christmas Card

art by Ryan M. and Debbie R., members of a Friendship group

Overview: Involve everyone in your group in creating a collaborative Christmas card. This is a great way to incorporate teamwork into your group, as well as to raise awareness of your ministry among the people to whom you send the cards. You could even make this a fundraiser by taking orders from members of your congregation, with sales to support your group or a cause you care about.

The card pictured above was created by two people, while the directions below are for a larger group project. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to adjust the size of the blue background paper. If you have a very large group, you may want to create multiple cards.

Materials:

- white cardstock, 1/2 sheet per participant
- dark blue cardstock, one 8 ½ x 11 sheet
- quality colored pencils, such as Prismacolor
- oil pastels
- scissors
- glue

Creating the stars:

1. Begin by talking with your group about what the night sky looks like. What do you see when you look up at the sky at night? What color are the stars? What are stars made of? Then tell the story of the wise men and the star that led them to Jesus. Explain that when we look at stars, they can remind us of Jesus' birth.

**If you have a print of Vincent van Gogh's painting "The Starry Night," consider showing it and talking about the way the artist depicted the night sky.*

2. Next explain that the group will be creating stars to make a card that will help remind others of Jesus' birth. Show different ways that stars can be drawn (5-pointed star, Star of David, stars with many points, stars with crossing lines like an asterisk, etc.). Explain that

even though the stars in the night sky look white, other colors may be used to make their stars beautiful or fiery. Demonstrate this with a quick, free example.

3. Distribute one 1/2 sheet of white cardstock to each participant, and place oil crayons, colored pencils, and scissors in places on the table where they can be accessed by all. Encourage participants to create several stars in different shapes and colors. Use the hand-over-hand technique if necessary.

**You may wish to create star stencils for those who have difficulty with motor skills or thick star cut-outs for friends who have visual impairments to trace around. However, do not make these too "perfect," and use them only as necessary.*

4. Have each participant select a favorite star and cut it out.

Creating the card:

1. Arrange the selected stars on the dark blue cardstock and glue them down.
2. Once you've done this, show the card to the group, and discuss whether you would like to include a text with the picture (ex. "Oh holy night, the stars are brightly shining; It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!", or "When the wise men saw the star, they were overjoyed." Matthew 2:10). Prepare this text for printing, along with a note crediting the members of your group for the art.
3. Decide whether you wish to make a ¼-page size postcard, or whether you wish to make a folded card.
4. Make copies (on white cardstock) on a color photocopier, or by scanning the art into a computer and using a color printer. We reduced the size of our card just enough to print four ¼-page postcards per sheet, leaving a white border around each card. If you are including text, print it on the reverse side of the paper.
5. Distribute the cards, along with envelopes if you created folded cards.