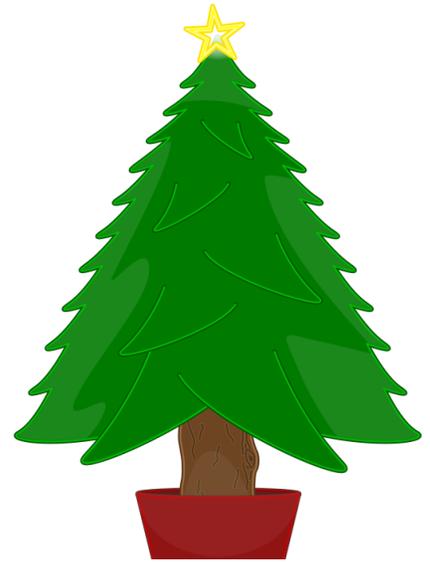


O Christmas Tree Kids Yoga Lesson Plan

Celebrate the holiday season with the age old emblem of a Christmas Tree. This kids yoga lesson plan is packed with holiday inspired yoga activities. You can use all 24 kids yoga poses as an advent calendar or pick and choose according to your time frame and the age and abilities of your students. Includes variations for everyone from preschoolers to tweens and teens.



Preparation

Print off the 24 Christmas Yoga Cards included in this lesson plan. Cut out, laminate and attach the softer side of small Velcro self adhesive tabs (found at craft and sewing stores) one onto the back of each card/item. Place in a small bag.

Print off and laminate the [O Christmas Tree poster found HERE](#). Your local print shop can do this for a nominal fee. Attach the rough side of the Velcro self adhesive tabs onto the poster, one for each yoga card. Feel free to use all 24 or fewer depending on how you will use the poster most often.

Ideas for Use

There are numerous uses for this lesson plan for the home, studio or school. Some ideas are:

- Teach part of or the entire lesson (all 24 poses will take 1 hour or more so you may need to divide it into Part A and Part B)
- Do one pose a day leading up to Christmas
- Use it as a center for preschools and kindergartens
- Have each student learn one pose/card and teach it to everyone else
- Once students know the poses encourage them to play again and again
- Group the poses according to type of card: presents, ornaments, bells, gingerbread man.
- Practice the poses in alphabetical order, random order, yoga flow, etc.

Introduction

Who decorates a Christmas Tree during the holidays?

Why do we have Christmas Trees?

Explain that evergreen trees have been used to celebrate winter festivals for thousands of years. Some people believe it is a symbol of the coming spring or to represent everlasting life with God. The first Christmas trees were used in Latvia and Germany in community festivals (1500s), then were brought

into people’s homes. Originally they were decorated with food such as apples, gingerbread and small candies as well as paper decorations. Over time glass and plastic ornaments as well as tinsel were invented and used to decorate the trees.

Today I need some help decorating and putting presents under our Yoga Christmas Tree

Yoga Poses

These 24 yoga inspired activities can be used with all ages. Variations for younger, older, tweens and teens are included. When deciding which variation to use consider age, ability, maturity and energy levels of your students.

Bells	Stand tall, arms out to the side. Swing one leg forward and back saying “ding, dong, ding, dong.” Repeat with other leg. You could also add taking the leg side to side working on adduction and abduction. Be sure to do both sides.
Candle	Kneeling, sit on heels. With an big inhale rise up on knees and reach arms overhead to light the candle, exhale and blow the candle out while lowering to your heels and bringing arms down. Tweens/teens: Shoulder stand (salamba sarvangasana)
Candy Cane	Stand tall, reach arms overhead, intertwining fingers. Inhale extend up, exhale lean to one side creating a crescent candy cane shape with your body. Inhale up to stand tall, exhale repeat on the other side. Repeat a few times. Alternatively you can hold for a few breaths while in the side bend.
Christmas Tree	Come into Tree Pose (vrksasana). Reach you arms over head pointing the fingers creating the tip of your evergreen tree. Look up and imagine the ornament to adorn/decorate the top of your tree: an angel, a star, a ball, a bird, a nutcracker
Dancer	Come into Dancers Pose (natarajasana). Repeat on both sides Tweens/teens: Double Dancers Pose: Partners look at one another, lift a hand to touch your partner’s hand. Grab your foot/ankle with the free hand and tip forward into dancers pose. Repeat on the other side.
Elf Hops	Hop over, around, across your yoga mat. Hop on one foot. On the other foot. Hop high, hop low, fast, slow.
Elf Wiggle	Begin to shake your hands/wrists, then your arms, your head, body, legs. Shake and wiggle your entire body. Continue for 3-5 minutes. Music suggestion: <i>Rocking Around the Christmas Tree</i> by Mary J. Blige or <i>Jingle Bell Rock</i> by Rascal Flatts
Gingerbread Man	Active – Sing “run, run as fast as you can, you can’t catch me I’m the gingerbread man” while running in place Passive – Lie on the floor extending your arms and legs. Imagine you are a gingerbread cookie being baked in the oven.
Ice Skating	Imagine putting your ice skates on, do up the laces, stand up (you’re a little wobbly), then hit the ice and begin to glide your feet alternatively out to the

	side pretending to ice skate. (Note: this works really well on wood floor with socks on). Skate around the room if space allows.
Mistletoe Breath	Oh my, someone hung some mistletoe. Look up to find the mistletoe hanging overhead. Take a deep breath in and blow kisses to your family (Mom, Dad, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, grand parents), another breath blow kisses to your friends here in this room, one more breath and blow kisses to all the people in the world who need extra love and compassion this Christmas season.
Penguin	Stand tall, feet together, hands at your sides with palms facing back. Waddle around on your short little penguin legs. Flap your penguin wings back and out. Be aware of other penguins and give everyone enough space. Tweens/teens: Start in the same position. Stretch through the neck by taking one ear to the shoulder. Keep reaching through your finger tips while taking the arms back and out. Gently come up and repeat on the other side.
Present	Make your body into a rectangle shape just like a present. Sit on your bottom with your feet in front of you, knees raised. Place your hands behind your hips. Gently lift up creating a present shape. Imagine a beautiful wrapping paper and ribbon covering your present. Then slower lower down. Repeat again this time imagine a present you can give to someone which doesn't cost any money. What can you give? Hold the pose while children give suggestions.
Reindeer	Deer Pose (marichyasana II) add antlers with your hands. Deer Pose (vin version)
Running Reindeer	Come onto all fours. Extend one arm out in front and the opposite leg behind. Reach across the body and hold. Tweens/teens: Inhale and reach, exhale and touch elbow to knee, inhale reach, exhale elbow to knee (repeat 5 x). Release, coming back to all fours. Repeat on the other side.
Santa Breath	Stand tall with hands on your big Santa belly. Inhale deeply. Laugh with a Ho, Ho, Ho. Repeat 3-5x.
Santa on the Roof	Walk carefully on the roof. Tip toe, heal walk. Don't wake anyone up. Be as quiet as you can.
Sit on Santa's Knee	Chair Pose (utkatasana) Tweens/teens may enjoy a group chair pose: one person comes into chair pose against the wall, next child sits on their lap, then 3 rd child sits on the lap of the 2 nd child, etc. You can easily do this with groups of up to 12. If your group is larger simply divide them up.
Sledding	Use the yoga mat as a sled. Hold onto the mat as you slide down the hill, go side to side to avoid the trees, hit some bumps, take a jump, etc.
Sleigh	Bow Pose (dhanurasana) Tweens/teens: Bow Pose with a partner: One person lies on the stomach, reaching arms back to hold onto ankles. Other partner uses the 1 st person's feet as a stool, sits down and reaches forward to hold onto the 1 st persons shoulders. The sitting partner then leans back giving their friend a nice stretch through the chest.

Snow Angels	Lie on your back. Image you are making snow angels, gently gliding your arms and legs open and then together. Music suggestion: Listen to <i>Snow Angel</i> by Linda Lara while making your snow angles.
Snow Falling	<p>Young children: Sing the action song <i>Snow is Falling</i> Snow is falling all around (use fingers to imitate snow falling On the roof tops (hands overhead, fingers touching, making a roof) On the ground (forward fold to touch the ground) Snow is falling on my nose (touch nose) On my head (touch head) and hands (wave hands) and toes (touch toes)</p> <p>Older children/tweens/teens: use fingers to imitate snow (lightly tickle each area) as it gently falls on your head, your face, your throat, chest, arms, belly, back, hips, legs, feet.</p>
Snowball	Rock and Roll Pose: curl up into a ball, rock yourself forward and back, forward and back making a snowball, repeat 5-10x.
Snowman	<p>Young children: Sing the action song <i>Once There Was a Snowman</i> Once there was a snowman, snowman, snowman (make 3 balls from the ground up) Once there was a snowman, tall, tall, tall (make 3 balls reach them high into the sky) In the sun he melted, melted, melted (begin to melt your body, slowly lowering) In the sun he melted, small, small, small (melt to the ground)</p> <p>Older children/tweens/teens: Two Scoops Pose: One partner comes into child's pose (balasana). The other partner does child's pose on the back of the first person, stacking their snowballs and making a snowman.</p>
Star	<p>Young children: Stand with legs wide, extend arms out to sides. Count the number of points in your star. Sing <i>Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star</i> as you rock side to side, lifting one leg at a time</p> <p>Older children/tweens/teens: Come into Star Pose as above. Take the right hand and bring it down to the left foot. Inhale come up. Exhale other side. Repeat 3-5x each side.</p>

Best Present Ever

Sit everyone in a circle. Take a moment and imagine a special gift for the person on their right. Something that would make them feel appreciated and loved. Imagine wrapping up that gift. Then have each student give his/her 'present' to the person on their right. Recipients 'oh and ah' over their gifts. Express appreciation for/give thanks to the givers. Imagine what would be the perfect gift to receive. Then pretend to unwrap the gift and react as if it is the best present ever. If wanted/time allows invite children to share what they gave and received.

Santa Says

Play Yogi Says/Simon Says with a different name. Use the yoga cards as inspiration.

O Christmas Tree lyrics

Audio recording by Marie Hines: <https://soundcloud.com/mariehines/o-christmas-tree>

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
How lovely are your branches!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree
How lovely are your branches!
In beauty green will always grow
Through summer sun and winter snow.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How lovely are your branches!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
You are the tree most loved!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
You are the tree most loved!
How often you give us delight
In brightly shining Christmas light!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
You are the tree most loved!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
Your beauty green will teach me
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
Your beauty green will teach me
That hope and love will ever be
The way to joy and peace for me.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
Your beauty green will teach me.

Christmas Tree Guided Visualization

Lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Begin to pay attention to your breath. Inhale. Exhale. Invite your body to relax. In your mind picture a beautiful Christmas Tree waiting to be decorated. Imagine gently stringing lights all around. Maybe you choose multicolored lights or ones that are all the same color. Place them all over the tree. Carefully decorate your tree with your favorite ornaments placing some high, some low. Take your time. If any of them have special meaning or a story remember that. Treasure those family traditions. Now choose a special ornament for the top of the tree: an angel, a star or something else special to you. Relax even deeper as the room gets darker and the lights of your Christmas Tree are turned on. Enjoy the beauty of the lights twinkling in the night. Enjoy a hopeful, peaceful feeling in your heart. Hold that feeling and keep it with you throughout the holiday season. Begin to gently move your body, wiggling fingers and toes. Stretch and slowly wake up.





Reindeer



Running
Reindeer



Santa
Breath



Santa
on Roof



Santa's
Knee



Sledding



Sleigh



Snow
Angel



Snow
Falling



Snowball



Snowman



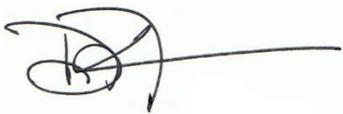
Star

Thank you

...for being part of Yoga In My School and Kids Yoga Academy. It is a pleasure to share with you my love of kids yoga and mindfulness. Each morning when I awake my mind is filled with ways to make teaching kids yoga fun, engaging and easy. Your support of our programs, classes, trainings and resources is such a blessing and makes this work possible. Thank you for sharing your passion for promoting and encouraging healthy, well balanced kids. Yoga and mindfulness tools are so essential to our children and will help them develop their mental, physical, social and emotional skills.

This Christmas give the gift of joyful movement, space to explore the breath and compassion for ourselves and others.

May your festive season be filled with light, laughter and love.



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