

## Kid's Craft

Personal Nativity Sets  
Quell Family Squabbles

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With the Advent season upon us, there is sure to be the annual argument in the Conner household, once the ceramic figures of Joseph, Mary and Jesus are unpacked. The argument over who gets to place the Holy Family, wise men, animals and angels ensues.

In an attempt to short circuit

this strife; I have found a craft that should make both Conner kids happy and may help at your house, too.

With the help of Pinterest, an Internet site for sharing craft ideas and recipes, we made Holy Family figures. Now, our children and two of their cousins have their very own nativity scene.

Depending on the number of children and their ages, parts of

the craft could be done ahead by a parent or older child and then assembled as a group. Since we had four children — our two, plus two of their cousins — doing this craft, my daughter, Cara, and I prepped the mangers in advance.

Prior to our craft time, I also cut felt pieces for the “clothes” out of the red, blue and white felt.

The rest of our project took little more than an hour.

As for glue, we used a hot glue gun, but craft or white school glue can also be used in this project. The drying time is longer with the cool glues and the hold may not be as strong.

When doing this project with young children, a cool temp glue gun is a great option to eliminate unexpected burns.

Here are the prep steps for adults and older children to do.

**1 Manger** — For the manger, pinch a small grapevine wreath into an oval. (I would suggest using garden gloves to eliminate poking branches.) Hot glue both ends of oval. Cut a double layer of burlap ribbon and hot glue it to the oval wreath, wrapping some burlap around the sides. Make an indentation in the middle of the oval for Baby Jesus.



Fashion manger in step 1.

**2 Felt squares** — To get the correct size for the felt pieces, cut about a 3 inch by 3 inch square of blue felt for Mary and red felt for Joseph. Fold the felt in half and measure it against the “adult” peg body. When folded, each red and blue felt piece should be the same size as the peg body, excluding the head.

**3 Wardrobe details** — For Mary’s dress, with the blue felt square folded in half, trim off the corners with pinking shears to form a circle. With a regular scissors, cut a small X in the center of the fold; this will be the opening for Mary’s head. For Joseph, use a regular scissors and trim the folded red felt, leaving some extra material on the sides. We left Joseph’s clothes in a more rectangular shape. Cut a small X in the center of the fold; this will be the opening for Joseph’s head.

At this point, younger children

## WORTH THE WAIT



(Observer photos by Lynne Conner)

An easy-to-make nativity set will keep all the children in your family happy when it comes time to decorate the house for Christmas.

can take over the assembly of project pieces.

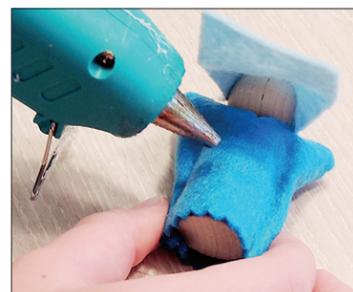
**4 Baby Jesus** — For Baby Jesus, wrap a small rectangular piece of white felt around the small peg body; excluding the head. Glue the felt to the peg, overlapping the edges, and glue the seam. Cut any excess felt from the bottom of the Baby Jesus figure.

**5 Mary and Joseph** — For Mary and Joseph, slip the felt squares over two “adult” peg bodies. Fashion the felt around the bodies and hot glue the layers of felt. Pinch layers to the sides of the peg body. Trim any excess felt from the bottom of the figures.



Pinch felt in step 5.

**6 Mary’s veil** — For Mary’s veil, glue a small rectangular piece of light blue felt to the “crown” of figure in dark blue felt. We put a small dot of hot glue on the back of the figure to hold the veil in place.



Glue veil in step 6.

**7 Joseph’s belt** — For Joseph’s “belt,” glue a small piece of brown ribbon around the middle of the figure in red felt. Overlap the ends of the belt with a small dot of glue.

**8 Faces** — Cut small pieces of yellow pipe cleaner and fashion into circles for halos. Glue halos onto the heads of each figure. Use a permanent marker to make faces and hair on each figure.



Add hair, faces in step 8.

We did use a few substitutions for our Holy Family figures. The original project called for using painted acorn tops for the halos and milkweed pods for the manger. We found pipe cleaners a good replacement for the acorn tops and the grapevine wreaths covered in burlap to be suitable for the manger.

I would estimate the project cost us around \$10, and for that price we actually made four sets of figures with leftover felt, burlap, ribbon and pipe cleaners. Some costs could be cut by using items found in nature for the manger or repurposing household items for parts of the project.

While we worked, we talked about the journey Joseph and Mary made to Bethlehem and how it is similar to the journey we make during Advent to the joy of Christmas.

Our craft was not only successful in ending the annual Nativity “argument” but also in reminding my four favorite kids about the true meaning of the season.



Bethany Hochstetler, 4, collects her craft materials before starting the project.

## Supply list

- Red, white and light and dark blue felt
  - Brown ribbon
  - Small grapevine wreath
  - Burlap ribbon
  - Yellow pipe cleaners
  - Peg people—2 “adult” size and 1 “child” size (These are available at hobby stores.)
  - Permanent markers for faces and hair
  - Hot (or cool temp) glue gun, craft or white school glue
- Note:** Hot glue dries faster and holds better but requires the supervision of an adult or older child.
- Scissors, pinking shears



Bethany Hochstetler, 4; Cara Conner, 11; Kyle Hochstetler, 7; and Ian Conner, 7, show off their personal nativity sets.