

January 1, 2021

Hello Brancher Families,

Wow! What a fun month December was. We loved getting into the holiday spirit in the Branch room, but as always, we like to incorporate our own little twist! So, in December we conducted a ton of science and math activities that were centered around the holidays.

Science and Math are huge in our classroom, and we think our Branchers are really starting to dig these two things as well! Working science and math into our activities is a great way to open up our Branchers eyes and get them thinking! We love to hear all of the questions that they come up with. You can truly see their minds at work!

To get our brains going, we learned a little about snowflakes! We learned how snowflakes are created and even how many points there are on a snowflake. Fun fact... there are six points on a snowflake! The Branchers then create their own beaded snowflakes by twisting pipe cleaners together to create six points. They then decorated their snowflakes with beautiful beads. We even had some Branchers creating their own patterns! Truly amazing.

The simplest activities can lead to some great learning opportunities, such as making and baking! For example... Gingerbread Playdough and Cinnamon Nutmeg Ornaments! When making both, we really focused on measuring out the ingredients and following the directions carefully. We had to do quite a bit of counting, so thank goodness we had the Brancher's help! We do our best to ask plenty of questions during these activities to get the Branchers thinking. We ask things like, "What do you think will happen to the mixture if we add water?", "Will the ornaments get softer or harder in the oven?" Not only do these questions allow the kids to think deeper, but it also keeps them more engaged in the activity. They love it when they are right!

We incorporated a ton of math in our many art activities this month... such as our Paint Swatch Christmas Trees. To make these beautiful and unique trees, the Branchers cut triangles out of old paint swatches. They were able to mix and match the paints swatches to create some colorful trees! When creating the trees, we were sure to point out the shapes that we were using. We discovered that we were using triangles and rectangles! We counted the sides of the shapes just to double check.

We also added in a little math when creating Garland for our mini Christmas tree. To create the garland, we used none other than Fruit Loops! The Branchers were able to count out how many loops they had on their string. Turns out our Branchers can count pretty high! The garland was pretty awesome and added a great touch to our classroom Christmas Tree.

We really challenged our Branchers when it came to our Countdown Paper Chains. Their challenge was to look at the calendar and help their teachers discover how many days until Christmas. It was pretty tricky to find such high numbers on the calendar, but with teamwork they accomplished their challenge! Afterwards, the Branchers were hard at work creating a paper chain so that they could count down at home.

One activity we did was our Candy Cane Stripe Test. It quickly became a classroom favorite! To conduct this simple experiment, we simply just dunked a Candy Cane into hot water. Before the dunk, we asked each Brancher what they predicted would happen. We were amazed to see that the stripes quickly disappeared off the candy cane and started dying the water. After a couple of minutes, we saw that the candy cane was completely gone! We discovered that the candy cane had dissolved into the hot water.

We had a ton of fun exploring Science and Math activities this month! But that wasn't the only fun experience we had going on. The Branch room was lucky enough to have their own special Elf... Evergreen Pancake!

Evergreen Pancake was a pleasure to have in the classroom. He brought us some treats, pulled some tricks, and even gave us some challenges! One of our first surprises from him was a Hot Chocolate Taste Test. When sampling the hot chocolate, the Branchers described it as sweet and hot! It sure was a nice way to spend a Friyay! But by far the most exciting thing that Evergreen did, was bring a special message all the way from the North Pole from no other than Santa Claus himself! The Branchers were challenged to decode the message from Santa to locate a surprise. After decoding the message, the Branchers were able to find some delicious treats left behind from their friend Santa. It was so fun to work together as a team and decode the message!

We hope you all enjoyed the Sing-Along! The Branch room worked so hard perfecting their Rock-n-Roll ABC's and Jingle Bell Rock. We thought they did an amazing job, and we are pretty sure you all felt the same way. Their singing skills are pretty rock solid! So proud.

What a fun and magical month it was! We hope you enjoyed the season just as much as we did. Although we are sad to see December go, we are excited for January and a new year! For the month, we will be taking a trip around the world! So, get your Brancher's bags ready because we are jetting off!

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out!

- Ms. Kenzie & Ms. Heather

Reminder:

- No school Friday, January 1st.
- Have a safe and Happy New Year!!



