

Gingerbread House Decoration

Activity Type: Crafting

Best suited for: First Level and above / Age 5-7, 8-11, 12-15, 16+

Maths involved: shapes, symmetry

Materials needed:

For the basic houses

- Pieces of brown cardboard, e.g. recycled packaging from parcels
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Eraser
- White paint pen

If you don't have a white paint pen and don't want to buy one especially, you can also use a black marker or other colours, it just won't look as much like icing on gingerbread.

Optional (for display)

- String
- Craft knife & cutting mat (adults only!)
- White tissue paper
- Glue
- LED tealight

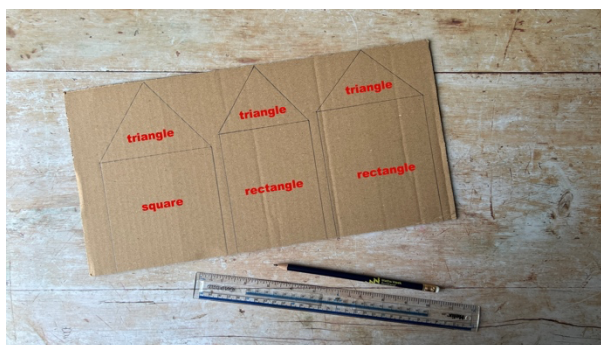
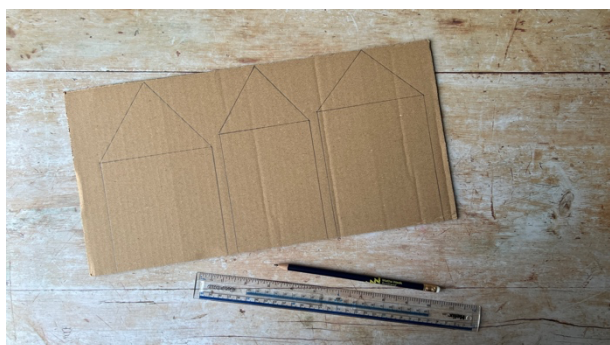


Instructions

In this activity we are going to be making 'gingerbread' house decorations out of recycled cardboard. Using a white paint pen on brown cardboard makes it look like icing on gingerbread. There's lots of shapes and symmetry involved, from drawing and cutting out the houses to decorating them. We'll also show you two alternative ways to display the finished houses.

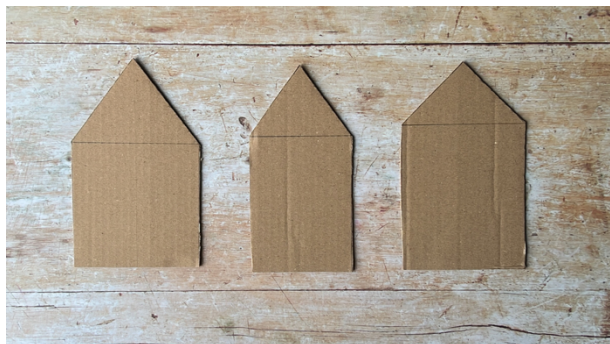
Step 1: With your ruler and pencil, draw the outlines of your gingerbread house. This is also an opportunity to talk with children about the shapes that can make up a gingerbread house. Here, we drew squares and rectangles for the body of the houses, then drew triangles on top for the rooves.

Our houses are 10cm – 12cm wide, and 20cm tall.



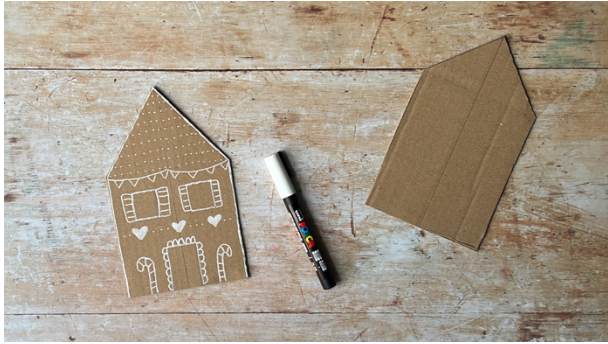
Step 2: Cut out the house. Erase any lines that you may have drawn in Step 1 to help construct the house.

Step 3: Now lightly draw in a line down the centre of the house – this is your line of symmetry.



Step 4: Decorate your 'gingerbread' house with the white pen. To create your symmetry, mirror anything you draw on both sides of the symmetry line.

Step 5: Make sure the pen has fully dried, then gently rub out the pencil lines.



That's your basic gingerbread house done! Now we'll show you two alternative ways you can display it.



Display Method 1: Hanging Decoration

With the point of a pencil, poke a small hole in the top corner of the roof of your gingerbread house. Thread through some wool or string and tie a knot in the end. Your house is now ready to hang up.

This is a good method to do with a bigger group of children, e.g. a school class. You could also vary the size and make a lot of smaller houses to string together as a garland. Or make miniature houses to hang on a tree.

Display Method 2: Standing Decoration

Note: The first part of this method involves a sharp knife, so should be done by an adult only!

If you want to avoid having to do the cutting for 30+ houses, this method is maybe better for at home or for a smaller group of children, rather than a whole school class.

Step 1: Place the gingerbread house on a cutting mat. With the craft knife, and a ruler to guide you, cut out the windows and doors or the house.

Step 2: Cut out pieces of tissue paper and glue them on to the BACK of the house, to covering the door and windows.



Step 3: Cut out two small square pieces of card (you can use the scraps left over from when you originally cut out your house). Cut a slit on one side of each square going about half way in.

Step 4: Cut a slit in to each side of the house, on the bottom edge. The slot the squares in to the slits on the house to create little stands.



You can now stand up the house, and optionally place an LED tealight behind it.



Taking it further:

At home – Decorate the house on one side of the line of symmetry then challenge your child to complete the other side.

At school – Pair up. Each child decorates one side of their house, then swap with your partner and complete the other side to make the decorations symmetrical.

