

Christmas Ornament

## *What's a witch doing in my Christmas tree?*

It may seem odd to have a witch as part of your Christmas decorations, but if you were in Italy, you may have images of La Befana in your house. In Italy, the main exchange of gifts takes place on January 6, the feast of the Epiphany, the celebration in remembrance of the Magi's visit to the Christ Child. Children anxiously await a visit from La Befana who brings gifts for the good and punishment for the bad.

The Christmas tree has never been particularly popular in France, and though the use of the Yule log has faded, the French make a traditional Yule log-shaped cake called the *buche de Nol*, which means "Christmas Log."

Since Christmas falls in the middle of the summer season in Australia, there has been a suggestion that "Swag Man" take over Santa's franchise Down Under!!! There is a lot of concern about Santa Claus perhaps suffering heat stroke whilst Down Under. "Swag Man" wears a brown Akubra, a blue singlet and long baggy shorts. He spends all winter under Uluru with his merry dingoes and then at Christmas time, he gets in his huge four-wheel drive and sets off through the red dust to deliver his presents.

A thousand years ago in Sweden, King Canute declared that Christmas would last a month, from December 13, the feast of St. Lucia until January 13, or Tjugondag Knut (St. Canute's Day). No one is quite sure why Lucia, a 4th century Sicilian saint, came to be so revered in Sweden. On her feast day the eldest daughter in each family dresses in a white dress with a red sash, and wears an evergreen wreath with seven lighted candles on her head. She (very carefully) carries coffee and buns to each family member in his or her room. Many schools, offices, and communities sponsor Lucia processions in which carol are sung and everyone thanks the Queen of Light for bringing hope during the darkest time of the year.

It seems every country in the world has a different way of celebrating Christmas. For your next project, you are going to create an ornament for the Saint Viator Christmas tree that depicts some aspect of how different countries celebrate Christmas. Maybe you will sculpt Santa Claus as he looks in England (known as Father Christmas.) Maybe you'll sculpt a poinsettia because it is so important to Mexico. Perhaps you'll sculpt a *buche de Nol* for the tree. What you make is up to you.

You will start by researching how a different country celebrates Christmas. Use the internet to search for "Christmas around the world" and you'll come up with plenty of sites. You can choose a country of your own ethnic background, or any other country you find interesting. Find something in that country's celebration that you can make into an ornament. Remember, you want to show something different than we celebrate in the United States.

Use the back of this page for notes, or simply print out the information from you Web site and attach to this sheet. Bring you research into class on Monday, October 26 and you will then get the details on how you will make this out of clay.



