Santa's on his sleigh

Cut out and colour the pictures to make your own Christmas scene
Winter wonderland

Cut out and colour the pictures to make your own Christmas scenes.
Who lives here?

Look at the ice grotto and then tell me
Which of these places do you see?

A magic grotto for someone who
delivers Christmas gifts to you;
who keeps his sleigh in this shimmering place –
a man with a smiling, bearded face?

A palace with a mirrored hall,
glistening ice on every wall;
jewelled pillars, sparkling light,
crystal diamonds gleaming bright?

An ice-cold room in a wintry land,
painted by someone’s frosty hand;
frozen fingers that point at you
trying to turn you cold and blue.

Who would live in the places you have seen –
Jack Frost, Father Christmas or the Snow Queen?
An ice giant, troll or polar bear –
who do you think would live in there?

Jillian Harker

Teachers’ notes

Show the children the poster image of the
ice grotto, encouraging them to talk about
what they see. Make a collection of the key
words they use, grouping together any that
fit a similar category (words that describe
cold or colour, for example).

Ask the children to look carefully at the
poster while you read the poem to them.
Invite the children to say which verse best
describes what they see. Encourage them
to suggest who might live in the place
described in that particular verse. Can they
think of anyone else, real or imaginary,
who might live in such a place?

Compare the words used to describe
the grotto in the poem, with those the
children used. Did they use the same
words, or did they describe the ice grotto
in a different way? Could some of their
words be used in place of any of the words
in the poem?
Santa's little helpers

The elves have caught a cold and there are presents waiting to be delivered! Can your class help to save the day?

Learning objectives
To develop problem solving through teamwork; to learn the properties and uses of ice.

You will need
Suitable working space; introductory letter and task cards (see below); ‘icy’ music (for example, Carl Davis’ Fire and Ice and the ‘Freezing Snow’ section from the Primrose dance pack Seasons (www.primrose-education.co.uk).

Whole class
Establish a clear signal to indicate when you are in role (stand up to show that the drama has begun, sit down to indicate a return to reality). Stand up and look very puzzled. Read out a letter, telling the children it came this morning – through your bedroom window.

The letter should be ‘icy-looking’ and in an envelope – perhaps silver pen on blue paper with a few silver sequins. Read out the letter:

Dear (teacher’s name),

Father Christmas has put me in charge of the elves who make all the presents for Christmas. They came to work in my ice grotto, but they are not used to ice and they have all got colds and gone to bed. I need helpers to get all the presents ready in time. They must be able to cope with ice, so they must pass three tests. If they work well they will be rewarded.

Yours sincerely
Jack Frost.

What might happen if poor Father Christmas does not get any helpers? (There will be no presents for anyone at Christmas!) Ask the children if they would like to help. With the decision made, it is time to decide what to pack – plenty of warm clothes, cold remedies, hot water bottles, and so on. Lead children around the space, wondering how you are going to get to the ice grotto. Suddenly point and say There is a sleigh! Put suitcases on it, but then remember the tests. In the icy envelope you need to have placed three cards. Take the first card out and read what it says:

Test 1: Lots of people say they don’t like ice, but it has lots of uses. You must think of five to pass this test.

Ideas might include to cool drinks, to put on bruises, to freeze food, to slide on, to make igloos, to make sculptures, to make ice cream, a penguin’s home, and so on.

When the test is passed, take out the next card and read it:

Test 2: You must prove that you are safe on the ice by skating safely on the ice rink. You will find your skates in the sleigh.

Lead children to the (imaginary) rink and skate to your chosen icy music. Then it is time for the final test:

Test 3: You need to get used to the cold. To do this you must work in an ice-cream factory and then test all of your different ice creams.

Put on aprons and caps, and set children to work churning, operating machinery, breaking eggs, adding flavours, piping cornets, and so on. Finally sit them all down, shuddering and shivering, to try out the selection of ice creams.

With the tests passed, it is time to get back into the sleigh. Play some music as the children travel across the ice. Then pull on some warm clothes, get the ice picks from the sleigh and begin climbing the ice mountain to reach the grotto.

On arrival, look at the list of presents that you need to make. (You can provide a real list if you want to!) Everyone can then begin making the presents.

When the presents are finished, each child picks their favourite as a reward. Return home in the sleigh to icy music.

To end the lesson, sit down and invite the children to talk about the presents that they chose.

Group/independent
As an extension to the drama activity, children can draw or paint pictures that will tell someone about their journey. More able children may wish to write a simple diary account. They could then make their own souvenirs to put in their diary – a colourful ice-cream menu, Santa’s list of presents, a crumpled map to the ice grotto, and so on.
Winter words

Extension ideas for the literacy hour to develop your ice grotto theme

The following are suggestions for related writing activities in a range of genres, intended to follow either the drama lesson (‘Santa’s little helpers’ – see photocopiable one) or the art lesson (Cave of wonders – see Photocopiable 2). Some, such as the acrostic poem, are suitable for a whole-class activity, while others, after a whole-class introduction, can be worked on individually.

A frosty reply
Children can reply to Jack Frost’s letter, thanking him for the invitation to the ice grotto (see ‘Santa’s little helpers’). They can use the letter to ask him any question that they would like him to answer. When complete, letters could be decorated with glitter or paint to make them suitably ‘frosty’ looking. If you’re feeling particularly creative, you could make snowflakes from paper and glue these on a neatly written envelope – ‘To Jack Frost’.

A thank you letter
Following the ‘Santa’s little helpers’ activity, children could write a thank you note to Santa thanking him for the opportunity to work with him. Encourage the children to comment on the parts of the job that they enjoyed or perhaps found tricky. Don’t forget to thank Santa for the present that everyone was allowed to choose!

Wrap up warm
Ask children to write a list of all the things that someone would need to pack if they are planning on going to the ice grotto (see ‘Santa’s little helpers’). Remind the children of the conditions of their journey (very cold!) and the types of equipment that came in useful (ice picks to climb the mountain). The list could be expanded by considering what the children might take as a gift for Santa to say thank you for letting them stay.

Ice is cool
Challenge the children to write a list of all the different uses for ice (to cool drinks, to freeze food, to slide on, to make igloos, to make sculptures, to make ice cream, and so on). What words would they use to describe the feel and texture of ice? These words can be added around the list in suitably icy writing.

You all right, Jack?
Jack Frost set three tests for the children to see how they would cope with his icy environment (see ‘Santa’s little helpers’). Now ask the children to work in pairs or small groups to plan three tests for him to carry out in our warm environment. These can then be written down on separate cards, decorated and placed in an envelope. Groups could swap envelopes and act out Jack Frost as he tackles each challenge in turn. Will he succeed?

Spelling with the senses
Ask the children to make a list of adjectives describing the ice grotto – either from the drama session or the art session. To help structure this activity, children could work through the different senses – sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. The resulting list of words can then form the basis of some poetry writing. Acrostic poems can be particularly useful in providing a helpful framework. Challenge the children to make poems using the words ICE GROTTO or simply ICE.
Cave of wonders

Explore colour, texture and shape as you create your own icy classroom grotto

Learning objectives
To plan and design a classroom ice grotto using a variety of art techniques.

You will need
A suitable corner of the classroom to turn into an ice grotto; plenty of drying space; a copy of the ice grotto poster; a Christmas tree (preferably silver); a wide range of ‘icy’ art materials set out on different tables.

The following are some suggestions:
Table 1 (wall covering): paints and/or inks in cold colours (blues, purples, black, white, silver) for mixing; mixing plates; brushes; card.

Table 2 (dangling snowflakes): metallic silver and blue paper; unwanted CDs; doilies; scissors; glue.

Table 3 (cone icicles): card; paper; glue; glitter; cotton wool balls; stapler (for adult use).

Table 4 (textured ceiling pieces or stalactites): fabrics in cold colours; scissors; glue; card.

Table 5 (textured wall pieces): pasta; glue; card; silver spray (for adult use).

Table 6 (strings of snow): white polystyrene balls; large blunt needles; thread.

Whole class
Look at the poster of the ice grotto. Ask the children to imagine what it would be like to step inside it. How would it make them feel? Encourage the children to describe what they can see in the grotto – the textures, colours and shapes.

Show the children the area you have in mind to transform into your own ice grotto. Look together at the materials you have set out. Ask the children to think about how they could be used to make the grotto look and feel ‘icy’. Talk through some ideas.

Suggestions might include:
● Paint sheets of card for the walls in cold colours. You could also try a marbling technique (effective for ‘ice’), by adding swirls of ink to water and laying the paper gently in the water.
● Make snowflakes by folding card and cutting out a pattern, then opening it up for a symmetrical effect. These can then be glued to old music CDs, so that the glittery, bright CD shines between the gaps in the snowflake.
● Create icicles from cones of card and covering in cotton wool.
● Make textured tiles for the ceiling or wall by experimenting with different fabrics and textures. Dry pasta shells or tubes that have been sprayed silver can look very effective.

Group/independent
Children can work in groups at the different tables, changing when suitable. When all the various pieces are finished and dry, pin them to the grotto’s wall area or hang them from the ceiling.

Provide suitable seating in the grotto, such as an icy-coloured blanket and/or cushions, or simply some blue or grey chairs. Add a little table and a silver Christmas tree to complete the scene.

On the table, place silver-covered or equally wintery looking boxes with bits and pieces left over from the art activity, as well as scissors and glue. Two children at a time can sit in the grotto and make decorations for the Christmas tree.
Rockin' around the Christmas tree

Cut out and decorate your very own Christmas tree
A child is born in Bethlehem

Cut out and colour the pictures to make your own Nativity scene