

# Christmas at the Candle Factory

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## About the Book - Grades K - 3

It's the candle factory's busiest and most exciting time of year, but Midnight, the factory's hardworking cat, can't handle the holiday rush and an annoying new kitten named Elvis! Her patience wears thin as the orders pile up, and the true meaning of Christmas gets lost in the hubbub. Colorful candles, beautiful illustrations, and a heartwarming ending will delight the child in everyone.

## Setting the Stage

Getting students ready to read:

Optional: We suggest a reading of *The Cat in the Candle Factory* several days ahead of time. This will set the stage for the candle factory setting and familiarize students with the main character, Midnight.

- Show the cover of the book to the students and have them make predictions of what they think the book will be about.
- Bring in an assortment of candles, especially those that are looped together with their wicks. Display in classroom. Discuss the different uses of candles.
- Read aloud the back cover of the book where it tells about the author. Children will feel connected because they know more about the author.
- **Read** story to children for enjoyment. Stop and point out pictures in the story. After every few pages, stop and have children **predict** what will happen next after.

## Review

After reading and enjoying the story and pictures, use the following questions to lead a discussion:

- How did Elvis and Midnight get along in the beginning of the story?
- Why didn't Midnight move to the Clarkston Country Store?
- What other holiday besides Christmas is mentioned in the book? Why?
- Can you name all the different scent days they had in the factory?
- What caused the tree to fall down?
- How many times did Elvis cause the tree to crash to the floor?
- Where did Grady send Elvis?
- Do you think Midnight was happier without Elvis? Explain.
- Why would Christmas be ruined if Midnight didn't snap back to her normal behavior?
- What question did Elvis ask Midnight throughout the story?
- What was the problem in this story?
- What was the solution to the problem? Do you agree with the solution?
- Do you think Grady was sensitive to Elvis and his feelings?

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(Pick activities appropriate for grade-level.)

### Writing:

- Ask students to write about a time when someone younger annoyed them.
- Make a list of students' favorite Christmas tree ornaments.
- Make a list of Fact vs. Fiction behaviors of the cat in the story.
- Write letters/cards to people who live alone, armed services members, or nursing homes.

### Art:

- Make candles out of paraffin and scents.
- Create a design for a Christmas candle. Vote on favorite designs and send them to the Davisburg Candle Factory.
- Make decorations for a tree in the classroom.
- Make a menorah. Use blue birthday candles and a white one in the middle.
- Fold a 12x18 sheet of white paper in half. On the top half of paper, have children illustrate the problem; on the bottom half illustrate the solution.

### Science:

- Talk about the source of different kinds of wax. (i.e. beeswax and paraffin) Did you know paraffin is a byproduct of oil refining?
- Discuss the way a candle burns, using fuel, flame, and oxygen.
- Learn about how candle wax melts at different temperatures.
- Discuss candle safety in the home.
- In a closed container, burn two different kinds of candles (i.e. beeswax vs. paraffin) and measure which one burns down the most after 30 minutes.
- List the different smells of Christmas and talk about how candle scent is locked into the wax during production.

### Math:

- Learn to measure by creating candles from paraffin and scents (see Art)
- Using balance scale, weigh an assortment of Christmas candles the children have brought in.
- Graph students' answers to their favorite part of the story.
- Estimate how many candy canes are in a big jar.
- Figure out the shipping costs for candle orders to different parts of the country.
- Discuss the impact of high oil prices upon the cost of candle wax.

### Reading:

- Set up a classroom library with a selection of books about cats, candles, Christmas, and Hanukkah. Use both fact and fiction.