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Opening extract from

Creative Craft with Kids

Written by

Jane Foster

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Introduction

My name is Jane Foster and I'd like to welcome you to *Creative Craft with Kids*. I live in Devon, in the southwest of England, with my partner Jim and our six-year-old daughter Polly. We run a business called Jane Foster Designs from our studio in Dartington. It's here that I design toys, illustrate, screen print and sew. It's a wonderful, peaceful space looking out onto fields and the Devon countryside.

Polly has grown up in a very creative household, in which the majority of our weekends are spent at the large kitchen table drawing, painting and making things. The lower half of our kitchen larder has turned into an art cupboard that's full to the brim: paper, card, empty cereal boxes, ribbons, pens, paints, cardboard tubes – you name it, it's there waiting for inspiration! Polly loves making things next to me and I love the freedom of expression that children have. She gets such pleasure from her handmade creations, which are immediately placed on the mantelpiece and fridge door to be admired. Polly also loves coming along to the studio and playing with my fabric off-cuts and whatever else she can lay her hands on. The studio environment really encourages her creativity and she refers to it as her second home.





It was the projects I've made with and for Polly that provided the inspiration for this book, and I'd like to say a big thank you to Polly and all her friends for participating in the book with me. All the projects are relatively inexpensive to make and can be adapted to suit children of different ages. Some are things that you can involve your own children in, while others are quick-and-easy toys and accessories that you can make for them, to give their bedroom a really unique, special look. The 1960s and 70s feel of the projects reflects my own design tastes; they're great for children, as they will love the bold colours and shapes.



I really love the idea of introducing children to crafting as early as possible. The benefits are enormous – for all the family. Not only does it help young children improve their hand-to-eye co-ordination and stimulate their creativity and self-expression, but it is also a way of the whole family bonding in a common interest. Yes, it can be a bit messy sometimes – but that's all part of the fun and the learning process! What does it matter if the stitching is a little wonky or the colouring-in a bit slapdash? The pride and pleasure that you and your children will get from your creations is beyond measure. Join me in this crafting journey: I hope you find it inspiring and fun.

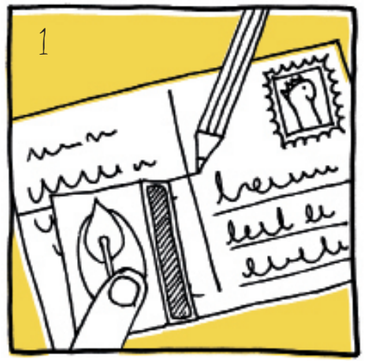
Mini treasure chests

As a child, I loved looking at my mum's little boxes of precious belongings – an agate brooch, a silver bracelet and so on. Children love secret treasures that mean something to them, whether that is pebbles from a beach or favourite bits of jewellery, and these decorated mini chests are a great and inexpensive way to store and display them.

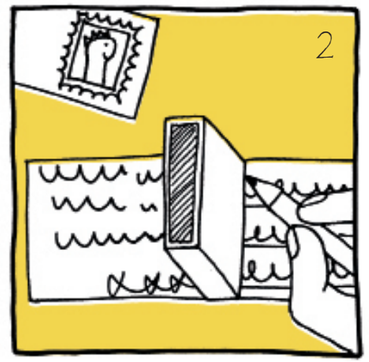
You will need

Basic craft kit (see page 12)
A few matchboxes (they can vary in size)
A few vintage postcards (or new ones)

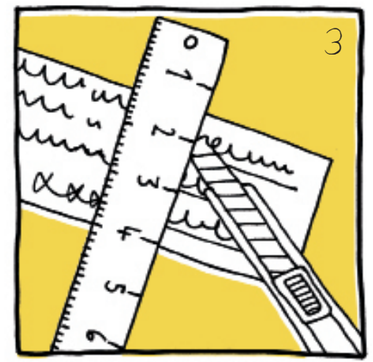




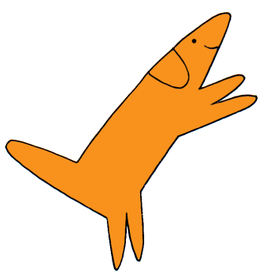
1 Place your matchbox on the back of the postcard and mark the height of the box. Draw a pencil line across the whole postcard at this level, then cut along your drawn line.



2 Look at the front of the postcard and select an area in the centre that you want to feature on top of the box. Place the box in the appropriate position on the postcard strip (still on the reverse). Using a pencil, lightly draw around the vertical sides to mark where the first folds will be. Then turn the box on its side, place one edge on each of the vertical lines in turn, and draw along the other edge to mark the second set of folds.



3 Using a craft knife (or a very sharp pencil) and a ruler, gently score along these lines to create sharp folds in the postcard. (Be careful not to cut through to the other side!)



Drawing with your kids

I think it's really important to spend time drawing with children. Not only is it incredibly enjoyable, it's bonding, calming, taps into the imagination and can also be therapeutic. It can be a fantastic way of working through any worries a child might have – often it's easier for them to draw pictures than verbalize.

We have a wide selection of things to draw with – Polly has a huge box full of everything ranging from felt tip pens (of various sizes), coloured pencils, crayons and normal HB pencils. I also let her use my special 'mummy pens' when I'm sitting with her – fine black ink gel pens. We also have a large selection of paper in different sizes, colours and thicknesses with some suitable for card making.

Polly and I often sit down to draw together, but it's even more fun when the three of us in our family draw together as daddy's drawings are often silly! His style is completely different to mine so there's even more stimulation for Polly.







