



REEEC

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center
University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign

Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum



Center for Global Studies
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Making your own Tomte (Swedish gnome)

20 minutes prep, 30 minutes of class time

This unit is designed to allow students to interact with the traditional Swedish stories of the tomte, or Swedish gnomes. Students will be engaged with traditional stories and traditions surrounding these gnomes and be given the opportunity to create and decorate their own tomte.

Required Materials:

1. Paper plates, cut in half
2. Craft paper cut to look like hats and noses
3. Glue sticks
4. Markers to decorate

Preparation: Place a halved paper plate, nose, and hat at each student's seat. Have glue sticks and markers available for students to decorate their gnomes once complete.



Lesson Plan:

1. Begin by asking the children what country we live in, and then help them locate that country on a map or globe. Then show them where Sweden is on a map/globe. (2 mins)
2. Use the printed images to introduce the class to Sweden, showing a picture of the capital city, Stockholm. Introduce them to basics about Sweden, including the word for hello ("hej") and goodbye ("hej då"). (3 mins)
3. Show students the images of the tomte and tell them the lore behind the little people of rural Sweden. Explain that they were traditionally seen as guardians of the farmers who looked after animals, especially the horses and cows. They usually stayed hidden in the spring and summer, but came out more in the darker months. They could be angered easily if they thought a human was rude to them or if a tradition had been changed. Their favorite food is porridge ('grot' in Swedish) with a lot of butter. They have become a symbol of Christmas in Sweden, similar to Santa, and typically a bowl of porridge is left out for them on Christmas Eve, which is called 'julgrot' (Christmas porridge). (5 mins)
4. Explain the activity to the class (10 mins):
 - a. First, each student will receive one half of a paper plate (the tomte's beard) and a piece of construction paper to be the hat and nose of the gnome.
 - b. They will glue these pieces together to resemble a gnome's face using a glue stick.
 - c. Students are then able to decorate their gnomes using markers. Once the gnomes are dry, they are free to take them home with them at the end of the day!