



Nochebuena: Puerto Rican Holiday Fun

Gabriel, age 8, loves Christmas but his fun doesn't end on Dec. 26!

Gabriel's mom is from Puerto Rico, where they celebrate several holidays in December and January. One of them is known as *Dia de los Reyes*, or Three Kings Day.

Dia de los Reyes is celebrated the morning of Jan. 6 in remembrance of the three kings—Baltazar, Melchior, and Gaspar—who journey to witness the birth of Jesus. To prepare, Gabriel does something special for the three kings' arrival on



camels.

"I collect grass from my yard and put it in a box under the Christmas tree," he says. It's kind of like leaving milk and cookies for Santa's reindeer!

SNOW CASTLE

Build a snow castle! Not as a fort from which to throw snowballs, but as an exercise in design. First, choose your shapes: Plastic buckets and rectangular plastic food containers make good molds to form bricks. Use these to build the foundation and walls.

You can make a conical roof out of a kitchen funnel. You can carve slots in the battlements with a butter knife or plastic spatula. Cut out tiny pennants from colorful paper, tape them to toothpicks, and mount them on the towers as your banners. You can press small stones into the wall for a natural look.

Finally, bring out the toy soldiers, man the battlements, and take pictures to show friends next summer!



NATALIE

