

reader Submitted Frugal Christmas Decorating

Festive (and Frugal) window decoration

Sponge stars or other seasonal shapes on your window with paint! Just add a teaspoon or so of liquid dish soap to acrylic craft paint, and after the holidays you can wash it off with window cleaner. Use a non-scratching dish scrubber if you come across a stubborn spot. by Lori

When our children were small after one Holiday season, we took advantage of the deep discounted sales and purchased a small, artificial tree for each to put in their rooms. Then, every year until they were older, they decorated their trees in their own style. Most of the decorations were handmade - created from materials that would have been normally discarded such as packaging materials, plastic lids, etc. They were painted, glittered, etc. and they each thought they

had the most beautiful trees in the world. As they got older, we purchased (after the holidays, of course) store-bought ornaments which they would keep

and treasure and still own for their grown-up family trees. By Dianne F.

For home made decorations you need cinnamon sticks assorted nuts unusual dried materials from a nature walk, pepper berry clusters and ribbon loops Take cinnamon sticks cut in 3 inch pieces (use the large natural sticks for crafts not the cooking ones) hot glue 2 of them in an X add on the nuts and dried mats filling out the X into a more rounded shape , top with loop tie and a few a small stem of the berries for color and you have a homemade tree hanger.

By Vicki A.

Use two 3/4-inch binder clips or one 1 1/4-inch one in the center of christmas cards, recipe cards, and photos for a decorative way to display them.

Frugal decorating tip:

For a nice window decoration, cut out holiday shapes from black poster board and tape inside windows, then close the curtains or blinds. The light from inside will illuminate them from behind at night.

I've always liked the idea of having a nice sized manger scene on the lawn during the Christmas Holidays, but the really nice ones were always out of my budget. Instead I drew and cut out a large silhouette of Joseph, Mary and a straw fill manger as a crib from black poster board. I'm not an artist, but since they were in large sized silhouette, they were easy and simple to draw. I taped the silhouettes inside the window and hung a lighted, inexpensive star tree topper above the images. During the day they were barely visible, but at night with my white sheer curtains hanging behind them and the inside light on, they look really nice and I have received many compliments. After Christmas is over, I replace the figures with large cutouts of snowflakes to bring in the New Year. by Connie Tucker

I buy clear ornaments and let my kids paint them, then I save them each year for when they grow up they will have ornaments from the past for their first tree's. Right now my youngest has 15. By Colleen G

To save money, the kids and I make our own Christmas Decorations using flour and salt. We cut them using cookie cutters then bake them and then paint!! Cheap and cute! By Jennifer B.

Okay, I hate to admit it, but I'm a single mom living on a very low budget. When my twins were toddlers a friend that was moving gave us a little fake tree that has branches that fold up for easy storage. We love that tree, but I did not have any extra money for ornaments that year. It was gifts for the girls, or ornaments. So then I looked around their room. My

goodness what a wonderland of ornament like goodies! We started a family tradition that year- the first year we decorated the tree with little 'Kelly' dolls that the girls were into then. The next year they were more into 'My Little Ponies'- so the ponies adorned the branches. Now my girls are a bit older and are into oragami, you know the Japanese art of paper folding, so guess what our theme is this year! That right oragami! All these years for fabulous Christmas fun, and we didn't spend any extra money on decorations! By Joanne A.