



# HOST A *POLAR EXPRESS* PAJAMA READING!

## BEFORE THE EVENT:

Download a copy of the invitation flyer, reminding children to come wearing their pajamas.  
(Whoever is reading the book might also want to wear their pajamas.)

Set up chairs in two rows like the seats of a train, and print out Polar Express train tickets.

Find a bell similar to the boy's bell in *The Polar Express*.

If you are hosting young children, print out and copy coloring & activity sheets and *Polar Express* bookmarks (click on Fun & Games on [www.polarexpress.com](http://www.polarexpress.com) to find these).

Download *Polar Express* Reading Logs & Stationery

Think about refreshments (there are recipes for hot cocoa & chocolate bars in the **Fun & Games** section).

### Let the fun begin!

Invite the children to take a seat on the Polar Express and hand them a train ticket. Just before the reading, you or a designated conductor can collect the tickets.

Dim the lights and call out "All Aboard the Polar Express," before you start the reading, inviting young readers into the magic of the story in an accessible, tangible way.

When the boy in the story receives the bell, take out your bell and show the students. When you read that only those who truly believe can hear the bell, ring the bell for the children and ask if they can hear it!

Serve refreshments—hot cocoa "as thick and rich as melted chocolate bars" and candy with nougat centers "as white as snow" will be a big hit! You could also give out cookies in the shape of trains. (Train-shaped cookie cutters are readily available.)

## AFTER THE READING:

For older children, you might want to follow the reading with a discussion of the book. (There is a list called "Guiding Questions for a Polar Express Book Conversation" within the Polar Express Teacher's Guide. Visit the Teacher/Librarian page on [www.polarexpress.com](http://www.polarexpress.com) for teacher's guides. )

Ask the children if they have a possession that holds as much meaning for them as the boy's bell holds for him. Follow the read-aloud and book conversation with a share circle. Discuss how it is not just the objects themselves that we love, but it is the people and ideas that they represent or remind us of.

Invite the children to write about their special objects and what those objects represent. Give them *Polar Express* Stationery to write on.

Younger children may prefer to do an arts-and-crafts activity. Look in **Fun and Games** for the instructions: "How to Make a Reindeer." The materials for this craft are inexpensive and easily attainable.

The *Polar Express* Pajama Reading can be a great kickoff for a *Polar Express* Reading Celebration. Give each child a Reading Log to take home; they can advance on the track by reading or being read to for twenty minutes each night.

You might want to provide a goodie bag for children. This could include *Polar Express* bookmarks and coloring pages. You could also provide a bell for each child and a packet of hot chocolate.

**May the bell still ring "for all who truly believe."**

Visit the Polar Express site ([www.polarexpress.com](http://www.polarexpress.com)) and click on Fun and Games for more great ideas and materials.