

Youth Work Ireland Nollaig 2026



DESIGN A CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION



INTRODUCTION

“Nollaig 2026” is an opportunity for young people between the ages of five and eighteen to design a Christmas card for **Youth Work Ireland**.

The competition is open to all young people affiliated to a **Youth Work Ireland Local Youth Service**. There are three age categories and a winner will be chosen from each. An overall winner will also be chosen and this card will be used as the Christmas e-card for Youth Work Ireland for 2026. The overall winner and the winners of each age category will receive a gift card and a copy of their card will be printed and framed.

This pack is designed for youth workers and club leaders. It contains all the information you will need to run a workshop with young people online/ or in person who wish to participate in the competition.

The pack outlines a workshop that can be used with groups in conjunction with “Nollaig 2026”.



WORKSHOP OUTLINE

What is it all about?

- * Introduce “Nollaig 2026”.
- * Explain to the group what Youth Work Ireland is and how their group /club is a part of it.
- * Have a discussion on the importance of an organization (i.e. Youth Work Ireland or Local Youth Service) Christmas Card – If possible have a couple of examples from previous years. (all images in this pack are previous entries)
- * Go through the rules and explain the different categories.



Rules and Regulations

- * All entries must be submitted by young persons affiliated to a Youth Work Ireland Local Youth Service.
- * The age categories are **5–9yrs**, **10–14yrs** and **15-18yrs** with persons being of this age on the closing date of the competition (**14th November, 2026**).
- * Please complete your entry on an A4 standard piece of white paper (Please do not fold the A4 in half or quarters, use the full page for the picture).
- * All 2D media are acceptable pen and ink, crayon, pastels, pencil, paint.
- * **Send your entry to Geraldine Moore, Nollaig 2026, Youth Work Ireland, 20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1.**
- * ***All entries MUST be submitted with an entry form.***
- * All entries must be submitted by **13 November, 2026**.



Getting Started

The most difficult thing to do when designing a card is to try and decide on “what you’re going to put on it”! Most designers spend some time thinking about the message they are trying to communicate with their design and play around with different ideas before choosing the final one.

- * It’s time to start thinking about Christmas and get the creative juices flowing! Lead the group in an in person/ online brainstorming exercise around the theme of Christmas.
- * Using a flip chart or large sheet of paper record all the words the group associate with Christmas. See example below.

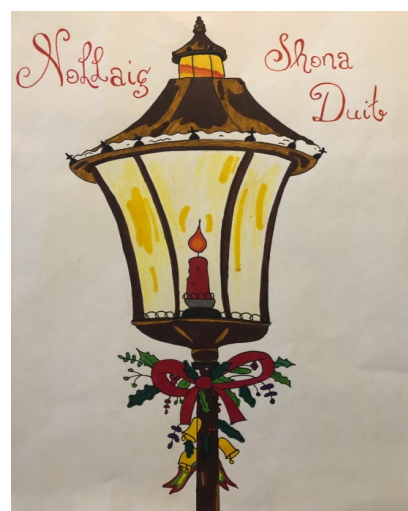


- * Explore different aspect of Christmas e.g. Religious symbols, Santa Claus, Traditional Symbols, Christmas Carols, Sci-fi Christmas etc., the ways different cultures celebrate Christmas in Ireland and around the world.
- * The group may want their design to relate directly to Youth Work Ireland and Youth Work, continue the exercise with a brainstorm around Youth Work Ireland and Youth Work. Once this is completed the group can try to match the identified Christmas themes with youth work.

Investigation

You don't always have to rely on your imagination when designing, there are plenty of good ideas out there to help you get started. Before the group puts paint to paper it's a good idea to look at a range of ready made Christmas cards. Examine them under different headings and ask the group the following questions.

- * Which card do they like the best and why?
- * Which card do they like the least and why?
- * Do different cards appeal to different audiences, what are the differences?
- * What is the style of the card? – Traditional, animated, funky, stylized, conservative etc.
- * What types of colours are used?
- * Has a restricted palette (a small group of colours e.g. red and gold) been used, was this effective?
- * What type of lettering has been used?
- * What does the type of lettering say to the audience?



Types of Media

This programme provides leaders the opportunity to introduce young people to a range of different artistic media (the stuff you draw with!).

This section gives an overview of the different media available and the merits of each. You could have a session where the young people sample the different types, and look at the different effects achieved by each, finding out what suits them.

Pencils

- * If a young person wants to work with pencil I would recommend that they use one or a selection from the H and B graded systems as they are a better quality and allow for more variety of tones. These are not too expensive and widely available in stationery and art shops. Coloured pencils are often easier to work with, as they are softer due to higher level of wax. Water-soluble pencils are often an easier option; you simply draw your image as normal and then go over it with a damp brush applying more water or pressure to achieve a more blurred effect.

Charcoal

- * Charcoal is easy to work with, but beware of the mess! If a young person chooses to work in this way you must use a fixing agent, the cheapest is regular hair spray. A good application will prevent smudging.

Pastels

- * Pastels are available in both soft, hard and oil. Again if a young person chooses to work with a soft pastel a fixing agent must be used.

Pens and Inks

- * This is a more difficult medium to work in as you can not rub out your mistakes, however it can have a very dramatic effect.

Paints

- * There is a huge variety of paints available, watercolours, acrylic, oils, poster. If your group chooses to work with paint, give them the opportunity to experiment with the different types. Encourage the group to try out different ways of applying the paint, using different types and sizes of brush.

Check List

Once the young people are ready to start, here are some questions they can ask themselves to make sure they have thought everything through.

- * Have you decided on your paper layout, is the card going to be portrait or landscape?
- * Have you decided on your theme?
- * Have you chosen the materials you are going to use and worked out why they are the best choice?
- * What colours are you using?
- * Is there going to be any lettering?
- * If yes what style is it going to be?

If you have all your answers to these questions then you are ready to go.



GOOD LUCK!





Youth Work Ireland

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