

# Snowy Chickadee Acrylic Painting Tutorial



Learn how to paint a chickadee on a pine needle branch with a snowy background.



## Materials Needed:

- 11 x 14 Canvas
- Traceable (Optional but I demonstrate how to do this with the traceable. It helps get the shape of the bird in)
- Graphite Paper (or you can scribble on the back and trace onto canvas)
- Pencil

## Acrylic Paint Colors:

- Titanium White
- Mars Black
- Naples Yellow
- Deep Green Permanent
- Light Green Permanent
- Cadmium Red Deep Hue
- Blue Grey\*
- Raw Umber

\*Blue Grey can be made by mixing 4 parts titanium white, 1 part mars black, 1 part ultramarine blue and 1 part primary blue.

You can also substitute for another grey such as "Neutral Gray Value 5" or any gray you may have in your paint collection.



## Acrylic Brushes:

- 3/4" Flat Wash
- 3/8" Angle Brush
- #4 Round Brush

## Traceables:

- [11 x 14 Chickadee Traceable.pdf](#)
- [9 x 12 Chickadee Traceable.pdf](#)
- [8 x 10 Chickadee Traceable.pdf](#)
- [16 x 20 Chickadee Traceable.pdf](#)



## Directions At A Glance:

# How To Paint "Snowy Chickadee"



[WWW.STEPPYSTEPPEPAINTING.NET](http://WWW.STEPPYSTEPPEPAINTING.NET)

## Step By Step Directions:

### 1. Paint The Background

The background consists of two colors: "Blue Grey" and "Titanium White". See notes above for how to make "blue grey" if you do not have it (I also demonstrate in the video how to make blue grey).

Use a 3/4" flat wash brush, load it into water and pat it dry. Double load your brush in blue grey and titanium white (load it into both of the colors).



Paint long angle strokes so the white and blue grey blend together. Fill the entire canvas with this technique. The paint should be thin. Add small amounts of water to your brush to help with the blending and flow of the paint.



The background should be a variety of that white and blue grey. Some areas are slightly darker and some are slightly lighter. Your strokes should go at different expressive angles. I purposefully made the left side of the background slightly lighter.



Let this dry before going onto the next step.

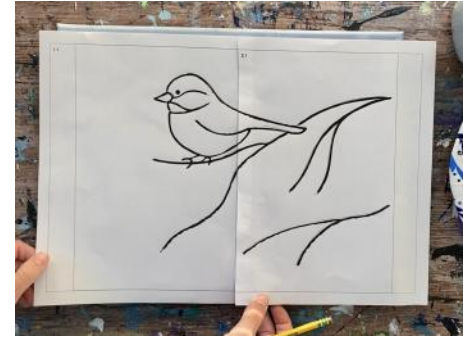
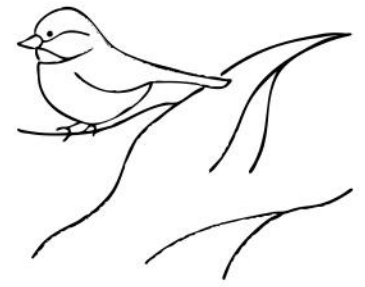
### 2. Draw Or Transfer Chickadee & Branches Onto Canvas

Print out the traceable. If using an 11 x 14 canvas, you will need to tape the two pieces of paper together.

Use a sheet of graphite paper and place it under the bird design. Trace the design firmly with a pencil. (It's best to trace with the canvas flat on the table)

You can also draw the bird and the branch lines lightly with a pencil.

I do not recommend drawing the pine needles because those will be painted in and the extra pencil lines may make it messy.



### 3. Paint The Branches

Use your 3/8" angle brush and raw umber to paint the branches. Alternatively, you can use a #4 round brush to paint the branches.



Try to make the ends of the branches go to a point. Make sure your lines are relatively thin.



#### 4. Paint The Pine Needles

The pine needles can be painted with the 3/8" angle brush or the #4 round brush (whichever you feel more comfortable using). I used the angle brush. This allowed the pine needles to be more pointed.

Load your palette with: titanium white, cadmium red deep hue, deep green permanent and light green permanent.

The pine needles are painted using a variety of the greens (the red is used to mix a darker green and the white is used to mix a lighter green). These pine needles are also about layers.



Start by mixing the white and light green together to make a lighter green. Load the tip of your 3/8" angle brush in that color.

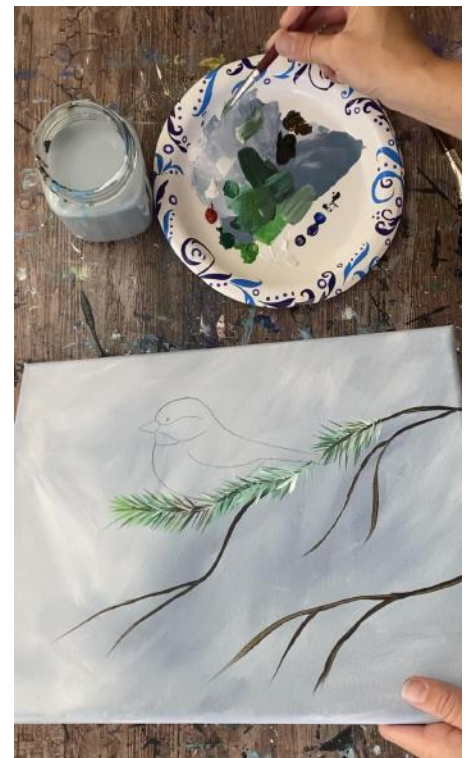


Then paint a few pine needles. Start at the end of one of the branches and paint single strokes that are angled outwards from the branch.

Start each stroke from the branch line and stroke outwards.

Then load your brush in a darker green.

To make the darker green, mix a very small amount of the red into the deep green permanent. This will darken the green.



Continue to paint more pine needle lines. Each time you load your brush in a color, load it in a different variation of the green on your palette.

Some of the pine needles are painted with white. The white will gently blend with the other greens.

Remember to work from the far left of the branch to the right. This will allow the pine needles to look like they are overlapping each other.

You can go back and add other color layers of the pine needles.



This step takes quite a bit of time to do! Take your time and relax. Remember to do multiple types of greens by mixing all different variations of the two greens, red and white on your palette.



You may need to wipe or rinse your brush off after a while if the greens start turning "muddy" or all the same color.



Then go back over some of your pine needle branches with some more white pine needles.

At the ends of some of your branches, use a #4 round brush and mars black to paint small mars black "buds". Simply paint a small dot.



## 5. Paint Berries

Use a #4 round brush and cadmium red deep hue to paint the berries. Paint two sets of three clusters of berries. Each one is slightly varied in size. (You can paint more berries if you want)





Use a tiny bit of deep green permanent to paint a small shadow on the right side of the circles.



Then paint small white dots on the left side of the circles (for frost).



## 6. Paint Chickadee

Use a #4 round brush. Load your palette with: titanium white, Naples yellow and mars black.

Start with the titanium white and the round brush. Paint curved strokes in the belly area of the bird. These curved strokes are slightly thick and give the bird some texture.



Then mix a little black with your white on your palette to make a light to medium gray. Paint some gray in the area just under the tail and diagonally under the head. Again, do this with short, curved strokes to create texture.



Then paint the black areas of the bird. Paint the top of his head and just under the beak. Paint a small amount of black in the lower left part of the wing.



Paint a few black marks on the top right of the wing. Add a few gray marks on the top of the head. Remember to do short, curved strokes. For the wing, they are short, angled strokes.



Then paint the yellow area of the bird with the Naples yellow. Load a thick amount of that yellow on the tip of your round brush. Paint an area just under the wing and overlapping the white of the belly.

Paint short, curved strokes to create the feather texture.



Then paint the wing. The wing is a "salt and pepper" color meaning you will be using the black and white to create different blends of gray but not allowing it to blend all the way.

Load your brush in white and paint curved strokes inside the wing area. Then load your brush in black and continue to paint curved strokes allowing it to gently blend with the white to create gray.



Continue painting the curved strokes. Some of the strokes are going more straight/ diagonal, especially up towards the bird's back. Paint the tail using long angle strokes and mostly black.



Then paint the white part of the bird's cheek in. Use just the titanium white. Paint a few loose strokes that overlap some of the black area of the bird's head.



Paint the beak using gray. Make the top part of the beak slightly darker gray and the bottom slightly lighter. Paint a thin black line in the middle of the beak.

Paint the eye by painting a small white dot.



Then paint the legs using the mars black.



## 7. Paint Blurry Lights & Snow In Background

To do the "blurry lights" use your #4 round brush and titanium white. Paint a small white dot on the canvas. Then take your finger and press on the dot to "smear it". It will make the dot blurry and faded.



Paint several clusters of the dots all over the canvas. Then paint actual snow dots by dotting the tip of your round brush but not smearing them.



### 8. Paint some snow on the branches

Use your round brush and titanium white. "Stipple" a little area of snow that is resting on several flat areas of the pine needle branches.



Then add a small amount of gray (mars black mixed with white) on the bottom area of the snow to give it some shadow. Stipple this as well and let it gently blend with the white.



And you are finished! Sign your name and show it off!

