

Holiday Celebrations

Summary

Students will explore three cultural holidays and compare and contrast the ways varied cultural groups celebrate their heritage.

Time Frame

4 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Materials

Papers, paints and brushes, glue and other materials to create props for the celebrations.; Chart paper for teacher to use during discussions of each celebration.; Appropriate pictures and storybooks for information and enrichment.

Background for Teachers

Teacher will need to be familiar with Kwanzaa background and customs, St.Patrick's Day background and customs, and Pioneer Day background and customs. Teacher should select appropriate activities for children to role play as they simulate the celebration of each holiday.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will develop awareness of various cultures. By role playing parts of several cultural celebrations, students will appreciate the cultural diversity of their community. Students will understand the meaning of Utah's Pioneer Day celebration

Instructional Procedures

Teacher will place objects such as a covered wagon model, a Kwanzaa candelabra, and a shamrock on a table, or place pictures of these objects on a bulletin board. Play 'what is alike' about these objects. Conclude that each is a symbol of a holiday that is special to a cultural group. Elaborate to strengthen children's understanding of terms such as 'cultural group' and 'symbol'. Define each group represented.

Introduce the children to the Kwanzaa celebration and its importance to the African-American culture. Students will create a cut-and-paste kinara (candle holder) and role play the lighting of the candles as you explain the significance of each day in the celebration. The children will celebrate Kwanzaa by participating in Kuumba, the day of creativity. They will dance, sing, paint, sculpt in clay, or do any creative activity offered by the teacher. The book 'Seven Candles For Kwanzaa' by Andrea Davis Pinkne, published by Scholastic Inc. ISBN 0-590-67726-8, is an outstanding reference for this lesson. Share information about the Irish culture and the significance of St.Patrick's Day. Leprechaun stories and Irish music as well as a lighthearted 'leprechaun' treasure hunt for a 'pot of gold' (candy coins) will create a celebration in the classroom. Children may wear cut and paste shamrock headbands and feast on green punch and cookies, or other treats furnished by parent volunteers.

Share information about the Mormon pioneer trek, pointing out its significance to Utah's culture. A stick puppet wagon train, simple paper bonnets and vests will put children into the role of pioneers as they walk and walk around the school's playground perimeter. No treats this time, just a bit of jerkey and a cup of water! To culminate the unit, list on a chart the reasons for each of the celebrations studied. Emphasize that while many cultures exist side by side and each celebrates its own unique

heritage, we have many things in common. Each celebration is about honoring our ancestors and showing pride in our heritage.

Extensions

Students with black, Irish or Mormon pioneer heritage may wish to share family stories that show pride in their particular heritage and tell how the holiday being studied is celebrated in their families. Teacher may wish to involve parents in this aspect of the celebrations.

Assessment Plan

Informal discussion in classroom will assess how well students understand the concepts of cultural pride and the celebration of the contributions of ancestors.

Bibliography

Davis, Andrea Seven Candles for Kwanzaa (Scholastic, Inc.,)

Authors

[Kathleen Webb](#)