Activities

Winter Holidays: Celebrating Diversity

Grades: PreK–K, 1–2

Teaching Tip: By simple words or greetings from foreign languages, studying children around the world, and showcasing posters and art objects with themes of the holidays, your students can discover the richness of diverse cultures and better understand their own uniqueness in the world.

Overview

Reading stories about winter holidays around the world, children broaden their understanding. They make wrapping paper and collect cans for the food bank and map the "route" of Santa.
This activity fosters:
• language and literacy skills
• critical thinking and problem solving skills
• multicultural awareness

Explain to children that people around the world celebrate the Christmas season in many different ways and that it's important to respect the cultural traditions of others. Introduce cultural celebration names: Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. Discover what children know about each celebration.

Some books recommended as resources:

• Christmas - Clifford's Christmas by Norman Bridwell (Scholastic) and The First Night by B.G. Hennessy (Viking Press)
• Hanukkah - What is Hanukkah? by Harriet Ziefert (Harper Collins Juvenile Books) and Eight Nights of Hanukkah by Nayer (Troll Communications)
• Kwanzaa - My First Kwanzaa by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate and My First Kwanzaa by Karen Katz (Henry Holt and Company)
• The Twelve Days of Christmas by Jan Brett (Dodd Mead)
• The Night Before Christmas by Clement C. Moore (Harper Collins Juvenile Books)

After reading, encourage children to express something new that they learned about each celebration.
Cultural Christmas Wrap!

Celebrate diversity by making holiday wrapping paper representing Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. Organize areas for dipping sponges in shallow pans of paint. Provide children with cut out shapes of symbols representing each celebration:

- Christmas: trees, stockings, North Star, Santa Clause, candy cane, reindeer, etc.
- Hanukkah: Menorah, Star of David
- Kwanzaa: Muhindi (ear of corn), Mkeka (straw mat)

Dip and press sponges onto back (usually white) of leftover rolls or pieces of wrapping paper, grocery sacks, large squares of fabric, or white paper. Wrap gifts made in the classroom and encourage children to share what they have learned about each culture with family and friends during the holiday season.

Giving never goes out of season!

- Encourage children to bring canned goods for local food bank

Mapping Santa’s Route

- Study map skills by tracking Santa's anticipated journey around the world... fun!

Subjects:

Arts and Crafts, Creativity and Imagination, Winter, Holidays, Understanding Self and Others, Religion, Reading, Social Studies