



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1980 Volume VI: The Present as History

Multicultural Education

Curriculum Unit 80.06.10
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Multicultural Education reflects broad humanitarian and democratic goals for equality, justice, understanding, and respect for all people as well as harmony between people of differing cultural backgrounds. Consequently, this unit is designed to bring to the consciousness of children the contributions of all immigrant and migrant groups represented in their classes. This consciousness-raising can be accomplished through the study of a variety of multicultural areas including: family life and roles, foods, religion, recreation, folk crafts, and history. The ethnic groups to be represented in this unit are Black, Hispanic, Jewish, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese, Irish, and Polish. I have chosen these particular ethnic groups because of their contributions to the settlement and development of New Haven and because they are all more or less represented in my classroom.

This unit is intended for use in a Foreign Language Exploratory class for seventh and eighth graders. It is focused on a multicultural calendar of ethnic festivals and celebrations, dated from September 1, 1980 through January 6, 1981, concentrating on holidays of major importance to the ethnic groups listed above. I have further provided background information and activities to accompany some of the dates listed on the calendar including:

1. Autumn as a season of Harvest Festivals: Sukkoth, Chinese Harvest Moon Festival, African Harvest Festivals, Halloween.
2. Winter Holidays in response to the winter solstice: Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanza, Three Kings' Day.

The background information is written so that it can be read to students if the teacher chooses. The activities are coded by grade level as follows: P-Primary, I-Intermediate, M-Middle, H-High School. The background information and activities are given as examples of how the calendar can be used as a starting point for a multicultural curriculum program. The unit is not intended to be a comprehensive four-month program, but rather a supplement to many other activities in the classroom. It is hoped that this unit will be used by educators of all disciplines and grade levels in an effort "to become more responsive to the human condition, individual cultural integrity, and cultural pluralism in society." ¹

September is a time when teachers consider their teaching strategies, the spatial arrangement of their

classroom, and the rules for classroom behavior and interaction. It is a time, in short, when they reflect upon both the “formal” and “informal” curriculum. The “formal” curriculum refers to that content or knowledge in textbooks, units, films, and other materials that we intend to teach students. The term “hidden” curriculum was first created by Philip Jackson in his book, *Life in Classrooms* . Other writers have referred to the “unstudied” or “informal” curriculum.

In general, the informal curriculum can be defined as those values or viewpoints that are inferred from aspects of the learning environment. Some examples are: school rules, teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships, spatial arrangements, and teaching strategies. The values, beliefs, viewpoints are reflected in the instructional process. The purpose of using a term such as the informal curriculum is simply to make one aware that the learning environment is just as important as the formal curriculum.

What, then, does the informal curriculum have to do with multicultural education? Multicultural education is designed to increase respect and understanding for all people. “Multicultural education is preparation for the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters...This preparation provides a process by which an individual develops competencies for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving in different cultural settings.”² Because so much of multicultural understanding involves such subtle yet important phenomena as clothes, gestures, accent, inflection, and manners, the informal curriculum of the classroom is particularly relevant. By recognizing that we can prepare students through both the informal and formal curriculum, we can increase our effectiveness in achieving all of these goals.

As further illustration of the meaning of the informal curriculum, consider the following examples:

In a classroom that has a bulletin board displaying pictures of people around the world one could infer a viewpoint that respects other cultures.

In a lunch program that includes foods from a variety of cultural groups one can infer that contributions from many cultural groups are valued.

In a classroom where the teacher encourages students to examine information from different frames of reference, one can infer that the teacher respects differing viewpoints and values critical thinking.

One way that multicultural education can be promoted through the informal curriculum is by relating curriculum content to the students’ lives and cultural experience.

Encourage bilingual students to teach their language to their classmates.

Decorate the room with visual signs for a multicultural focus with objects students have brought in or made that can help them personalize the room.

Involve parents in the classroom. At the beginning of the year parents could be sent an invitation to assist in the class, to contribute cultural information or artifacts or to teach the class a special skill or hobby they have.

Among the activities that can be used in a Foreign Language classroom to stimulate learning and to promote appreciation of the many customs and festivals of differing cultures are: culture capsules, international cookbooks, international dinners, minidramas or skits, multicultural sports and games, films and slides, magazines and newspapers, guest speakers, international music, folk crafts, and field trips. Multicultural education need not be limited to Foreign Language teachers. Many of these activities can be developed in conjunction with teachers of other disciplines in order to stimulate interest in multicultural education.

Celebrating holidays of major importance to the different groups in the school can foster positive multicultural interactions and understandings among students and teachers. The following background information is designed to support multiethnic modes of celebration.

Autumn as a Season of Harvest Festivals

Looking at the multicultural calendar for September through November, one can see that historically people who have lived close to the soil have celebrated autumn as a season for rejoicing in their harvest rewards. Harvest festivals are held in many cultures. While the customs vary, there are some common themes. It is a busy time when people are united through long hours to harvest the crops that they have nurtured since spring. After the long hard work has been finished, they celebrate the successful completion of their work and the results of their labor. Harvest dances, accompanied by feasting and drinking, are celebrated around the world. This is also a time of thanksgiving in which people of the community gather together to offer thanks to the gods they worship.

Some of the customs of the autumn season originated in the fears of people long ago whose livelihoods were subject to the unpredictable forces of nature. People thought that their crops would be harmed if the gods were angry with them, so they offered sacrifices of various kinds to avoid offence. Once the crops were harvested and stored for the winter, people still feared that something bad might happen to the crops. Evil, destructive spirits, bad witches, goblins, demons, the souls of the dead were thought to roam the countryside at this time of the year. Fire, ceremonies, and chants were used to scare away the evil spirits. Although Halloween no longer has this meaning, it originated in these fears of earlier peoples.

Rosh Hashanah September 11-12

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, means “head of the year” and is observed at the beginning of Tishri, the first month of the Jewish year. The first ten days of the Jewish month Tishri are called “The Ten Days of Repentance.” The Jewish New Year is greeted not with noise and joy, but with a serious and solemn heart. Jews believe there is a Book of Life in heaven in which every deed, work, and thought of every human being is recorded. On Rosh Hashanah, the Book of Life is opened and the good and evil acts, words, and thoughts of each person are examined. On the basis of this record the fate of each person is inscribed. *Leshanah tovah tekatevu velehatemv*, meaning “May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year” is the wish expressed on Jewish New Year cards.

A custom associated with Rosh Hashanah is to set a dish of honey or syrup on the table and to avoid eating sour foods. It is believed that if one eats sweet dishes at the beginning of the year, sweetness will abide for the entire year.

This holy day is observed in the synagogue or temple where the *shofar* is blown to rouse those who have

fallen asleep in their duties and neglected the truth. The *shofar* is a natural wind instrument made from a ram's horn. It is one of the oldest wind instruments known to the world.

Yom Kippur September 20

The Tenth Day of Repentance, the most sacred day of the Jewish year, is Yom Kippur. Worshipers abstain from all work, food, and drink until the fall of night. The day is observed with services in the synagogues. Eight times during the day, the congregation makes a confession to every sin and wrongdoing in case they have committed any sins unknowingly. Memorial services for the dead are held and candles are kept burning in memory of the dead. When the first star appears in the sky, the *shofar* is blown in one long steady note, signaling the end of Yom Kippur. Sins forgiven, many Jews now begin preparations for the festival of Sukkoth.

Sukkoth September 25-October 2

Sukkoth, "The Festival of Booths or Tabernacles," is the longest and most joyous Jewish festival. It begins on the eve of the fifteenth day of the Jewish month Tishri and is observed for nine days. The observance, which developed among the Jews who farmed the fields and orchards of ancient Palestine, was a harvest time festival. It is also reminiscent of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness after their deliverance, when they lived in booths or huts.

The main feature of the Sukkoth festival was the building of booths or *succos*. The *succos* is a structure made from planks and odd pieces of lumber and is distinguished by an open roof which is covered with leaves and branches. Each man erected a *succos* for his family. Sometimes, neighbors would join forces and erect a great *succos*. The entire family turns out to decorate it with strings of bright berries, garlands of longlasting flowers, corn, ripe pomegranates, and clusters of grapes. The family gathers for all its meals during the festival in the *succos*.

Chinese Harvest Moon Festival October 17

On the fifteenth day of the Eighth Moon called the Harvest Moon-according to Chinese tradition the rule of the sun begins to wane. From that day on, the days begin to grow shorter and cooler; the nights grow longer; and once again autumn is in the air. The Chinese believed that on this night the moon is her brightest and fullest.

The Birthday of the Moon is one of the happiest and one of the most important holidays of China. The Birthday of the Moon arrives when the harvests are in and people all over China celebrate "Harvest Home" of Thanksgiving. They are grateful to their gods and to their ancestors for the crops of the summer that will provide for them throughout the winter. It is a season for rejoicing.

Long before the holiday arrives, cakes are baked, round as the moon, made of pale-yellow flour, decorated with red, yellow, green, and sometimes gold leaf. At midnight, when the moon shines brightest, the family gathers for a brief service to the Queen of the Skies and eats the festival meal out in the moonlight. One of the most popular decorations of this festival is the rabbit, who, like the moon, sleeps with his eyes open. He promises a long life to those who are virtuous.

African Harvest Festivals

African peoples have always had festivals and celebrations at the times of sowing and harvest. Although these celebrations vary, most include an offering of food to the gods or spirits and the sacrifice of an animal. Most begin with a solemn ceremony of thanksgiving and end with feasting and dancing to the sound of beating drums.

The Southwest Africa, some of the newly harvested grain is made into porridge. The head of the family takes some of the porridge, dips it into melted fat and offers it to the Spirits of the East and West. In this way, thanks are given to the spirits for having insured a plentiful harvest.

The Ashanti tribe of West Africa celebrate the harvest with a first fruits festival called the “Festival of Yams.” Since the yam forms the staple of their diet, a good yam is essential for survival. The festival consists of two days of ceremonies in which the priests dance to the beat of the drums and rattles. The ceremonies conclude with the sacrifice of a sheep. The gods are offered yams and only then can the people partake of the newly harvested yams.

The Yoruba, another West African tribe, have an annual ritual of the ancestors of which the yam festival is a part. Masqueraders, wearing long robes and masks covering their faces, dance in the street and visit the homes of those who have recently died. The new yams are offered to the spirits before the people can eat them. All these festivals take place at the end of October.

Halloween October 31

Halloween is a festive celebration in Ireland, England, Scotland, and the United States. The current customs of Halloween can be traced back to the traditional observances of Halloween in Ireland. Our celebration of Halloween did not come about until the Irish immigration of the 1840’s. In 1880, Halloween became a U.S. holiday.

The colors of Halloween, orange and black, are symbolic of its position as a harvest festival, the Festival of Samhain—Lord of the Dead, and as a time of fear when the souls of the dead were everywhere. Orange represents the harvest; the ripened fruits, vegetables, and grains. Black in most countries is the color of death.

From the Scotch and Irish we derive our customary Halloween foods. Doughnuts, gingerbread, pumpkin pie, cider, popcorn, apples and nuts are eaten at Halloween parties. “Nuts and apples were not only a part of the feast. They were also used for telling fortunes on this magical night when charms, spells, and ways of finding out the future were believed to be most successful.”³ Games were played using nuts and apples to make predictions about whom a boy or girl would marry; which of two sweethearts a girl should choose; how happy a couple would be; or the length of one’s life.

The Jack-O-Lantern originates from imaginative stories told by people long ago that thought Jack-O-Lanterns were the souls of sinners condemned to walk the earth until the end of time. Scottish children hollowed out the largest turnips from the harvest and put candles inside to scare away evil spirits. Irish children used turnips or potatoes and in some parts of England, large beets were hollowed out. It was not until the Scotch and Irish came to the United States that pumpkins came into favor.

Winter Holidays in Response to the Winter Solstice

A multiethnic study of winter holidays can help students correct misconceptions of other groups as “abnormal” or “deviant” by illustrating that there are other ways of living that are as valid and viable as their own. Comparisons of many of the symbols and customs integral to the winter holidays reveal characteristics and needs common to people from all ethnic groups:

- to educate the young in the principles and beliefs of the group.
- to reward members of the group with gifts.
- to light the winter darkness.
- to reflect on the past year and anticipate the new year.
- to feast and sing.

The specific cultural variations on these themes illustrate how groups are affected differently by certain geographic and social positions.

“The origins of many of the major holidays are directly related to the changing of seasons and the agricultural cycle. As many of the autumn holidays are celebrations at the end of the harvest season, many of the winter holidays originated in response to the winter solstice.”⁴

Since ancient times, fires were lit to the dying sun around the time of the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year and the beginning of our winter. Ancient Mesopotamians celebrated the arrival of winter for twelve days with fires, feasting, and gift-giving. The Jews did, and still do, celebrate Chanukah, the Festival of Lights. The Persians lit fires in honor of the birth of the Sun God, Mithras. The Romans celebrated the winter solstice with the exchanging of gifts during the Festival of Saturnalia. Christians celebrate the birth of Christ and call him the Light of the World.

Chanukah December 3 December 10

Chanukah, the Feast of Dedication, is a joyous celebration which lasts eight days. It begins on the twenty-fifth of the Jewish monthly Kislev and commemorates the rededication of the Temple after the recapture of Jerusalem in 165 B.C. from the Syrians. This battle was fought for religious freedom and was one of the earliest battles against religious oppression in the history of the world.

Chanukah is also known as the “Feast of Lights” from a miracle which is said to have happened during the rededication of the Temple after it was cleansed. There perpetual lamp was to be lit with sacred oil, but there was only enough oil to burn for one day. Miraculously, the oil continued to burn for eight days until more could be prepared. In memory of this miracle, Menorahs or Chanukah lamps are kept burning throughout the eight days of the celebration.

The *Menorah* is a candelabra with eight candleholders at equal level and a ninth in a higher position. This place is for the candle called the *shamesh* or servant. The *shamesh* is the first candle lit each night and is used to light the other candles. For example, on the first night of Chanukah, the *shamesh* and one other candle is lit. On the second night of Chanukah, the *shamesh* and two other candles are lit. It is customary for women and children to light the candles.

Services are attended in the synagogue during the entire week and work is forbidden while the candles are lit. Instead, games are played, parties held, and gifts exchanged. The traditional foods are *latkes* , potato pancakes, and *kugel* , a potato pie.

Christmas December 25

The first Christmas holiday was celebrated at the same time as the Roman Feast of Saturnalia. Around the year 320 A.D. the date of December twenty-fifth was established. Today, the customs and manner of celebrating Christmas are as varied as the countries and people who celebrate them.

Christmas in Great Britain is celebrated in much the same way as in America except for their traditional wassail bowl. The wassail bowl contains a mixture of spices, toasted apples, and hot ale and is traditionally drunk for health's sake. The word *wassail* means "good health."

Germans were the first to decorate evergreen trees at Christmas and this is still the highlight of the season. Sometimes each member of the family has his/her own tree.

Young people in Switzerland try to drink from nine fountains on their way to church. Tradition dictates that their future husband or wife will then be waiting for them at church.

In Italy, it is customary to distribute gifts from a large crock called the Urn of Fate.

People in Spain celebrate Christmas with a huge *nochebuena* dinner and street dances after attending midnight mass.

The children of Mexico think the best part of their Christmas celebration is trying to break the *pi-ata* , usually an animal figure made of *papier-mâché* and filled with gifts and candy.

In Sweden, young girls vie for the honor of portraying St. Lucia. They dress in white gowns and wear wreaths containing seven burning candles on their heads.

In Puerto Rico, Christmas is celebrated twice, once on December twenty-fifth with the arrival of Santa Claus, and then on January sixth with the arrival of the Three Kings.

Kwanza December 26 January 1

As I have previously mentioned in the section on African Harvest Festivals, celebrations at the end of the harvest of the first crops are traditional in Africa. In some parts of Africa this celebration is called *Kwanza* meaning "first." Consequently, this festival has been adapted to meet the needs of Africans born and raised in America in an effort to pass on to future generations those ideals and principles upon which their ancestors built and nurtured their societies. The basic theme of Kwanza is unity, honoring and teaching of offspring, self-determination, work, and self-respect all of which will build and nurture strong communities today. Kwanza is celebrated from December 26 through January 1 in America. It is a time when Afro-Americans gather together

at the end of the year to celebrate the accomplishments of their communities.

The seven principles of Kwanza are:

1. Umoja (Unity)
2. Kujichagulia (Self-determination)
3. Ujima (Collective work and responsibility)
4. Ujamaa (Co-operative economics)
5. Nia (Purpose)
6. Kuumba (Creativity)
7. Imani (Faith)

On each day of the week of Kwanza when asked *Habari gani* ?(What's the news?) the answer, depending on the day, will be one of the seven principles. For example, on the fifth day the reply is *Nia* , which is the fifth principle.

Each night of the festival, one of the *Mshumaa* (one of the seven candles symbolizing the seven principles) is placed in the *Kinara* (seven branch candelabra). It is then lit and an explanation of the principle it represents is given. On the second day, two *Mshumaa* are lit, and so until the seventh day on which all are lit.

December 31 is the night of the feast for adults. It consists of seven phases: food, drink, music, dance, conversation, laughter, and ceremony. Everything is prepared according to the third principle, Ujima (Collective work and responsibility). On the last day of Kwanza, January 1, the *Zawadi* (gifts) are opened. A large dinner is prepared with the help of the children and the last principle is explained and discussed. The children are then asked to declare their commitments for the coming year.

Three Kings' Day January 6

The sixth of January, known as Three Kings' Day in most of Latin America, has traditionally been a time of gift-giving. This tradition was brought to Latin America by the Spaniards. The origin of Three Kings' Day comes directly from the New Testament and the story of the Three Kings, who were said to have journeyed from distant lands following a star that was to lead them to the place where the new born King was to be found. The Three Kings traveled far and brought gifts for the Christ child.

Today, the holiday is celebrated in a variety of ways in Puerto Rico. On Three Kings' Eve, groups of musicians go through the streets of the town singing *aguinaldos* or there are processions through town with people dressed as the Kings, Mary, or Joseph.

Another important aspect of Three Kings' Day is celebrated by having the children place grass or grain and a

dish or water under their beds to feed the camels of the Three Kings. The Kings then leave gifts for the children to thank them for the food they left for their camels. Children who misbehave are told that the Kings will leave them a piece of charcoal instead of a gift.

This was the main gift giving occasion during the Christmas season. Although the twenty-fifth of December was acknowledged as the birthday of Jesus, and there were parties and special masses; it was not known as a time for gift giving.

No single discipline is sufficient to help students adequately understand the origins and significance of holidays with geographic, religious, mythical, and political dimensions. The activities at the end of this unit have been selected and designed to facilitate an interdisciplinary approach to learning about autumn and winter holidays. Consult the bibliography for complete information on authors, particularly the books by Ilene Hunter and Marilyn Judson, Florence Temko, and Virginia Brock.

Notes

1. "Definitions of the Terms Used on the Survey of Multicultural Education in Teacher Education," (Washington, D.C.: AACTE, 1977), n.p.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Edna Barth, *Witches, Pumpkins, and Grinning Ghosts* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), p. 80.
4. Linda Allison, *The Reasons for Seasons* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1975), p. 46.

Activities: Harvest Festivals

1. Rosh Hashanah
 - a. *Research and Mapping*: I, M
On a map of New Haven locate the synagogue nearest your school.
Where are other New Haven synagogues located?
 - b. *Tradition* : I, M
Make a list of the ways customs and beliefs are passed from one generation to another.
How are customs and beliefs transferred from one part of the world to another?
2. Yom Kippur
 - a. *Musical Instruments* : P, I, M
Make a *shofar* from a cow horn which can be obtained from a slaughterhouse or

veterinarian.

Borrow a *shofar* from a local synagogue and have students experiment with the sounds it produces.

3. Sukkoth

a. *Map Reading*: P,I,M

What crops were harvested during Sukkoth?

b. *Foods*: I,M,H

Design a menu that one could prepare with these foods.

4. Chinese Harvest Moon Festival

a. *Research and Mapping*: I,M

On a map of New Haven locate the nearest Chinese bakery or restaurant.

b. *Foods*: P,I,M

Make or buy moon cakes.

c. *Language*: I,M

On the night of the Harvest Moon, write one paragraph or make a list of words which describe how the moon looks and how it makes you feel.

5. Halloween

a. *All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day*: I,M,H

Students might research how these holidays are observed in Europe and Latin America and compare those customs to the customs associated with Halloween.

b. *Masks*: I,M,H

Students can study customs and ceremonies from around the world in which masks were worn.

Students can make their own masks by painting and then melting foam cups in the oven.

6. African Harvest Festivals

a. *Masks*: I,M,H

Students can research the masks that the Africans used during their harvest festivals.

b. *Foods*: I,M

Have a student bring in a yam. Discuss what kinds of foods can be made from yams.

Develop a recipe for sweet potato pie with the help of students or parents.

7. General Harvest Activities

a. *Celebrations*: I,M,H

Have harvest celebrations throughout the fall or one big celebration in which students or their parents prepare foods from around the world and observe the customs of different cultures during their harvest celebrations. Use the background information on Sukkoth, Chinese Moon Festival, Halloween, and other festivals mentioned on the Multicultural Calendar.

b. *Autumn Equinox*: I,M

What connection or relationship do you see between the length of days and nights and the harvest festivals?

Why do you think there are so many festivals around this time of year? What do all these festivals have in common?

Keep track of the time the sun rises and sets for two weeks beginning September 15. Are the days getting longer or shorter? Which day is the autumn equinox?

c. *Interdependence* : I,M,H

Urban children may not be familiar with the techniques and vocabulary of farming. Study crops that are grown around the world and the methods in which they are planted and harvested. Teach vocabulary such as harvest, scythe, reaper, sickle, sheaves, etc. Have them do pictorial projects or written reports in which they explain how crops around the world are grown.

We celebrate harvest as a time to be thankful for the food that we can store through the winter. However harvests have also been a period of hardship for slaves who worked someone else's fields. In modern times migrant workers work for low wages. Therefore harvests can also be studied to understand the experience of racial and cultural minorities as farm workers in America. Current struggles for better working agreements for migrant workers can be studied by researching their union organizing efforts.

While cultures around the world observe different harvest celebration customs, this season offers an opportunity to show ways in which all people are united through their common experience of what it is to be human. Have the class make a chart in which they compare the customs of each culture's harvest festival. Then have them list the themes that all festivals have in common. Some possible themes are: People at work, People at play, People and their physical environment, People and their community, People and their religion, People and their aspirations and fears. Students could use these themes to make a mural showing the unity of mankind.

Activities: Winter Holidays

1. Chanukah

a. *Foods* : I,M,H

Prepare a traditional Chanukah food such as potato latkes.

b. *Crafts* : I,M,H

Make a *menorah* or *dreidel*

c. *Games* : P,I,M

Holiday dreidel games—Each player in turn spins the dreidel and wins the number of points corresponding to the Hebrew letter which lands upright. Highest total score wins.

2. Christmas

a. *Music* : P,I,M,H

Teach Christmas songs from around the world.

b. *Crafts* : I,M

Making candles—an easy project for children but requires constant adult supervision.

c. *Gift giving customs* : I,M,H

Compare gift giving customs associated with several winter holidays (Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanza, Three Kings' Day) in terms of number, nature, and purposes of gifts.

3. Kwanza

a. *Language* : P,I,M,H

Teach Swahili vowel sounds:

“A” is pronounced as “AH” as in rah.

“E” is pronounced as “A” as in day.

“1” is pronounced as “E” as in be.

“O” is pronounced as “O” as in go.

“U” is pronounced as “OO” as in boo.

b. *Reflection and renewal* : I,M

Explain that on the seventh day of Kwanza, January 1, the children are asked to state their commitments for the coming year. Have the students write a composition about their New Year resolutions. This can also be done as an oral activity if preferred.

c. *Comparison* :

There are many similarities in customs in the celebration of Chanukah, Christmas, and Kwanza which you may want to point out or have the class infer.

4. Three Kings' Day

a. *Crafts* : P,I,M

1. Make crowns out of foil or wrapping paper for Kings

2. Create a nativity scene, using clay models of the characters in the story of the Three Kings.

3. Make a *guiro* , *gourd rattle* , or *maracas* .

b. *Music*: P,I,M,H

1. Teach an *aguinaldo* for students to sing.

2. Develop a lesson on musical instruments from Puerto Rico.

3. Teach one of the many Puerto Rican dances.

c. *Reflection* : P,I,M,H

1. In some areas of Puerto Rico children write *peditos* or petitions to the Kings about their hopes and wishes for the coming year. They lay the *pedito* on top of the hay or grass in the box so the Kings will see it right away.

2. Identify and compare similar customs from holiday celebrations in other cultures.

5. General Winter Activities

a. *Graphing*: M,H

Mathematics or Science teachers might use graphing to visually represent the difference in daylight and darkness on the days of the summer and winter solstices.

b. *Seasonal cycles*: P,I,M

1. To stimulate thinking about seasonal changes and cycles, have students talk about the behavior of animals during the winter. For example, fish swim deep into warm under parts of ponds and insects vanish to hibernate or wait for spring as eggs.

2. Do humans change or behave differently during the winter? How? What does not change?

c. *Human cycles*: M,H

Select a metaphor from the animal world to describe the behavior and feelings of humans at the beginning of winter.

d. *Interdependence*: I,M,H

1. Compare the origin and symbolic meaning of light in Chanukah, Kwanza, and Christmas celebrations.

2. Compare the celebration of Kwanza to the celebration of Three Kings' Day in Puerto Rico. Do these holidays have any customs or ideas in common? What are the primary differences?

e. *Foods*: I,M,H

1. Compare the traditional dishes of several winter holidays (Chanukah, Christmas, Three Kings' Day). What inferences can students make about the climate, crops, geographic location of a culture from the recipe ingredients?

2. Design a multiethnic winter festival menu.

f. *Multicultural Calendar*: P,I,M,H

All human groups have traditional notions of time, the changing seasons, and celebrations. Many activities which encourage multicultural education can be based on the calendar. The calendar can be utilized as a resource around which to plan activities such as comparative studies or recognition of special days in an effort to increase global awareness in the classroom.

MULTICULTURAL CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER, 1980

1 Labor Day—Canada, U.S.A.

Khordat'sal Parsi—This festival celebrates the birthday of the prophet Zoroaster.

8 World Literacy Day

Feast of Greenery—In Poland, “The Feast of Greenery” celebrates the end of summer. Farmers bring bouquets of herbs, vegetables, and flowers to church to be blessed by the priest.

11 Maskaram—Ethiopian This is the New Year celebration of the Coptic Church of Ethiopia.

Rosh Hashanah—Jewish This is a two day holiday celebrating the Jewish New Year 5741. Begins at sundown and lasts for two days.

15 National Holiday—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua celebrating the overthrow of Spanish rule.

16 National Holiday—Mexico It commemorates the beginning of the rebellion against Spain in 1810.

17 Citizenship Day—U.S.A.

18 National Holiday—Chile celebrates the overthrow of Spanish rule.

20 Universal Children's Day—German Federal Republic

Yom Kippur—Jewish Day of Atonement This is a day of fasting and cleansing of sins for all Jewish people which begins at sundown.

22 Autumn begins—Northern Hemisphere

23 Mid-Autumn Festival—Chinese (Malaysia) This Holiday marks “The Birthday of the Moon” and the end of the harvest season. At night, the women set up altars outside and offer moon cakes, pomegranates, grapes, apples, melons, red candles, and incense to the Goddess of the Moon.

25 October 3 Sukkoth—Jewish Feast of Booths It commemorates the presentation of the Ten Commandments to the Jewish people by Moses. It is also a harvest celebration which begins at sundown.

26 Declaration of the Rights of the Child—Geneva 1924

28 Confucius' Birthday—celebrated Chinese philosopher (551-478 B.C.)

2. Gandhi's Birthday—Indian Non-Violent Activist, Educator, and worker for Social Justice (1869-1948)

Shemini Atzereth—Jewish Eighth day of the Feast of Booths.

3 Simchat Torah—Jewish Orthodox Jews observe this additional feast day of Sukkoth.

5 White Sunday—Samoa This holiday is especially for children.

They put on new white garments and attend church services. After church, they come home to a feast consisting of chicken soup, yams, bananas, breadfruit, and pork. In the afternoon, the children act in plays.

6 Universal Children's Day—designated by the U.N.

12 Harvest Festival—Nigeria

Children's Day—Brazil

Dia de la Raza—Corresponds to Columbus Day, and is celebrated throughout Spain and Spanish America.

13 Columbus Day—U.S.A.

Thanksgiving Day—Canada

17 Chung Yang Festival—Chinese Moon Festival celebrates the overthrow of the Mongol Dynasty. During the revolt, secret messages were sent in moon cakes. It is the day of the fullest moon of the year. People celebrate by eating moon cakes, drinking wine, and telling tales.

24 United Nations Day—The thirty-fifth anniversary of the implementation of the U.N. Charter in 1945. It is celebrated in the states, American possessions, and by the eighty-one countries which are members of the U.N.

24-26 Thadingyut—Burma "Festival of Lights" is a three day Buddhist holiday marking the end of Lent and of the Burmese monsoon season. It is a joyous time when there are lights, flowers, offerings of food, music, and dancing everywhere.

30 Sojourner Isabella Truth's Birthday—Born into slavery in 1797. She ran away and traveled all over the U.S., speaking out against slavery and for the rights of all women.

31 Halloween, Unicef Day—Canada, U.S.A. Trick or Treat for Unicef began in 1950. October 31 was proclaimed as National Unicef Day in 1967 by President Johnson.

Ancient Celtic New Year—The ancient Celtic tribes celebrated their New Year on November 1. According to the Celtic calendar, winter and the New Year began the same day. On October 31, the eve of the Feast of Samhain, the Celts honored their dead relatives, foretold the future, played games, and built bonfires to scare away evil powers.

NOVEMBER, 1980

- 1 All Saints' Day—Christian An important Polish, Italian, Irish, Lithuanian, and Puerto Rican holiday. It is a day set aside to honor all saints who do not have a feast day set apart for them.
- 2 All Souls' Day—Catholic Another important Polish, Italian, Irish, Lithuanian, and Puerto Rican holiday. On this day, prayers are said and candles are lit for the dead. Flowers are placed on graves.
- 3 National Holiday Panama celebrates its independence from Columbia in 1903.
- 4 Election Day—U.S.A.
- 8 Divalu Hindu "Festival of Lights" is celebrated throughout India in honor of the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity who is supposed to pass by and bless the houses which are lit and freshly cleaned. The day is celebrated with a special breakfast, village processions, and fireworks.
- 9 Muharram (New Year)—Islamic
- 11 Armistice Day—Europe, Australia, New Zealand
Veteran's Day—U.S.A.
Remembrance Day—Canada
- 13 Feast of St. Stanilaus Kostka—Polish Celebration of the Polish youth who had a vision in which the Virgin directed him to enter the Society of Jesus.
- 14 Children's Day—India
Nehru's Birthday—Leader of the India National Congress; prominent in India's effort toward unity and independence.
- 16 All Saints' Day—Armenian
W.C. Handy's Birthday—A trumpeter and composer who wrote "The Birth of the Blues." He helped establish Black folk songs as a vital part of American music and culture.
- 19 Discovery Day—Puerto Rico Puerto Ricans commemorate the day Columbus landed on the island and named it Puerto Rico.
- 20 U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child—1959
- 23 Labor Appreciation Day—Japan Originally November twentythird was the Japanese Thanksgiving Day (The Festival of Niiname-Sai). In recent years, this has been combined with a labor day and is known as Labor Thanksgiving.
- 25 St. Catherine's Day—France and French Canada "The Patroness of Old Maids" is a day given over to jokes and laughter, and designed to ease the heart of any young women who is worried about becoming a spinster. Those girls over twenty-five years of age "put on St. Catherine's cap" and parade down the street paying gay tribute to St. Catherine.
- 27 Thanksgiving Day—U.S.A.

3-10 Chanukah—Jewish “The Feast of Lights” is an eight day holiday celebrating the recapture of the Temple of Jerusalem by the lighting of one candle each day for eight days on a menorah. It begins at sundown.

6 St. Nicholas’ Day—Christian Nicholas, the person from whom our Santa Claus is derived, was born near present day Antalya in Asia Minor. He became famous for his good deeds to the poor and is Russia’s patron saint.

10 Human Rights Day—Universal Declaration of Human Rights was issued in Paris in 1948.

13 St. Lucia’ Day—Christian (Sweden) This day is often observed by Americans of Swedish descent in honor of Lucina, Goddess of the Harvest, Light, and Life.

16-24 Posadas—Mexico Parties in which a *pi-ata* is broken and the children try to catch the candy it contains. It is celebrated mostly in Mexico during the nine days before Christmas.

19 St. Nicholas’s Day—Russian Orthodox

21 Winter solstice—Northern Hemisphere

22 Chinese Winter Festival—Celebrates a good season and coincides with the winter solstice. Families eat boiled dumplings and vegetables.

25 Christmas Christian (The Nativity of Jesus)

26 St. Stephen’s Day—Italian An important Irish, Italian, and Polish holiday. St. Stephen was the first Christian martyr. In Poland, people visit friends and relatives and eat a traditional dinner of hunter’s stew. In Ireland, the day is also called Wren’s Day. Groups of boys used to hunt for wrens which they placed in decorated cages. The boys paraded, singing and dancing from house to house. They brought good luck and were welcomed with food, drink, and gifts.

Boxing Day—United Kingdom The day after Christmas, so called from the practice of giving Christmas boxes on that day to messengers, postmen, and others entitled to gratuities.

26-January 1 Kwanza—U.S.A. The celebration begins with a day honoring “Umoja” (Unity). It is a seven day holiday based on African tradition. Each day honors a different value of African culture.

27 Kwanza—“Kujichagulia” (Self-determination)

28 Kwanza—“Ujima” (Collective work and responsibility)

Day of the Holy Innocents Catholic A Latin American holiday especially for children. It is devoted to mischief, pranks, carnivals, jokes, and tricks much like April Fool’s Day.

29 Kwanza—“Ujamaa” (Sharing resources)

30 Kwanza—“Nia” (Purpose)

31 Kwanza—“Kuumba” (Creativity)

Hogmanay—Scottish (last day of the year)

Ano Nobo—Cape Verdean New Year celebration begins.

St. Sylvester’s Day—Celebrated in European countries with various pranks in anticipation of the New Year.

JANUARY, 1981

1 Kwanza—The traditional African celebration ends with “Imani” (Faith)

New Year’s Day

Ano Nobo—Cape Verdean All day and night groups of musicians, followed by men, women, and children visit houses and sing songs of good cheer to welcome the New Year.

6 Three Kings’ Day—Puerto Rico, Latin America This is the traditional gift giving time during the Christmas season. On Three Kings’ Eve, children place shoes on the windowsill and boxes of grass and water under their beds in hopes of receiving gifts from the Three Kings.

Epiphany—Greek Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic Epiphany is the twelfth day after Christmas. This holiday commemorates three religious events: the visit of the Three Wise Men to Bethlehem; the miracle of changing water into wine at the marriage feast; the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist.

The Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of Christ Armenian—In many cultures, the Christmas holidays end on this day.

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FESTIVAL FIGURES

14" high cardboard figures in the festival attire of their regions. Information is included on clothing depicted and the festival being celebrated.

LINGO

A trilingual game played like Bingo using basic foods. The game may be played in English, French, and Spanish.

SING CHILDREN SING SERIES

12" LP recordings featuring songs from 6 countries, sung by a children's chorus.

1980 WALL CALENDAR

A calendar of children's art listing dates for holidays of all the world's religions, national holidays, and other celebrated days.

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An informative and educational card game developed by Unicef with messages about living conditions in both developed and less developed countries.

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