



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume V: Reading Across the Cultures

Favored Holidays-Festivals of Children outside of America and the Foods and Objects Associated with Them

Curriculum Unit 98.05.04
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The purpose of this unit is to expose third through sixth graders to holidays and festival celebrations enjoyed by children of other cultures outside of the United States and the foods and items associated with each event. The four cultures that will be explored are the Spanish culture (Mexico), the Italian culture (Italy), the Jewish culture (Israel), and African culture (Ghana).

These four were chosen because I have had actual contact with members from each group. The few experiences shared with me from those different people made me all the more interested in what is important to them.

Knowing the reason for these celebrations may help us understand what things are valued in cultures other than our own. Often holidays in other cultures are based on a religious event or person. Sometimes the celebrations are to commemorate some political or patriotic victory. Still other festivals are directly associated with foods and natural resources. I will cover each of these in this unit.

The foods chosen and used in these celebrations often have a specific reason why they are used and prepared in a special way. Other foods are used because in the country where they are used they are plentiful. Some foods are used in more than one feast but for the same reason. This will be explained even more in the unit.

I have noticed how some children joke and jeer as they observe children of other cultures openly honor their holidays through practices, dress and foods. Of course, some children may not care why the particular event is being celebrated or even know what the celebration is, but I believe the use of this unit may help stimulate an interest, knowledge, and respect for cultural diversity.

This joking, insensitivity, I have found to be true with African-American children. I believe this stems from most of them, or us, not knowing which country our ancestors are from. Africa, being a continent not a country, has many diverse cultures, languages, and practices. It is well known that the practices, customs and history of most people have been preserved and passed down by word of mouth and writings, books. The passing of knowledge is almost a sacred ritual sometimes called oral tradition. The mean and heartless period of open slavery stripped most African-Americans of their culture and heritage. The breaking up of the African families left few, if anyone, to pass down the history, struggles, bloodline, and more important the victories of the people. Family and national pride is lacking. An attempt to restore some of this pride and self-respect is seen in the Festival called Kwanzaa. This celebration will not be covered in this unit because I want to focus on

those holidays that originated outside of the United States. Kwanzaa began in the United States in the mid-60's.

The festivals and countries to be covered will be presented in the order based on the seasons, from spring to summer then fall and winter. A skill will be focused on in each lesson that cooperates with Connecticut Mastery Test.

This is the order in which they will appear.

Italian - Cricket Festival (spring) Math/Measurement to the nearest 1/4 inch

Mexico - Fiesta (spring) Food Pyramid - DRP

Ghana - Yam Festival (summer) Game/Following Directions

Israel - Succoth/Sukkot (fall) Nature-identification fruits & flowers

Mexico - The Day of the Holy Kings (winter) Earth Science - Precious Stones

Israel - Purim (winter) Language/Editing

Please note that there are things that some of these holidays have in common. Some of those comparisons will be made in this unit. Foods like beans and maize (corn) are common in many third world countries. Independence, how it was initially taken away from and is finally being regained by two of these countries, is similar. More emphasis is to be placed on the similarities than the differences.

Mexico and Ghana share the experience of losing and regaining their independence. Mexico is an Indian country. The last Indian empire in Mexico - that of the Aztec - fell to Spanish invaders in 1521. For the next 300 years, Mexico was a Spanish colony. The Spanish did as most invaders who take or try take over the land of unsuspecting natives; they took the riches of the land and left the Indians poor and uneducated. But some positive changes were introduced by the Spaniards in farming, government, industry, and

religion. A third group developed during this time called mestizos. They had both Indian and white ancestry, similar to the mulattos who had black and white ancestry. Today, the great majority of Mexicans are mestizos. The country makes a conscientious effort to stress the Indian role in Mexican culture. The Indians are proud of their ancestry and think of the Spaniards as intruders. In 1949, the Indian Cuauhtemoc, the last Aztec emperor, was made the symbol of Mexican nationality. His bravery under torture by the Spanish made him a Mexican hero.

Mexico is rich in many things. It is one of the world's leading silver producers. It also has large deposits of copper lead, salt, and sulfur. Mexico is one of the world's leading producers of coffee, corn, cotton, oranges, and sugar cane. It's no wonder the

Spaniards tried hard to take it from them. The Mexicans gained independence from Spain in 1821. It was still an uphill struggle for many of the native Indians and it remains that way today.

Ghana is a country in western Africa. Most of the people of Ghana are black Africans. There are small groups of people of Asian and European descent. Like many, if not all, countries not stolen by Europeans it was a target of unsuspecting natives. This country is so rich in gold that it was nicknamed Gold Coast by Portuguese explorers who landed in Ghana in 1471. European merchants came for, of course, slaves and gold. In the late 1800's, the Gold Coast became a British colony.

Gold wasn't the only product Ghana is known for. Cacao seeds, which are used to make chocolate, are the country's most important crop and leading export. Ghana's forests yield valuable tropical hardwoods. The country also has important deposits of Bauxite, diamond and manganese.

Ghana gained its independence in 1957. It took the name Ghana, the name of an ancient African kingdom. Ghana was the first member of the Commonwealth of Nations to be governed by black Africans. Its official name is the Republic of Ghana.

Introduction to Holidays and Celebrations

I will invite the students to suggest how and why people celebrate. We will discuss what people do make, and eat, as well as what feelings they express when they celebrate. Then I will ask the students to listen to the introduction of the event that I will have on audio tape. These audio tapes I will make up myself. They will be able to follow along in their booklets. These booklets I will make myself by combining all the guided student reading sheets I have included in this unit. This is done so that we preview the theme title and to assist in setting a purpose for reading this unit. The students will be encouraged to tell why performances and victories might be reasons to celebrate. Then we will discuss holidays children enjoy.

I will then ask my students to share what they know about how people in other countries observe national holidays that celebrate their independence. I will have the students compare and contrast how these holidays and celebrations are similar to and different from the United States' Fourth of July.

The focus will be cultural awareness.

Purpose (for every holiday)

I will let the students know that each part of this unit is about a holiday enjoyed by children not necessarily in America. Each one describes an event that brings joy, whether the event is a big festival or an ordinary event. Students will be asked to listen and read for words and phrases that show that the characters in the event ultimately enjoy themselves.

Italy- Cricket Festival

To build background I have to access prior knowledge and build vocabulary concepts.

Students will be told that the first event is called Cricket Festival. It is about a special holiday that is celebrated in Italy. Italy is a country in Europe, shaped like a boot. I would then explain that the Cricket Festival is unlike most holidays in the United States because they collect insects. How long is a cricket? I

would have the students look cricket up in the encyclopedia. If one is not available. the average one is about two inches long. How long is two inches? I would give each student a ruler. Then I would draw a model of a magnified ruler on the board, up to four (4) inches.

inch inches inch inches 0-----1-----2-----3-----4 I would then isolate one (1) inch and explain that it is one whole like a whole pizza. I'd also draw a large circle (pizza). 0-----|-----1

1/2

Then at the halfway mark I use a different color chalk and draw a long line. I would explain that if I cut the pizza into two (2) equal parts each part would be called a half. It is the same with the inch. The two sections one to the right and left of the colored line that I just drew are equal halves. Then halfway between the 0 and the 1/2 mark and halfway between the 1/2 and 1 inch mark I would draw another line using another color. I would ask, if I cut the pizza halves in half, how many equal parts? (hopefully they will say 4 or I would just tell them so) It is the same with the inch. Each of the four (4) sections is one fourth of the inch.

0-----|-----|-----|-----1 inch

1/4 inch 1/2 inch 3/4 inch

The cricket is about 2 inches long. Draw a line with the ruler 2 inches long.

This math measurement information will be necessary during the lesson following the reading of the Cricket Festival.

I'd have the students working groups to list ways families celebrate Memorial Day such as:

Ways People Celebrate

1. We would have a cook out.
2. Many family members and friends would attend.
3. We go to the local parade.

Vocabulary Strategies

As a vocabulary strategy, I will write the following paragraph on the board. I'd invite them to read the paragraph silently, then I'd model using context clues with phonetic and structural analysis to decode each underlined word and figure out its meaning. Dictionaries or Glossaries may be used.

The Key Words to define are:

1. cricket
2. Italy
3. grillo
4. cage
5. tradition
6. captivity
7. environs
8. array
9. merriment
10. populated

Check for Understanding

To check for understanding I will read the definition of each word, out of order, one at a time, and the students will give me the word defined.

Strategic Reading

Preview and Predict (for each holiday)

Students will be encouraged to read the title of each holiday, look at each of the illustrations, and to read the first two paragraphs of each reading. I would help them make predictions by asking:

- * What are some of the ways in which people celebrate at the Cricket Festival and all of the other celebrations?
- * How is the Cricket Festival, and each of the holidays chosen, like other celebrations?

Setting a Purpose (for each holiday)

Brainstorm with the students what they think they might learn as they read the story, based on their preview and on what they already know. They would then use their predictions to set a purpose to reading about this unit. I will model a purpose if the students have difficulty setting one like:

- * I am going to read to find out what makes the Cricket Festival and all the other celebrations special.

After the reading the students will be making cricket cages as a part of their mathematics measurement lesson. To do this they will have mastered measuring items, using a ruler, to the nearest 1/4 inch. All the materials will have to be measured and cut.

This is the Guided Student Reading Sheet to be photocopied and given to each student.

Cricket Festival

In Florence, Italy and its environs there is the cricket festival. This is a favorite of the children. As strange and ugly as these little creatures may be, the boys and girls think it exciting to choose their own cricket to present to relatives and friends as well as for personal enjoyment. Once upon a time when there were more grassy areas and less populated areas, people used to catch their own crickets, known in Italy as grillo. Now they are found in stores as are other pets.

The streets are full with excitement and fun. Half of all the noise comes from the chirping of the crickets that are kept in tiny, painted, wood or wire cages. Most insects don't last long in captivity but the children of Italy try keeping them alive as long as they can. They go home with the children after the festival. Bright colors, red, yellow, green and more array the area. Good food, toys, cold drinks and balloons are sold, adding to the merriment.

What would make people keep crickets? When did this tradition start? It seems to have begun a very long time ago. The wall in Pompeii was a showcase of the little creatures.

Mathematics Lesson

The Making of a Cricket Cage

Purpose:

To measure length in inches to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
To make a cage for our crickets.

Materials:

12-4" wood dowels per student, lots of telephone wire,
ruler, pencil, cardboard, wood glue

Procedure: This lesson would be presented only after a measurement lesson has been taught.

1. All the materials listed above will be given to each student.
2. The telephone wire must be measured and cut into 48-7 inch pieces. (they can do it!)
3. Six wires should be partially wrapped and evenly spaced around one dowel. (do this around 4 dowels)
4. Wrap the loose end of the wire around another dowel parallel to the other dowel. (do this to each dowel with wire)
5. Glue the four dowels with wire down to a piece of heavy cardboard that measures 5 inches square.
6. Use excess wire to connect the tops of the cage.
7. Wrap some wire around the remaining four dowels and connect them at the corners with glue and extra wire.
8. Weave the wire horizontally through the vertical wiring to give the cage effect. (do this at all four corners)
9. Glue another Cardboard, 5 inches square, to the top of the cage, securing all dowels.
10. Wrap excess wire, about 8 inches, around each corner at the top of the cage.
11. Join all four wires together at the center and twist them tight right to the end and make a hook.

Actual crickets can now be found and placed in the cage or an insect of your choice.

A fake insect may be used for decorative purposes.

Conclusion:

1. Does the project look like a cage?
2. Is it symmetrical?
3. Is it durable, will it hold a cricket?
4. Were the correct measurements used to the nearest 1/4 inch

Mexico- Fiesta

I would begin building background by accessing prior knowledge and build vocabulary concepts. Students will be told that the second event is called Fiesta. It is about special holidays that are celebrated by Mexican/Latin American families. Latin America includes all the Spanish speaking countries in Central America. I would then explain that Fiesta is similar to the American term "Party."

An important part of the Fiesta is the foods eaten. I would tell the students that the Health Department of the United States has developed a food pyramid to help people make wise decisions when it comes to what we put into our bodies as well as how much of each food items. It was once believed that we needed large portions of protein at each meal: now recent studies have shown that whole grains and cereals provide the nutrition most needed for a healthy existence. This is not to say that all or any of the other food groups can be eliminated from the diet, but that smaller portions of them should be eaten each day.

Draw a large pyramid on the board. (Be sure you have a picture or poster of the food pyramid on hand) Section it off like the one on the picture but do not fill it in. I would have the students brainstorm the major food groups aloud. I will record the correct responses on the pyramid in its proper place. If they have difficulty coming up with the groups I would assist them.

Fats/oils / \

/ _ \

meats/proteins / _ | _ \ dairy

fruits / _ | _ \ vegetables

/ \

bread, grains / _____ \ cereals, pasta

I would ask them why is the bottom section so large and the top section so little. Hopefully they will figure out that larger portions of the bottom category should be consumed daily while much smaller portions of the top

group should be consumed. Their intake of the middle groups should be regulated accordingly, more than the top group but less than the bottom group.

Have the students work in small groups to list the types of foods eaten by their families when they celebrate in their homes such as:

1. pizza
2. hot dogs/hamburgers
3. cake and ice cream
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Can they place them in their proper location on the food pyramid? Let them try.

As a vocabulary strategy, I would write each word on the board, use it in a sentence and ask if anyone could pronounce it and discover its meaning given the way it was used in the sentence.

The Key Words to define are:

1. community
2. Fiesta
3. tortilla
4. ventriloquists
5. marionettes
6. vendor
7. food pyramid
8. souvenir
9. fireworks
10. siesta
11. grotesque
12. booths
13. repertoire
14. nutrition

To check for understanding I write, in advance, on a large sheet of paper each word with three words beside it. One word would have a similar meaning to the vocabulary word. That word would have to be circled, for example:

1. vendor- a. an inventor b. a seller c. a climber answer: seller
2. tortilla- a. an instrument b. clothing c. a food answer: a food

A health lesson will follow the reading. The students will apply their knowledge of the food pyramid to the making of a Tortilla. They will determine if this is a well balanced meal or not.

DRP (Use this after the students do the reading)

The focus of this lesson was the food pyramid. The triangle shape makes it easy to identify which foods we are to eat the most and least. At the base are the breads, grains, cereals and pasta. We are to eat 1 portions of foods from this group. At the top of the pyramid is the 2. We are to eat very small amounts of the foods in this group.

A tortilla contains food from 3 of the food groups. It is a well balanced meal.

1. a. large b. small c. round (a. large)
2. a. vegetables b. fats, junk food c. point. (b. fats, junk food)
3. a. some b. one c. most (c. most)

This is the Guided Student Reading Sheet. It should be photocopied and given to each student.

Mexico - Fiesta

Who has not heard the word Fiesta? Not to be mistaken with Siesta which is a long nap like rest, Fiesta is a big community holiday made popular in Mexico but celebrated throughout Latin America. I believe it is the Mexican word for the American word "Party." They are held in honor of a national holiday, a religious holiday, or a saint. Old and young alike participate in the festivities. @ \$:

The start at first light and can continue on more than a day. Little booths are set up in the center of town waving brightly hued streamers. What kind of fiesta would it be without candy, toys, cakes and drinks and special souvenirs for the occasion? These are placed in the booths. The loud clanging of church bells and the hiss and pops of firing rockets are heard.

Buy a mask from a mask vendor and become anything you like from a grotesque animal to a pretty princess.

Such big affairs draw bands and the voices of strolling musicians. Popular rides like the merry-go-round and the Ferris Wheel are present. Trumpets and drums are used to lure people into tents where popular

attractions like, dancing, singing, and acting are performed on miniature stages.

Marionettes, little clay figures on wires, have a wide repertoire and ventriloquists speak their lines. This is a great souvenir for the children.

Fireworks are the crowning act of a fiesta. Their construction is a combination of the imagination of the Indian to the craft learned from the Spaniards, wonderful animals filled with roman candles, which burst.

Tortillas filled with meat or beans and topped with veggies and cheese satisfy the appetite. Corn is a staple food in Mexico and is used in many dishes. Drinks of all kinds made with and without alcohol quench the meanest thirst. Slices of fruit, oranges, lemon, lime, strawberries and pineapple delightfully decorate drinking containers.

After a day or so of this level of fun, a siesta would be in order.

Health Lesson

The Making of a Tortilla

Purpose:

To use the food pyramid to show how a tortilla is a well-balanced meal.
To make and eat a tortilla

Materials:

Round corn Tortillas, beans or meat, shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, shredded cheese, and maybe some sour cream, plates, paper, crayons, and paper, food pyramids poster.

Procedure:

This lesson would be taught only after the food pyramid and all its components have been introduced.

1. Each ingredient listed above must be categorized in one of the food pyramid sections.

tortilla-bread & grains

tomato/lettuce-vegetables
cheese/sour cream-dairy
beans/meat-proteins

2. Each child will be given a sheet of paper and some crayons.
3. They are to draw a large Triangle and section it off like the examples of a food pyramid like you have.
4. They are to then draw the different ingredients to a tortilla in its proper place and its proper color.
5. They are to be displayed around the room.
6. Then each child is given a real tortilla, on a plate, and are allowed to build their own to eat.

Drink and a dessert may also be provided but not necessary.

Conclusion:

1. Can you name all the sections of a food pyramid?
2. Is a stacked tortilla a complete, balanced meal?
3. How important is it to eat from most of the food groups everyday? Why?

Ghana - Yam Festival

To build background I would tell the students that in the following holiday they will learn some of the games played by children in Ghana, a country in western Africa.

Eating is always important but games mark the happy part of this celebration.

I will make a web of the different games played in the United States.

tag ----- (games)----- hide and seek

/ ----- \

/ \

hopscotch duck. duck, goose

We will discuss how each game is played. Then I would tell them game are not the same all over the world.

I will have the students work in pairs to list their favorite games such as:

Favorite Games

1. Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?
2. Wonder ball
3. kick ball
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

I would ask one person from each pair to explain how their favorite game is played.

As a vocabulary strategy I have all the words listed on the board and have each child look them up in the dictionary. Allowing them to use the pronunciation key as a guide, I would randomly choose students try to pronounce one word from the list until all the words have been properly pronounced. I would help with the phonetic break down of a word, if necessary.

Then the students would read the definitions and give the meaning to me in their own words. (It may be necessary for me to put the word in a sentence so that the correct definition may be applied.)

The Key Words to define are:

1. yam
2. season
3. abundance
4. somersault
5. collect
6. Ghana
7. maize
8. competition
9. leap
10. harvest

After the reading a following direction lesson will be given using a game played in Ghana.

This is the Guided Student reading Sheet. It is to be photocopied and given to each student.

Ghana - Yam Festival

@Text: The Yam Festival is a yearly children's festival which is held by the children of Agona district, in Ghana, just as the rainy season comes to a close. It is generally held in the first and second weeks of the month of August. Just before this time food may have been scarce so this is cause for a big celebration. Fresh yams and cocoyams are ready for harvest, and dry maize is in abundance. Beans and okra are ripe. The Adults have their own version of the Yam Festival known as the "To Hoot at Famine." This is a competition of sorts between the women. Fresh yams are harvested and borne on the heads of women gardeners. The reward is to be known as the best farmer of the town for bringing the biggest and ripest yams.

The adult festival and all it entails may go on for about a week, but the children may go on for two weeks. The children under twelve collect food items from their houses and gather together in an open place, where the girls begin to cook the food. When all is ready, the young are invited to come and dine with them.

After this repast, games are played. Two popular boys' games are somersault and throw-and-catch. For somersaulting a thick and solid coconut palm branch is cut and fixed into a hilly ground. The girls stand by and cheer the best performers. Odo, throw-and-catch, is another exciting game. A fairly thick tassel is made of palm leaves, with the midribs removed. The boys divide into two sides. The tassel is thrown into the air, and while is falling back, the players stand with loops made of fiber to catch it. Whoever catches it gains a point for his group.

The girls also divide into two sides and play a game in which a pair of players, one from each side, leap up, each stretching a leg forward at the same time. If the players stretch out different legs, as a left and a right, one side counts a point. If they stretch out the same leg, a right-right or left-left, the other side gets a point. Boys have a similar game, but they throw out their arms instead of their legs and they keep time by clapping instead of jumping.

Notice how maize or corn is common in this culture as well as Mexico.

This holiday shows thankfulness for the harvest and ingathering.

Following Directions Lesson

Purpose:

To reinforce following direction skills

To learn a new game

Materials: at least six people

Procedure:

1. The students will be divided into two equal groups.
2. One player from each side leaps up and stretches one leg forward at the same time.
3. If the players stretch our different legs, as a left and a right, one side gets a point.
4. If the players stretch out the same leg, a right -right or a left -left, the other side gets a point.
5. The first side to get ten points wins.

Conclusion:

1. How many times did the directions have to be repeated?
2. How many students can explain the directions to a newcomer? (call on two to explain)
3. Can a round of the game be played without adult intervention? (demonstration necessary)

Israel - Succoth/Sukkoth

To build background I will tell the students that the next celebration takes place in Israel, a country in the Middle East. It is called, Succoth, sometimes spelled Sukkoth. This is a harvest celebration that involves fruits, flowers, and green branches.

I will have the students brainstorm all the fruit they know. Then after putting these on the board I will add a few they may not know or have not mentioned. We will discuss how we like these prepared. Fresh, not cooked or blended like sliced watermelon picked strawberries, cooked like applesauce, in pies, cobblers, or pastries, blended like any fruited milkshake.

Students will work in groups of 2-3 people and each will list his/her favorite fruit and how they like it prepared. It may be drawn out and colored on construction paper.

As a vocabulary strategy I will say each word aloud and have each child write them down, spelling them the best they could, phonetically. After the last word is given we will check our spelling against the dictionary and my list.

The Key Words to define are:

1. Succoth
2. Tabernacles
3. symbolize
4. fruit
5. booths

6. slavery
7. wilderness

8. harvest

To check for understanding each word will be matched with its proper definition.

After the reading a nature lesson will be given in which the students will make booths or tabernacles similar to the ones used during Succoth. The identification of various fruits and flowers will be a major part of this lesson.

This the Guided Student Reading Sheet. It is to be photocopied and given to each student.

Israel - Succoth/Sukkoth

In late September or early October there comes a festival that Jewish children particularly enjoy. It comes eight days after the Day of Atonement. Succoth, also spelled Sukkoth, is an ancient and happy festival. It is of biblical origin (Leviticus 23:39-43) and is called the Feast of Tabernacles the Feast of Ingathering, or the Feast of Booths. It began as a feast of autumn when the crops were safely gathered in and people were grateful for the harvest. It was also a time of remembering how the forebears of the Jewish people escaped from slavery in Egypt. These booths symbolize the shelters built by Moses on his trip to the Promised Land. They stayed in the wilderness for 40 years and lived in these tents or tabernacles.

Note that thankfulness for the harvest was also a focus of Ghana's Yam Festival.

Today, Jewish families build booths of green branches, decorated with all sorts of freshly grown flowers and fruits, and placed in a garden, on a porch, or on a roof. A table is placed inside the booth and on it is a bowl of fruit in season, a dish containing citron and a sheaf of palm fronds fastened with myrtle and willow twigs. This lasts from five to nine days and the family meals are eaten in the booth. Friends and relatives are invited in. Note that booths were also used in Mexico's Fiesta but for a different reason.

There are synagogue services and the kibbutzim (collective settlement) celebrates with pageants, entertainment and displays of the community's harvested produce and newest manufactured goods.

At this time of the year many Jews make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

It seems that religion is not a once or twice a week program as is often the case with religious practices here in the United States but it is a major part of their lives. Most of the Jewish holidays we celebrate here are of a religious nature. This is not necessarily true of Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Arbor Day, Martin Luther King's Day, New Year's Day, and many others.

Nature Lesson

The Making of a Booth or Tabernacle

Purpose:

- To build a booth that could be used for the Succoth or Fiesta
- To identify different flowers To identify various fruits, not just the common ones.

Materials:

Two large, empty, cardboard refrigerator or stove boxes, branches with their leaves(different kinds), a basket of fake or real fruit, books of many fruit and flower identification, paper, pencil, glue, and crayons or markers, string

Procedure:

1. Make a flap in both of the cardboard boxes by cutting one side in two places on the fold or crease.
2. Cut two large holes on the three remaining sides so that light can come in.
3. Leave these to the side for now.
4. Start with the flowers, then go to the fruit using a reference book, when needed, to identify each.
5. Draw a copy of each item and glue and label it on a sheet of paper.
6. When all have been identified, that can be identified start cutting them out off your sheet with the labels and attach them to your boxes. Don't forget to string up branches too!
7. Allow two children one day for 9 days to have breakfast in the booth until everyone has had a chance.

If the booth will be used for Mexico's Fiesta then fill it with decorated boxes.

Conclusion:

1. Can you identify most of the flowers and fruit without the book or your sheet?
2. Was it comfortable to eat in the booth?
3. Could the booth be improved? How?
4. How often do you think the children of Israel had to fix or adjust the decorations on their booths?

Mexico - The Day of the Holy Kings

To build background I will tell the students that the next holiday we will explore is called The Day of the Holy Kings. It is celebrated in Mexico, a country that borders the United States to the south. This holiday has to do with gifts given to a baby from kings. I will ask the students what kind of gifts would they expect to come from a king. We would compare and contrast the gifts given by a king to those given by a friend who was not rich or of royalty.

King Friend

Gold, silver, money, jewelry, car Toys, jewelry, money, clothes, candy

We would note the differences and discuss why they would exist.

I would have the students brainstorm aloud the different stones they know like gold, silver, onyx, jasper, emerald, ruby, pearl, diamond, jade, etc. I would have them write this list down and save this for later use during the lesson that would follow the reading.

As a vocabulary strategy I would give the reading piece to each child and have them write down every word they could not give me the meaning of. The words on their lists that are not a part of my list they would look up and write the definitions for homework. The vocabulary words that are on my list we will decode with phonetics and define using context clues together.

The Key Words to define are:

1. Mexico
2. nativity
3. frankincense
4. carols
5. erected
6. figurines
7. myrrh
8. precious

To check for understanding each word must be used in a sentence in a way showing that its meaning is understood.

An Earth Science Lesson will follow the reading . Precious stones and metals will be explored. The list developed when the background for this holiday was given will be used with this lesson.

This is the Guided Student Reading Sheet. It is to be photocopied and given to each student.

Mexico - The Day of the Holy Kings

The Day of the Holy Kings, January 6, has been celebrated in Mexico ever since the Spanish people came to this continent, soon after Columbus discovered it. Traditional American symbols of Christmas, Santa Claus and Christmas Trees are newcomers in Mexico.

The whole Nativity scene is erected in the central location in the home, early in December. Old figurines, as well as new ones, are added to the display. The children make animals out of cardboard to be added the scene. These designed are covered with cotton or yarn depending on the animal being constructed. Common Nativity creatures made are sheep, cows, and donkeys.

The focus and love of the children is the baby Jesus. When they visit the homes of friends and relatives to see their manger scene (nacimientos) all are proud of their figurines.

Christmas comes and goes with celebrations of Posadas and Christmas parties. In Evangelical (Protestant) families there are programs in vacation school, in Sunday school, with special services in church and the singing of carols, plays, pageants, and recitations. Gifts are collected and given to the poor.

The Christmas Eve dinner consists of chicken, turkey, mole (meat with a rich spicy sauce), rice, soup, pasta, and beautiful salads. These are foods the family can afford. The special sweet is the Funelo, a very thin fluffy fried cake.

Festive decorations are kept in place until The Day of the Holy Kings, the Twelfth Night after Christmas. This commemorates the trek of the Wise Men to see the baby Jesus. Gifts are given to the children, just as gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh was given to the infant Jesus.

Chicken and pasta are favorites in Italy as well as Mexico.

Science - Lesson

Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh

Purpose:

- To identify precious stones and metals
- To locate their origins
- To develop a graph categorizing the jewels

Materials: Books on precious stones and metals, encyclopedia, paper, pencil, crayons, markers, graph paper, colorful beads, sand/rice

Procedure:

1. Begin by comparing the look and size of the stones.
2. Then compare the value of each stone.
3. Using the reference materials decide if the stones look the same way they do when they are found, as they look in the stores.
4. Give each child a paper and pencil.
5. Each student should fold the paper into four sections and put an origin of a stone in each section. Work in pairs.
6. Take the colorful beads and give a variety of them to each pair.
7. Have them place the bead that resembles one of the stones researched, on the section of its origin.
8. After they are all placed, take a sheet of graph paper and graph the origin of precious jewels.
9. When completed, the teacher can use a bucket or pail filled with sand or rice and hide the different beads/jewels in it.
10. Divide the students into two groups and have each competing pair come up one at a time and on command they are to search through the sand/rice. The first one to find a jewel and correctly identify it gets a point for their team. Then the next pair comes up until all have had one try.

Christmas in most countries involves gift giving and receiving. In some countries if there are no children in the household they don't celebrate the holiday.

Conclusion:

1. How many stones can you identify?
2. How many origins can you remember?
3. On your graph, where are most of the precious stones found?
4. Everyone has a birthstone. Do you know yours? Where is it found?

Israel - Purim

To build background I will tell the students that this is another holiday celebrated in Israel. This holiday has a hero. Her name was Esther. She saved her people from death.

This happened so long ago. I would ask, are there any more recent female heroes? I would write all answers on the board and ask what makes each a hero? Possible answers, Harriet Tubman, Amelia Earhart, Joan of Arc, Mother Theresa, Lady Diana, Rosa Parks, Florence Nightingale, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Did any of them choose relatives, like mother, sister, grandma? Listening Strategies

I will tell the students that this entire story is on tape which will be played for them.

I will tell them that the tone of the characters speaking can give clues to their moods. I will have them close their eyes and listen carefully to the tape. (approx. 1/2 hr.)

After the Tape or Reading

We will discuss the key characters; Mordecai, Esther, the King, Haman, list them, and the key scenes; Haman and his council plotting a way to quickly do away with Mordecai, Esther entering the King's court unannounced, Esther's final banquet with the King and Haman, and list them.

Vocabulary Strategies

The key terms will be decoded and defined using context clues with phonetics and structural analysis to figure out the meaning. Dictionary may be used.

The Key Words to define are:

1. Purim
2. recounts
3. summoned
4. scepter
5. honor
6. decree
7. annihilated
8. plundered
9. reenact
10. foe

To check for understanding students will choose the one word in the group of words that does not mean what the key word means, for example:

1. honor- a. praise b. glorify c. disgrace answer : disgrace

A cooperative lesson involving script writing, editing, stage designing, and costume design will follow the reading and tape. The students will be preparing to put on a production of Purim.

Israel - Purim

Purim is held in February or March and is one of the most joyous days in the Jewish religion. Purim recounts the events in the biblical book of Esther. Esther's cousin, Mordecai refused to bow down to a man named Haman because Jews only bowed down to the God of Heaven. This lack of respect to Haman's supposed honor drove Haman to issue a decree to have Mordecai and all his fellow countryman slain and annihilated and their goods plundered. The relationship between Queen Esther and Mordecai had not been revealed to the king and his court so Haman did not know Queen Esther was also a Jew.

Some time before this decree was drawn up, Mordecai heard of a plot to take the life of the king and revealed that information to Queen Esther. She quickly relayed the message to the King who had the would be assassins put to death . Mordecai, though, had never been rewarded for his deed. So while Haman was scheming to have him killed, the king was contemplating how to reward him. Haman had a gallows build in his yard 50 cubits high to hang Mordecai on. Queen Esther planned a banquet for the king and Haman. She wanted to tell him of Haman's wicked plan but, she and no other member of the kingdom were allowed to neither enter the king's court nor be in his presence without being summoned. All who do so, would be destroyed except those to whom he held out his golden scepter to. The Queen would have to take that chance for her life and that of her people. All Jews fasted for three days, then she adorned herself beautifully and went before the king not summoned. Miraculously, the king held out his golden scepter and she touched it. Then she invited the king and Haman to her home two times before she made her request for him to spare her life and that of her people. At this announcement even Haman was surprised, still not knowing she was a Jew. When asked by the king who would dare do such a thing , she revealed a foe and enemy, Haman. The king left out immediately but, Haman stayed and begged for his life. When the king returned a servant told him he saw the gallows in Haman's yard, meant for Mordecai. Hang Mordecai on that, was the command of the angered king.

There was feasting and celebrations after that in honor of Queen Esther for her bravery. Every year at the same time she is still honored. Purim is the name given to this national festival. Children dress up in costumes and reenact the story of Esther. There are carnivals, parades, and public entertainment .

Purim is the Jewish answer to Mardi Gras.

Fish is a popular Jewish food for most of their celebrations, but one of the favorite foods served during the Purim festival is a poppy seed cookie.

Language/Reading Lesson

Queen Esther Saves the Day

Purpose:

To write a play using the information from the written material and tape

To edit the written material

To read and act with expression

To write in logical sequence

To create the settings

Materials: paper, pencil, costumes, copies of the account written on, the previous page, a chart of the editing symbol, crayons, scissors, glue, markers

Procedure:

1. The story will be replayed for the students to listen to or they can read account on the previous page.
2. Characters must be developed. Some of them are obvious while others will have to be imagined and developed. Divide the class into five groups.
3. Group 1 will write the script.
4. Group 2 will make the settings/stage.
5. Group 3 will edit the scripts.
6. Group 4 will develop costumes.
7. Group 5 will monitor each of the other groups to make sure things are progressing in a timely and orderly fashion.
8. After all is completed, parts must be given to students
9. After a few weeks of rehearsing, a small production can be put on in class. (dry run)
10. With a bit more practice, polishing up, the rough edges, there should be a dress rehearsal finally a large school production.
11. Follow up this lesson with some Poppy Seed Cookies.

The children should be proud of their work. Each job should be made to all important so that no one feels superior or inferior to another because of their role in this production. Reward everyone the same.

Conclusion:

1. Were the scripts written for your grade level?
2. Was the editing of good quality?
3. Was the setting and scenery appropriate for the subject?
4. Were the speakers convincing in their roles?
5. Did the events happen in a logical sequence?
6. What would you change or do differently?

Lesson Extensions

. What If?

What if one year, during the yearly Yam Festival, the Yams all went bad? .

What if another decree is made to destroy a nation of people?

What if torrent weather like El Nino hits Mexico the day before a fiesta?

What if locusts destroy the crops just before any ingathering or harvesting could be done?

What if you discovered the cure for cancer or even Aids? How would you want to celebrate?

What if your parents win the largest lotto jackpot in history? How would you celebrate?

What if you created the mechanism that made all people be colorblind as far as race and nationality goes? How would you commemorate this event ?

It would be important to include children in the information as well as the celebration side of these noteworthy events. In other countries it seems they play an important role in all the major events. Many children in our country are poorly informed about noteworthy national, scientific, political, environmental , financial, and social issues and events in our society. Who is responsible to get this information to them? The teachers? The parents? The media? Their friends and associates? The government? I believe some combination of all.

If the children are shown how to appropriately stand for a cause, and to take pride in their accomplishments they may be better able to appreciate and respect the stand and involvement of children of other cultures.

Bibliography for Teachers

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This book includes activities and readings for your students

Bibliography for Students

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