Personal Development

Celebrations Around the World

OBJECTIVES

- Learn about holidays and celebrations in various countries.
- Become aware of other cultures and customs.
- Become aware of diversity and other countries.
- Develop self-understanding through comparing own traditions and beliefs to others.
- Develop basic map-reading skills.

GROUP SIZE

6–8 children per adult volunteer

TIME FRAME

This lesson is designed for a group meeting between 30 and 60 minutes. Each activity will take about 5–15 minutes to complete.

BACKGROUND

Children are not always aware of other cultures and holidays that are different from their own. It's fun for children to make new friends and if they are aware of more cultures, they can more easily become friends with children from various backgrounds. Holidays are a fun time to celebrate, and the more children know, the more fun they can have.

LIFE SKILL AREAS

- Social skills will be developed as children share their thoughts about differences in cultures.
- The children may also become more aware of their own culture.
- Map-reading skills may be developed by exploring where their state and country is located on a world map.

HELP TO THE VOLUNTEER

Try these suggestions:

- Choose one or two of the following activities from each section.
- Props and songs will help express some of the celebrations in various countries.
- Encourage participants to talk about meeting other children who are exchange students, pen pals, travel, or by computer technology (e-mail).
- Let children know that not all people from one place follow the same customs. There are many differences in one place just like in the U.S.

Molly Gregg and Chuck Hill,
4-H Specialists

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GETTING STARTED

ACTIVITY "Mexican Tissue Flowers"

Materials: sheets of colored tissue paper, green pipe cleaners, flower pattern, pencil, scissors, and a hole punch
Fold paper lengthwise twice and crosswise twice. Trace the flower patterns on tissue paper. Cut out and stack the tissue flower largest to smallest. Punch center holes in the flowers. Put pipe cleaner through holes and twist to form stem. Fluff to have a better look.

Application: Did you know these flowers are used in Mexico to celebrate their national culture with dances, songs, art and festivals? The flowers are used to decorate houses, churches, and streets.

ACTIVITY *Good Luck Chinese Dragon*

Materials: dragon pattern, 4-inch construction paper circle, crayons, red crepe paper, scissors, glue, hole punch, and yarn
Color and cut out dragon face. Glue to center of the circle made of constructions paper. Cut several strips of crepe paper to attach to back of circle. Punch hole at the top for dragon to hang with yarn.

Application: Did you know a dragon is the emblem of strength and wisdom of the Chinese emperors? The Chinese New Year always has the appearance of the dragon to wish everyone peace, prosperity, and good luck.

ACTIVITY *Mini matryoshka (mah-tree-OSH-ka) Russian Doll*

Materials: two sizes of paper cups, doll pattern, markers, pen, scissors, glue, and yarn
Color and cut out doll pattern to fit size of cup. Glue onto cup. Use pen to poke hole in the bottom of each cup. Thread yarn through both cups. Knot the yarn inside the small cup. Place large cup so one inch of yarn is in between the cups. Loop the yarn at the end and tie at the tip for hanging up.

Application: Did you know these wooden dolls were made by Russian grandparents to give to their grandchildren? The doll's dress is called a babushka and each doll opened up to reveal a smaller doll inside.

ACTIVITY *Indian Elephant*

Materials: elephant pattern, colored construction paper, crayons or markers, scissors, glue, sequins, yarn, and a hole punch
Cut out and color the elephant. Glue the elephant on colored paper and cut it out leaving a border. Glue on sequins, yarn, and decorations to the saddle and headdress, and add fringe.
Punch a hole at the end for a tail made out of yarn and at the top to hang.

Application: Did you know in India, the Hindu people value the elephant as a religious symbol and for transportation? It is a beast of burden and is used in wars. They are decorated for ceremonies or state processions.

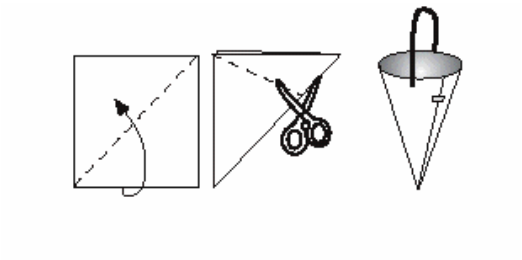
ACTIVITY *Spanish Tiles*

Materials: sun pattern, Styrofoam meat tray, scissors, pens, liquid dish detergent, paint, paintbrushes, paint tray, old shirts, drop cloths, and yarn
Tape sun pattern to meat tray. Trace the design with a pen, pressing hard enough so the design will show up on the Styrofoam. Add liquid soap to tempera paint to help it stick. Paint sun design. Once it is dry, hang with yarn.

Application: Did you know in the year 711, when the Moors conquered Southern Spain, they brought tiles with beautiful art? They were used to decorate the floors and walls of homes. The sun *(el sol* in Spanish) is a popular design.

ACTIVITY *German Cone*

Materials: construction paper, (6-inch squares), scissors, pencil, glue, giftwrap, ribbon, stickers, paper scraps, markers, and yarn
Fold square in half diagonally. Cut a curved line on one corner. Open the paper and decorate with paper, ribbons, stickers, and any other paper scraps. Roll the paper into a cone and glue. Punch hole on each side of cone and hang with yarn.



Application: Did you know in Germany, children get a large cone filled with candy, cookies, and other goodies on the first day of school?

Digging Deeper

ACTIVITY *Friendship Tree*

Materials: newspaper, tape, scissors, construction paper, Christmas-tree stand or pot of sand, wallpaper, and paste for paper mache
Roll three sheets of newspaper diagonally very tight. Tape the newspaper to hold. For large tree, use several sticks to make stem. Use one for individual trees. Make more stems of various lengths for branches. Tape together. Use paper mache (wallpaper paste and newspaper strips) to cover tree so it will stand strong. Hang all your multicultural crafts on your tree. Add your own decorations representing holidays or customs you celebrate.

Application: Make a large tree for the classroom or small trees each child can take home.

ACTIVITY *Where in the World Are We?*

Materials: large world map—preferable a paper map that can be opened up on a table or floor, an assortment of small stickers or marking pens that can be used to mark places on the map

Note to the volunteer: You may want to help the children locate the countries of origin for the projects completed for the friendship tree—Mexico, China, Russia, India, Spain, and Germany. There may also be someone in the group who has traveled to another country and the group may be interested in finding that place on the map and marking it as well.

Application: Have the children sit around the map. Ask the following questions and help them find the places on the map, marking them with a sticker or pen.

- Can you find the United States on the map? Where is our state?
- Is our state in the north or south part of the United States?
- What is located to the east of the United States? What is to the west?
- Which direction is the equator from the United States?

Looking Within

ACTIVITY *International Friendships*

Materials: paper and pencils

Application: Your children or group can have international friendships. An international pen pal can teach letter-writing skills. You may like to work as a group to write a letter to another group of children abroad or each have individual pen pals. For more information about pen pals contact:

Worldwide Friendship International
3749 Brice Run Road, Suite A
Randallstown, MD 21133

Our Children's Sake
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 828
New York, NY 10115

World Pen Pals
1690 Como Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108

REACHING CONCLUSIONS

ACTIVITY *Throw a Birthday Party for the Earth*

Materials: decorations, party hats, birthday cards, a birthday cake, and gifts
Make an earth mural backdrop for your party—or use the world map from the "Where in the World" activity. For hats, use recyclable materials such as paper cups and decorate with feathers, shells, or grass. Make a birthday card with a message to the earth saying that you are doing all you can to recycle and protect the earth. Talk about what kinds of gifts the earth would like and to make it more beautiful (for example, planting flowers, growing a garden, or cleaning up litter). To organize a school recycling program call 1-800-795-8552. Collect pennies for the rain forest. For more information write to:
The Earth's Birthday Project,
P.O. Box 1536
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1536

Application: Did you know you can send in your earth-day celebration cards and pictures and share them with others? Use markers or tempera paint and send them to:
Clifford Ross
The Earth's Birthday Project
P.O. Box 1536
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1536

Going Beyond

ACTIVITY *Where in the World Did This Come From?*

Materials: the world map used in previous activities, stickers, and encyclopedia

Application: Look at the labels on your clothing. Where in the world was it made? Find that county on a world map and mark it with a star or sticker. Help the children in your group do the same. Look up flags in an encyclopedia or on the Internet. Help the children find the U.S. flag. Match flags in the encyclopedia with places marked on the world map from other activities. Why are flags different? What are symbols? What is the 4-H symbol?

ACTIVITY *Design a Club Flag*

Materials: colored construction paper, scissors, glue, and markers
Talk about what symbols might be used to decorate a flag (for example, the 4-H symbol, club colors, and the club name). Help children to cut out shapes they draw. Glue the shapes onto one piece of construction paper to create a club flag. Be sure to have it displayed at each club meeting.
Ask the children if they have a parent who sews and if they would duplicate the flag design using fabrics of the same colors and shapes.

Application: How did you as a group decide what your club flag would look like? What does your club flag stand for?

Reading Adventures

This listing of reading materials can be used as background information, for sharing before the group activity to set the stage for learning, or for sharing afterwards to reinforce the activity.

Earth Day, by Linda Lowery

Ethnic Celebrations Around the World: Festivals, Holidays, and Celebrations, by Nancy Everix

Festivals Together, by Sue Fitzjohn, Minda Weston, and Judy Large

Festivals Around the World, by Philip Steele

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