

THEME: TRADITIONS

The fall and winter seasons bring more than just a change of weather. The holidays seem to blow in quickly, and it is easy to get overwhelmed by all the commercial buzz that surrounds us this time of year. But Northern California is rich with many different cultures that celebrate important dates and rituals in many different ways all throughout the year. Take time to learn with your children about the cultures and traditions that are represented in their classroom and your community. Learning about diverse traditions can open the door to having a deeper understanding of the wonderful ways that make people different.

Traditions play a very significant role in a child's life because these special rituals are intertwined with emotions and feelings that are the anchor of self-identity and self-esteem. Cultural customs and traditions help keep children and families connected to their heritage, which is the building block of cultural identity. Family traditions build stronger relationships and kinship. Many happy lifetime memories are created through experiencing family traditions. No matter whether it's a big yearly get-together or a small weekly game night—traditions of all types are equally important!

Exposing children to the importance of tradition is a great way to support their awareness of both themselves and others, allowing them to feel connected to their culture, community and families.

DOING ACTIVITIES EXTENDS THE LEARNING

Physical Development: Provide a lot of opportunities for children to explore a different culture's traditions through hands-on and physical activities. Explore the cultures that are represented in your community by visiting a local museum or library. Learn about the arts-and-crafts traditions of another culture and complete a similar project.

Language/Literacy: Read a variety of books that spark questions and conversation about different traditions and heritages. Just by going to the library, you can take a trip around the world by learning about the traditions of others!

Social/Emotional: Children's participation in family and cultural traditions helps them build a positive self-identity, establish a connection to the past, and create special moments with family and friends. Nurture these moments with children to build positive self-esteem.

Cognitive Development: Have an open-ended dialogue with children to discuss and explore the concept of traditions and their importance. Ask children to think and talk about traditions that happen in their household, culture and community. Brainstorm ideas with children to create new traditions.

BOOKLIST

Reading to children is the most important activity adults can do with them to support early learning and literacy skills. Select any of these books, or a book of your choosing, to read and further explore this month's **Traditions** theme.

Bread, Bread, Bread (3–6)

by Ann Morris

Celebrate the many different kinds of bread and how they may be enjoyed.

Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message (4–8)

by Chief Jake Swamp

This prayer of the Iroquois Indians celebrates the precious and rare gift of the natural world and the resources of Earth.

The Long Silk Strand: A Grandmother's Legacy to Her Granddaughter (4–8)

by Laura E. Williams

In ancient Japan, a young girl climbs a long silk strand hanging from heaven, where she finds her deceased grandmother waiting for her. With her grandmother's help, she realizes that her life is on Earth.

I Got Community (5–8)

by Melrose Cooper

A young girl describes, in rhyming verse, how members of her community make her feel loved.

The Carousel (5–8)

by Liz Rosenberg

A carousel is the backdrop for this sensitive story about sisters who search for memories of their mother's legacy.

Celebrations/Celebraciones: Holidays of the United States of America and Mexico (5–8)

by Nancy Maria Grande Tabor

Mexico and the United States have much in common, as illustrated by each country's holidays. Beginning with New Year's Day, this brief bilingual overview of Mexican and American holidays proceeds month by month.

KQED

education network

2001 Mariposa Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
800.723.ELMO
www.kqed.org/ednet

CONTRIBUTING WRITER
Kari Meidlinger

EDITOR
Sheila Butcher Smith

COPY EDITOR
Joan Saunders

DESIGN
NCPB Design

© 2007 KQED is a service of Northern California Public Broadcasting, Inc.