Bright Days, Big Hearts:

Belonging in the ECC

SCH

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING



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Holidays marked with * follow lunar or lunisolar calendars and therefore change dates each year. This includes Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Diwali, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Lent, Easter, Holi, Passover, and Eid al-Adha.

Dear ECC Faculty and Staff,

This resource book was created to support you in centering belonging and cultural awareness in the early years. Each page offers developmentally appropriate activities, kid-friendly language, and suggested texts for celebrating and learning about a wide range of cultures, identities, and holidays.

Our intent is to give you practical tools that spark joy, conversation, and curiosity in the classroom while affirming the children and families who are part of our community. We also recognize that no resource is ever complete. If you notice a culture or identity missing from this collection, or if you have ideas for deepening the practices inside, we welcome your feedback and contributions.

The work of belonging is never done in isolation. We are grateful for the strength of our DEIB team and invite you to reach out to us anytime: **DLT@sch.org**

- **Maxime Sinal**- Director of DEIB
- **Gerri Allen** — Lower School Diversity Coordinator
- **Zana Bass** — Lower/Middle School Diversity Coordinator
- **Polly Kimberly** — Upper School Diversity Coordinator

Together, we are committed to supporting you as you bring culturally responsive practices to life in ECC.

With appreciation,
The Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging



Belonging begins when every child's story is seen, heard, and celebrated.

- Maxime Sinal

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING AT SCH

At SCH, we curate brave spaces. We stimulate meaningful discussions and encourage students to show up and engage. Our Diversity Leadership Team, consisting of faculty members from each division and overseen by our Director Maxime Sinal, works hard to ensure that every member of the SCH community feels seen and valued.

DEIB Statement

Diversity is a condition of excellence. Embracing a diverse and inclusive community is fundamental to providing the most rigorous and globally competitive education.

At SCH, we aim to engage, understand, and celebrate the broad range of human experiences and perspectives. Through our curriculum, professional development, community-centered events, and daily interactions, we are committed to cultivating empathy and inclusion and to nurturing the authentic expression of every individual.

Our Mission

We are an inclusive community on a mission to inspire unbounded curiosity and independent thought in every one of our students from preschool through 12th grade. In a unique educational environment that extends well beyond campus, we nurture students' knowledge of themselves and the world, expanding their full academic and personal potential while preparing them to lead lives characterized by thoughtfulness, integrity, and a quest to effect positive change.

Our Core Values

Integrity | Courage | Diversity | Thoughtfulness | Resilience

Vision

SCH Academy aims to be at the forefront of independent school education through excellent teaching, learning, creativity, and innovation. We see a future where SCH graduates become catalysts for positive change, their impact echoing not just within our walls, but throughout the world.

CENTERING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

1. **Start with Joy**
    a. Highlight similarities that help children connect (food, music, play) while affirming unique cultural practices.
2. **Use Mirrors and Windows**
    a. Offer materials that reflect students' identities (mirrors) and introduce them to others (windows).
3. **Prioritize Representation**
    a. Choose books, music, and visuals that center diverse voices and family structures.
4. **Name Fairness Simply**
    a. Use simple language like "That was not fair. Dr. King wanted the world to be fair."
5. **Affirm Everyday Heroes**
    a. Remember that belonging is not only about famous leaders but also about affirming children's own families and communities.

If you notice a culture not represented in this book or if you have a child whose family traditions are different from those highlighted:

1. **Ask Openly and Kindly**
    a. "Can you tell us about a special celebration your family has?"
2. **Invite Families In**
    a. Encourage parents or caregivers to share stories, food, music, or pictures.
3. **Affirm All Answers**
    a. Even if a child says, "We don't celebrate holidays," that is still a meaningful cultural expression.
4. **Build Flexibility**
    a. Add new pages, notes, or displays in your classroom when cultures emerge that aren't in this guide.



WELCOME
September

- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept 15–Oct 15)
    - Rosh Hashanah*
- **Overview**
  - September begins the school year with celebrations of identity and renewal.
    - Hispanic Heritage Month honors Latinx and Hispanic histories and cultures.
    - Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, celebrates reflection, joy, and family.
- **Why Dates Vary**
  - Rosh Hashanah changes each year because it follows the Hebrew calendar, which uses both the sun and moon.
- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - Teachers can weave Hispanic Heritage Month activities across September and October while marking Rosh Hashanah with a focused story, song, or food tradition.



PAPEL PICADO



PUERTO RICAN VEJIGANTE MASK

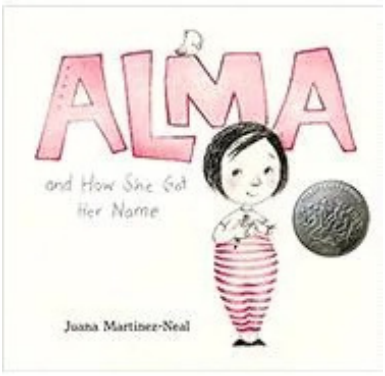
Hispanic Heritage Month

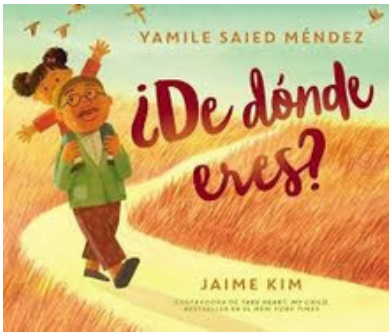
(Sept. 15 – Oct. 15)



MEXICAN SERAPE BLANKETS

Kid-Friendly Language: This month we celebrate people and families from countries where Spanish is spoken, like the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. We learn about their music, food, stories, and the many ways they make our world special.







Activities by Group:

1. **Willows (18–24 months):** Play and dance to Spanish-language children's music like 'De Colores' or 'Los Pollitos Dicen'.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years):** Explore a sensory bin with miniature foods, fabric swatches, and flag cards.
    a. Fruits: Mangoes, bananas, papayas, and plantains
    b. Staples: Mini tortillas, rice bags, beans, and corn cobs
    c. Meals: Tiny tacos, empanadas, or arepas (felt or plastic)
    d. Treats: Small pan dulce or churros (wooden or felt play versions)
    e. Fabric Swatches
        i. Mexican serape blankets – striped, woven cotton
        ii. Guatemalan textiles – bold, geometric patterns
        iii. Puerto Rican vejigante mask colors – bright reds, yellows, and blues
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years):** Create simple papel picado with tissue paper.
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+)**: Learn greetings in Spanish, like 'Hola' (hello) and 'Gracias' (thank you), and practice during circle time.

Countries to Celebrate and Acknowledge:

Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

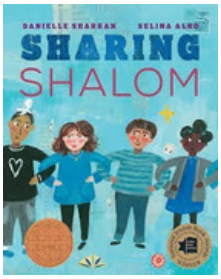
Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur

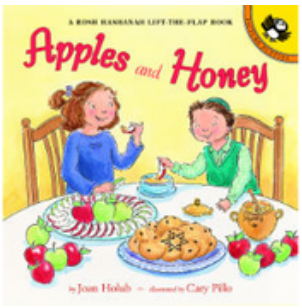


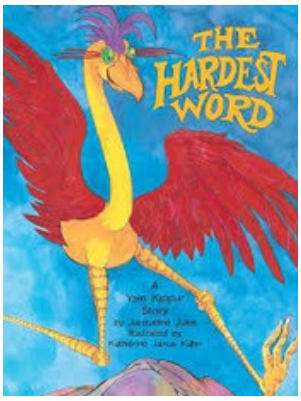
Kid-Friendly Language:

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year, a time to celebrate fresh starts with family, sweet foods like apples and honey, and special traditions. **Yom Kippur** comes soon after, and it is a day to reflect, say sorry, and think about ways to be kind and caring in the year ahead. We're learning about what's special to some of our friends and their families. Even if it's not your holiday, it's fun to learn and celebrate together.









Rosh Hashanah

2025: September 22 (sundown) – September 24 (nightfall)
2026: September 11 (sundown) – September 13 (nightfall)
2027: October 1 (sundown) – October 3 (nightfall)

Willows (18–24 months): 1. Listen to shofar sounds. 2. Explore honeycomb textures with mats or toys. 3. Apple-themed sensory play.	**Willows (18–24 months)** 1. Board books about kindness or feelings. 2. Pretend play "hugs" with dolls or stuffed animals.
Laurels (2–3 years) 1. Apple stamping with paint. 2. Sort red, yellow, and green pom-poms as "apples." 3. Sing simple "Shanah Tovah" greetings.	**Laurels (2–3 years)** 1. Emotion cards to explore feelings. 2. Pass a "kindness ball" and share ways to help friends.
Chestnuts (3–4 years) 1. Pretend Rosh Hashanah table with toy foods. 2. Honey drizzle art with yarn. 3. Draw wishes for the new year.	**Chestnuts (3–4 years)** 1. Kindness jar: add pom-poms for kind acts. 2. Read a friendship story and discuss saying sorry.
Jr. Pre-K (4+) 1. Create a "Wishing Wall" with drawings or dictated notes. 2. Practice "Shanah Tovah" greetings and what they mean. 3. Discuss new beginnings and kindness.	**Jr. Pre-K (4+)** 1. Make promise cards with one kind act to try. 2. Role-play with puppets to practice apologies and forgiveness.

Shofar



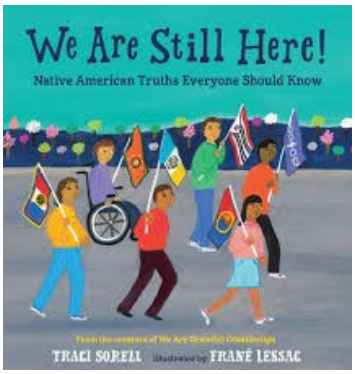
Yom Kippur

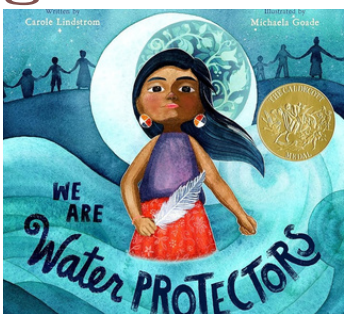
2025: October 1 (sundown) – October 2 (nightfall)
2026: September 20 (sundown) – September 21 (nightfall)
2027: October 10 (sundown) – October 11 (nightfall)

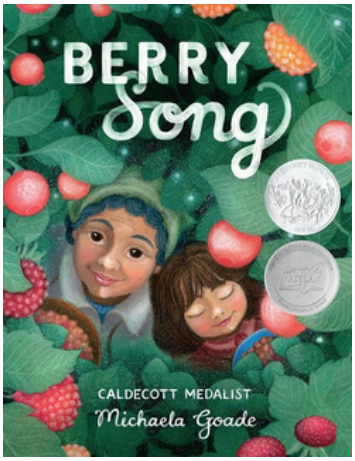
Hello October!

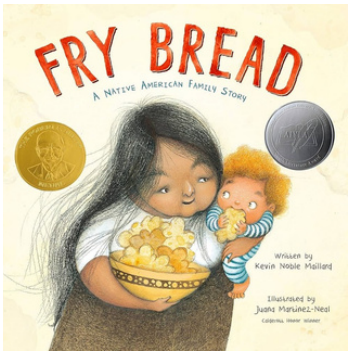
- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - Continuation of Hispanic Heritage Month
    - Indigenous Peoples' Day
    - Filipino American Heritage Month
    - Polish American Heritage Month
    - Italian American Heritage Month
    - Yom Kippur*
    - Diwali*
- **Overview**
  - October brings a wide range of cultural observances. This variety allows children to see the richness of heritage and traditions.
- **Why Dates Vary**
  - Yom Kippur follows the Hebrew calendar and shifts each year.
  - Diwali follows the Hindu calendar and is tied to the new moon, so it moves around the fall season.
- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - This month is full. Teachers should rotate celebrations across the month: spotlight Hispanic Heritage, pause for Indigenous Peoples' Day, and mark Yom Kippur or Diwali as they occur. Use art, music, and storytelling for Filipino, Polish, and Italian heritage.

Indigenous Peoples' Day (2nd Monday of October) & Native American Heritage Month (November)









Kid-Friendly Language:

This is a time to celebrate the first people of this land. We learn about their stories, art, and traditions, and we honor the ways they care for the earth and their communities. Native people are still here today, sharing their cultures with us in many beautiful ways.

Activities by Group:

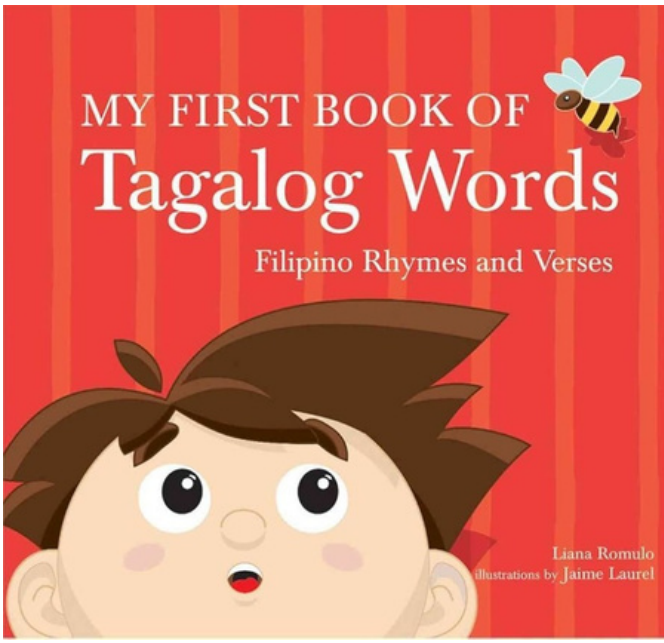
1. **Willows (18–24 months):**
   a. Explore nature baskets filled with safe items, such as pinecones, smooth stones, or large feathers.
   b. Listen to soft drumming or nature-inspired music during circle or rest time.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years):**
   a. Create a sand or soil sensory bin with scoops to explore caring for the earth.
   b. Use earth-tone paints to sponge or finger-paint patterns inspired by Native art.
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years):**
   a. Read *We Are Water Protectors* or *Fry Bread*, then discuss what water, food, or gratitude means to each child.
   b. Make bead patterns using natural-colored beads and pipe cleaners.
   c. Share gratitude moments during circle time by naming one thing they're thankful for.
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+):**
   a. Create a "gratitude circle," talking about things we are thankful for, inspired by the value many Native communities place on gratitude and caring for the earth.
   b. Look at a local map to see the Lenape homelands and discuss that your school is on Lenape land.
   c. Watch a short, child-friendly video about Lenape people today to show that Native communities are living and thriving.
   d. Create nature symbols or animal art to represent respect and care for the earth.

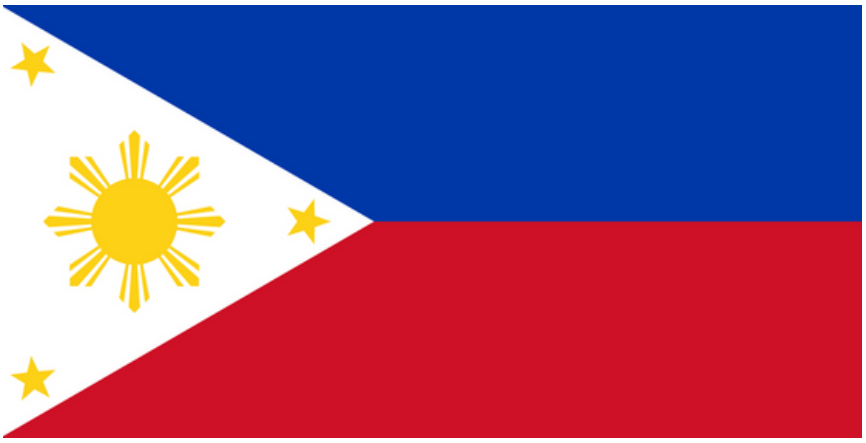
FILIPINO AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

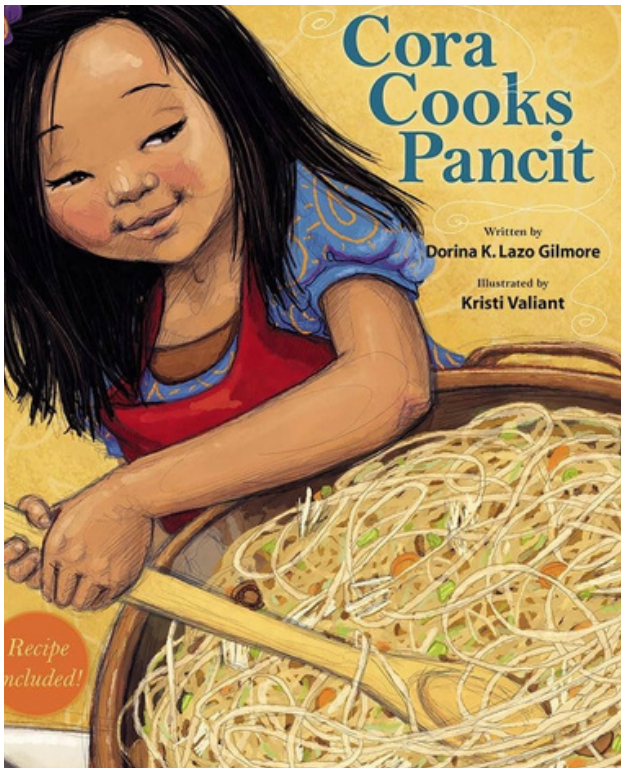
OCTOBER

Kid-Friendly Language:

This month we celebrate the people, stories, and traditions of the Philippines and Filipino American families. We learn about their music, food, and art and how they make our community special.







Activities by Group:

1. **Willows (18–24 months):** Listen to Filipino children's songs or lullabies during circle or nap time.
    a. "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan" (In the Cradle's Swing)
        i. A classic Filipino lullaby written by Lucio San Pedro and Levi Celerio, often sung softly or played as instrumental music.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years)**: Explore a sensory bin with safe items like seashells, woven fabric pieces, or miniature toy boats to represent the islands.
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years)**: Create a simple parol (Filipino star lantern) with paper and string to display in the classroom.
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+):** Read a story about the Philippines and locate it on a globe or classroom map. Children can share or learn a simple Tagalog word like "salamat" (thank you).



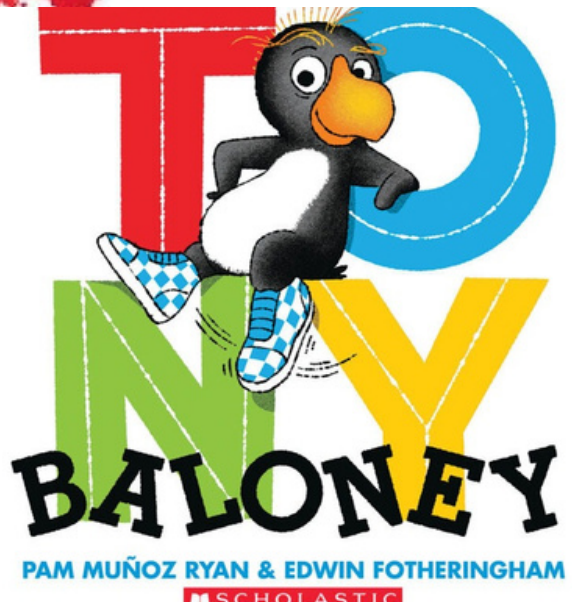
PAROL

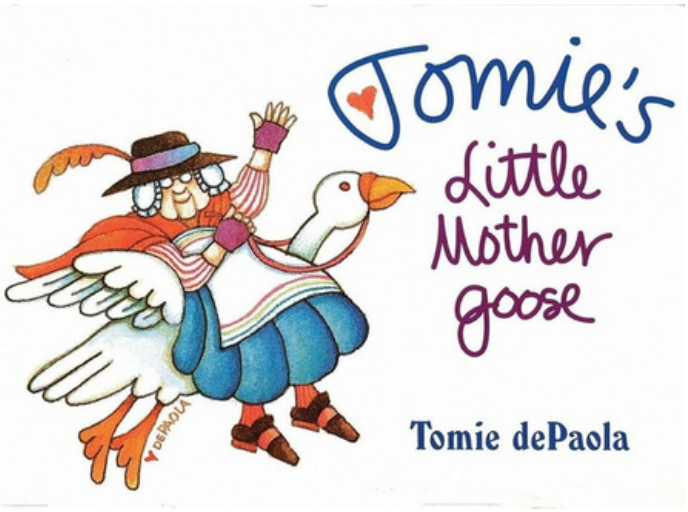
ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

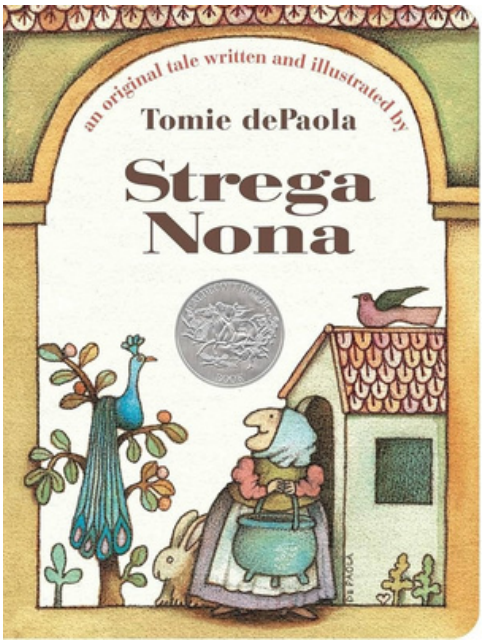
OCTOBER

Kid-Friendly Language:

This month we celebrate Italian American families and their traditions. From music and art to delicious food, we get to discover how their stories are part of our community and our everyday lives. We will listen to their music, make art, learn new words like 'ciao' and 'grazie,' and explore fun ways Italian American culture makes our world bright and special.







Activities by Group:

1. **Willows (18–24 months)**
   a. **Music Exploration:** Play gentle Italian lullabies or instrumental music during circle time and encourage simple clapping or swaying.
   b. **Pasta Sensory Bin:** Use large, uncooked pasta shapes like rigatoni or shells in a dry sensory bin. Offer large scoops and cups for safe exploration and pouring.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years)**
   a. **Color and Texture Art:** Dye pasta in the colors of the Italian flag (green, white, red) and let children glue pieces to paper for tactile art.
   b. **Pretend Cooking:** Set up a "mini kitchen" in the dramatic play area with safe utensils, wooden spoons, and empty pasta boxes for pretend pasta-making.
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years)**
   a. **Flag Collage:** Make the Italian flag using construction paper strips and glue. Talk about what each color represents.
   b. **Cooking and Math:** Make simple dough (flour, salt, water) and have children help shape "pasta." Talk about counting and shapes as they roll and form pieces.
   c. **Storytime:** Read Strega Nona and talk about the importance of family and traditions in the story.
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+)**
   a. **Map Exploration:** Locate Italy on a classroom globe or map and talk about its "boot" shape. Show where Rome, Venice, and Florence are located, and point out that it's surrounded by water.
   b. **Language Fun:** Practice simple Italian words during circle time, like "ciao" (hello), "grazie" (thank you), and "amico/amica" (friend).
   c. **Mini Feast:** Prepare a safe, no-cook snack together like mixing tomatoes and mozzarella for a "caprese cup," or tasting a small piece of bread dipped in olive oil (check for allergies).



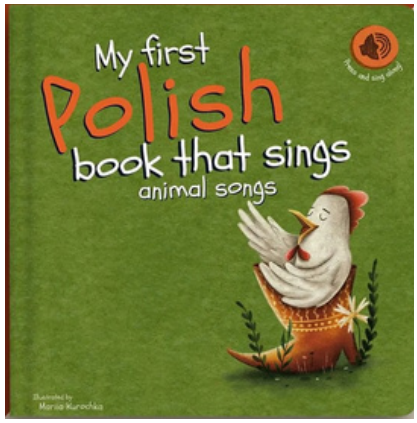
Kid-Friendly Language

Polish American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate families with roots in Poland. Families may share stories, food, music, and art from Polish traditions. Some families celebrate this month, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.



1. **Willows (18–24 months)**
   a. **Music Exploration:** Use My First Polish Book that Sings to play traditional Polish songs. Encourage clapping, swaying, or rocking.
   b. **Block Play:** Build with red and white blocks (colors of the Polish flag).
   c. **Photo Discovery:** Show joyful photos of Polish families cooking, dancing, or celebrating together.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years)**
   a. **Flag Art:** Children glue red paper squares on the bottom half of white paper to make the Polish flag.
   b. **Read Aloud:** *My First Polish Book for Kids:* practice saying simple words and pointing to pictures.
   c. **Food Exploration:** Taste a small piece of Polish bread (like chleb) or a pierogi bite (with family permission).
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years)**
   a. **Wycinanki Paper Art:** Fold and cut bright colored paper into simple flower or heart shapes, inspired by Polish folk art.
   b. **Story Rug:** Share pages from Facts About Poland for Kids. Ask: “What do you notice about the castles, food, or animals?”
   c. **Dance Play:** Play lively polka music and teach children to march or stomp in rhythm together.
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+)**
   a. **Living Museum:** Display pictures of Polish landmarks (castles, mountains, the city of Kraków) and leaders like Marie Curie or Nicolaus Copernicus. Use simple captions: “She was a scientist,” “He studied the stars.”
   b. **Story Connection:** Revisit Facts About Poland for Kids and invite children to draw something they learned (like a dragon, flag, or castle).
   c. **Cultural Symbols:** Color in outlines of the Polish eagle (national symbol) with red and white crayons.







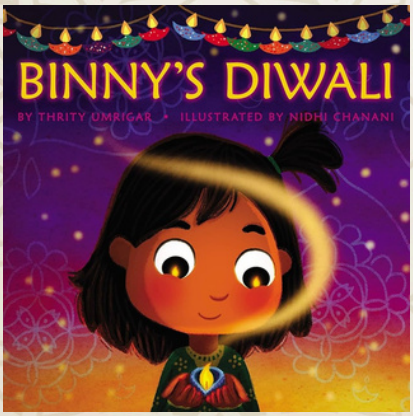
(Date Varies)
2025: October 20
2026: November 8
2027: October 29

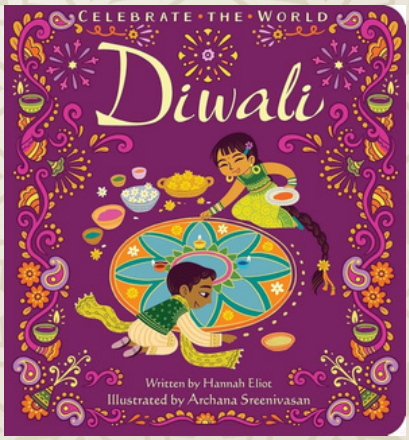


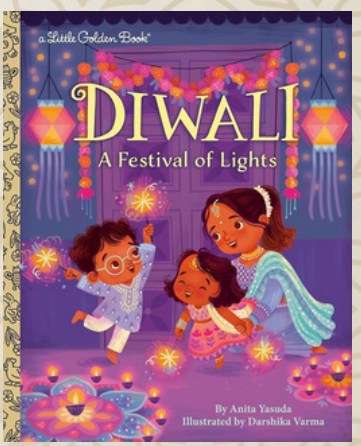
DIWALI

Kid-Friendly Language:

Diwali is called the festival of lights. Families celebrate with candles or lamps called diyas, share sweets, and spend time with people they love. Some families celebrate Diwali, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any holidays, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about different celebrations so we can understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.







Activities by Group

1. **Willows (18–24 months)**
   a. **Light and Shadow Play:** Explore safe, battery-powered tea lights or soft string lights in a quiet space to build sensory awareness.
   b. **Music Time:** Play soft Diwali music during circle time to introduce new sounds.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years)**
   a. **Rangoli Patterns:** Use colorful scarves or felt pieces to make simple patterns on the floor.
   b. **Diya Sensory Bin:** Add small cups, scoops, and fabric scraps to mimic diya decorating.
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years)**
   a. **Paper Diyas:** Decorate paper cutouts of diyas with markers, glitter glue, or sequins to hang around the room.
   b. **Storytime:** Read *Binny's Diwali* and talk about the importance of light and togetherness.
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+)**
   a. **Simple Rangoli Art:** Use colored rice or sand in shallow trays to create simple rangoli patterns.
   b. **Gratitude Circle:** Talk about people or things the children are thankful for, connecting to the themes of light and love in Diwali.
   c. **Music and Dance:** Learn simple dance steps to traditional Diwali songs to celebrate through movement.



Rangoli Art

Music Resources

Spotify/Apple Music: Search for "Diwali for Kids" or "Indian Children's Songs" playlists.
Youtube:Sesame Street: Sesame Street-Celebrate Diwali Song! The Festival of Lights!

HELLO

November



- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - Native American Heritage Month (see Indigenous Peoples' Day)
    - Veterans Day
    - Thanksgiving
- **Overview**
  - November centers Indigenous voices while also including national observances like Veterans Day and Thanksgiving.
- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - Teachers may focus deeply on Native American Heritage while briefly acknowledging Veterans Day and Thanksgiving in simple, respectful ways.
    - Sample Activities for Veterans Day:
      - Make peace handprints or a mural with thank-you messages. Create star stamps on cards for helpers.

Thanksgiving

4th Thursday of November

Kid-friendly Language:

Thanksgiving is a time to be with family and friends, to share food, and to say thank you for the people and things that make us happy. It is also a time to remember the first people of this land and to honor their stories.

Activities by Group:

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Gratitude Basket:** Pass around soft objects or family photos while saying "thank you."
2. **Music Time:** Sing simple gratitude songs or play calming music during circle time.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Handprint Art:** Make colorful "thank you" handprints for caregivers.
2. **Gratitude Circle:** During circle, help children name one thing or person they love.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

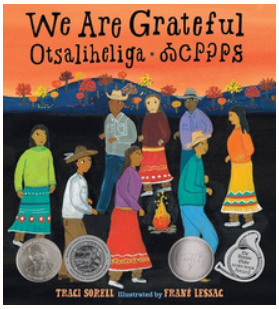
1. **Thankful Tree:** Create a paper tree where children add leaves with drawings of what they are thankful for.
2. **Story Time:** Read Thank You, Omu! and talk about ways we can share and be kind.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Classroom Feast:** Make a simple snack like fruit salad and share it family-style to talk about togetherness.
2. **History Exploration:** Show photos of the Wampanoag people today and explain that Native people are still here, keeping traditions alive.









For Young Children (Willows, Laurels, Chestnuts)

- Focus on gratitude and togetherness.
  - Example: "Thanksgiving is a time to say thank you and to share with the people we love."
- Mention the first people of the land in a positive way.
  - Example: "Long ago, Native people cared for this land, and Native people are still here today."

For Jr. Pre-K (4+)

- Add simple truths about history.
  - Example: "A long time ago, Native people and newcomers shared food together. Over time, Native people were not treated fairly, but today we honor their stories and celebrate that they are still here."
- Use visuals of modern Native communities to show Native people are living, thriving, and part of our world today.

Avoid

- **Using stereotypes (like inaccurate costumes).**
- **Language that makes it seem like Native people are only in the past.**

Hello December

- ***Celebrations & Heritage***
  - This Month
    - Hanukkah*
    - Christmas
    - Kwanzaa
    - International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- ***Overview***
  - December celebrates light, family, and joy in many forms. It also reminds us of the importance of inclusion with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- ***Why Dates Vary***
  - Hanukkah follows the Hebrew calendar, so it shifts but always happens in winter.
- ***Navigating Multiple Celebrations***
  - Teachers can emphasize shared values of joy and light while also naming what makes each tradition unique.

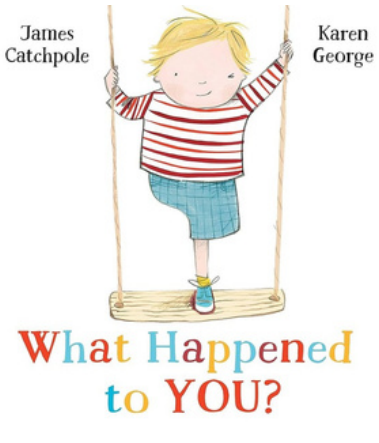




December 3

Kid-friendly Language:

Today we celebrate the many ways people's brains and bodies work. Everyone is special, and everyone belongs in our community.



Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Texture Exploration:** Create a sensory bin with safe materials of different textures, soft fabric, smooth wooden blocks, and textured balls, to show that we all experience the world in different ways.
2. **Gentle Music Time:** Play calming music and encourage gentle tapping or shaking of instruments to include everyone in group play.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Storytime Connection:** Read a simple, inclusive book like *Yes I Can!* or *We Move Together* and pause to point out how everyone is playing or learning together.
2. **Movement Game:** Play a "follow the leader" game where children can try moving in different ways, walking slowly, spinning, crawling, to show that bodies move in lots of ways.

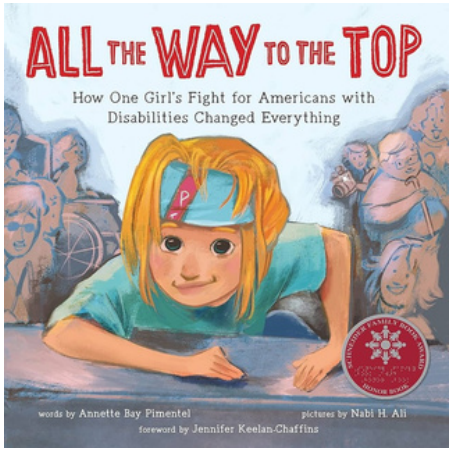


Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Dramatic Play with Dolls and Figures:** Provide dolls, figurines, or classroom people with different abilities (wheelchairs, canes, cochlear implants) and invite children to create inclusive play scenes.
2. **Art Celebration:** Use art materials (markers, stickers, crayons) to decorate "Everyone Belongs" posters with handprints or self-portraits.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Role-Play Inclusion:** Set up dramatic play scenarios, like helping a friend join a game or welcoming someone new and guide children in practicing kind, inclusive responses.
2. **Problem-Solving Circle:** Use a social story or puppet to share a simple scenario: "Our friend wants to play but needs help. What can we do?" and brainstorm ways to help.



Additional Resources:

- Kid-friendly videos from https://www.wid.org/
- Sesame Street clips with characters like Julia (autism awareness)

Christmas
December 25th

Kid-Friendly Language:

Christmas is a time many families celebrate love, kindness, and giving. It can be about sharing time, food, or gifts with people we care about. Some families celebrate Christmas, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any holidays, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about different celebrations so we can understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.







Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Christmas Sensory Bin:** Fill a bin with soft ribbons, large jingle bells (supervised), and small gift boxes to explore textures and sounds.
2. **Music and Movement:** Play gentle Christmas instrumentals and encourage clapping, swaying, or dancing.
3. **Board Book Time:** Share bright, sturdy Christmas books to build vocabulary and early recognition.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Ornament Art:** Use sturdy paper ornaments for decorating with crayons, stickers, or pom-poms.
2. **Pretend Gift Wrapping:** Provide fabric squares and small boxes for “wrapping” and “unwrapping” play to build fine motor skills.
3. **Storytime:** Read Bear Stays Up for Christmas and talk about how the characters show love and care for one another.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Kindness Countdown:** Make a paper chain where each link lists a kind action (like sharing or saying thank you) to do each day leading up to winter break.
2. **Holiday Cards:** Create cards for family members, teachers, or school staff to spread kindness.
3. **Global Christmas Exploration:** Show pictures of how families celebrate Christmas around the world, from parols in the Philippines to markets in Europe.

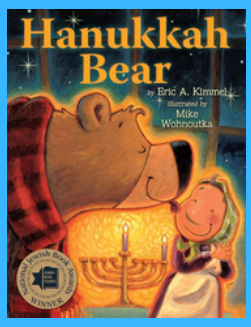
Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Community Gratitude Project:** Work together to make thank-you cards for community helpers like cafeteria staff or bus drivers.
2. **Story time and Discussion:** Read Last Stop on Market Street and talk about how giving can mean different things to different people.
3. **Sharing Traditions:** Create space for children to share a holiday or family tradition, Christmas or otherwise, through drawings or circle-time stories.



Kid-Friendly Language:

Hanukkah is the festival of lights. Families light candles, share food, and spend time together to celebrate hope and courage. Some families celebrate Hanukkah, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any holidays, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about different celebrations so we can understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.



Dates varies year to year:

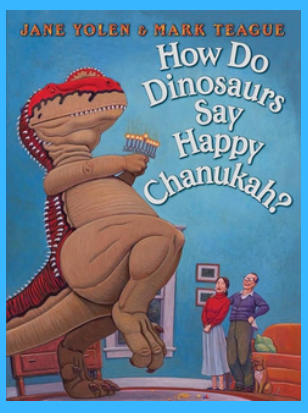
2025: December 14–22 (sundown to sundown)

2026: December 4–12 (sundown to sundown)

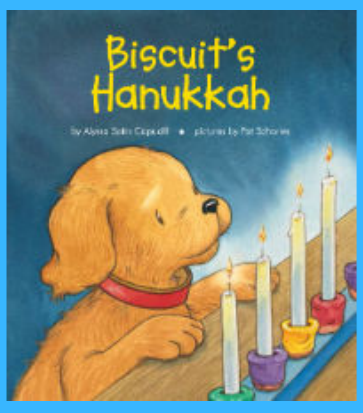
2027: December 24–January 1, 2028 (sundown to sundown)

Activities by Group

1. **Willows (18–24 months)**
   a. **Light and Music Exploration:** Use soft, battery-operated candles or string lights in a basket for children to safely explore. Pair the experience with quiet instrumental Hanukkah music to create a calming sensory moment.
   b. **Cause-and-Effect Play:** Provide simple shakers or bells to accompany the music, letting children join in the rhythm.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years)**
   a. **Finger-Paint Art:** Use blue and white finger paints to make simple Hanukkah-inspired art, like dots, lines, or handprints, which can be displayed as "lights."
   b. **Sensory Bin:** Create a bin with blue and silver pom-poms, ribbons, and soft fabric scraps for children to scoop, pour, and sort.
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years)**
   a. **Dreidel Play:** Introduce a simple dreidel game with large, easy-to-hold dreidels. Focus on spinning rather than rules, emphasizing fun and sharing.
   b. **Food Exploration:** Taste a safe Hanukkah snack like plain potato latkes or applesauce (check allergies first). Talk about how food is part of many celebrations.
   c. **Story and Discussion:** Read Hanukkah Bear and talk about family, traditions, and kindness in the story.
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+)**
   a. **Paper Menorah Craft:** Use construction paper to make a large paper menorah. Each day of Hanukkah, children can "light" a new paper candle to connect the celebration to the calendar.
   b. **Candle Conversations:** Talk about what each candle represents in simple language, like hope, courage, and family, to make the tradition meaningful.
   c. **Dreidel Game with Counting:** Teach children to count chocolate coins or counters to build basic math skills while playing.





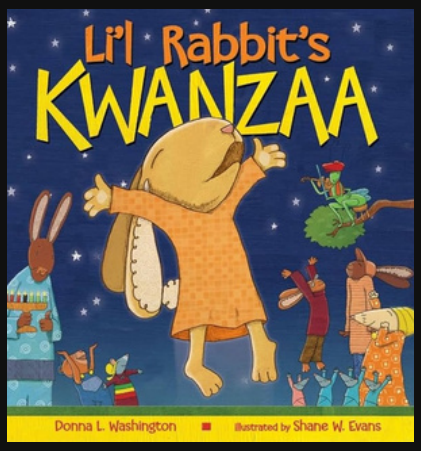


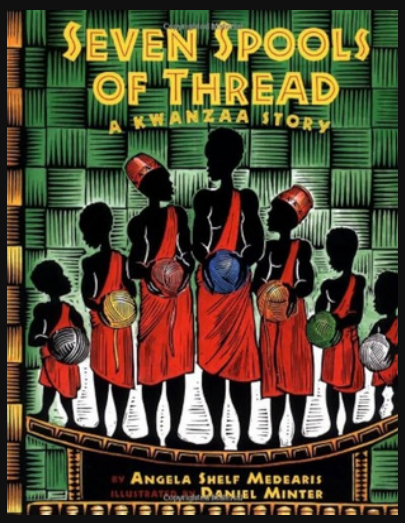
KWANZAA

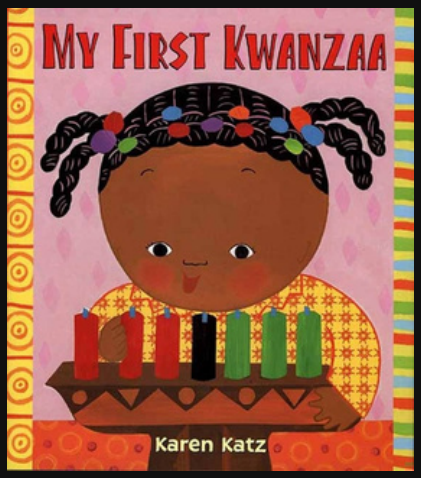
December 26 - January 1

Kid-Friendly Language:

Kwanzaa is a celebration of African American history, family, and community. It is seven days of sharing stories, music, and traditions together. Some families celebrate Kwanzaa, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any holidays, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about different celebrations so we can understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

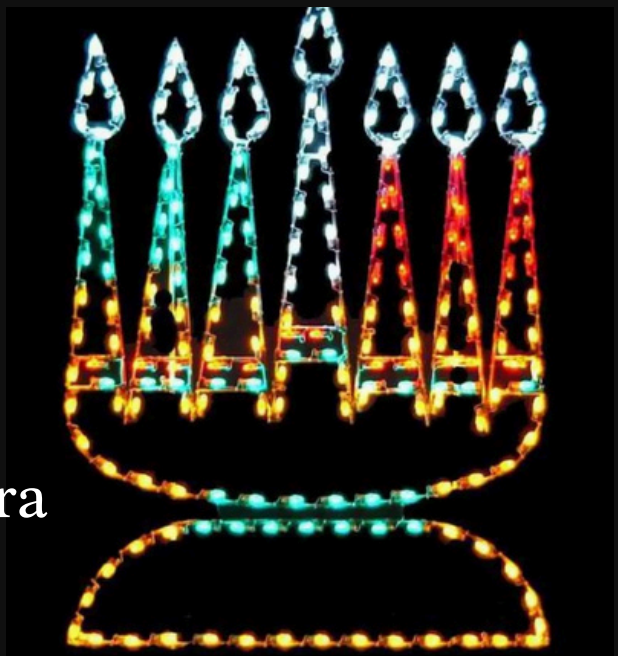






Activities by Group:

1. **Willows (18–24 months):** Explore a sensory bin with red, black, and green fabric squares.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years):** Make simple color collages with red, green, and black paper.
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years):** Light a pretend kinara (using paper candles) each day and talk about the principles of Kwanzaa in simple terms.
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+):** Create unity chains with paper strips where children share drawings of what family and community mean to them.



Kinara

WELCOME January

- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **Overview**
  - January honors Dr. King’s dream of fairness and care.
- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - With one main observance, teachers can go deeper into MLK’s story and connect it to children’s own hopes for fairness and kindness.

Third Monday of January



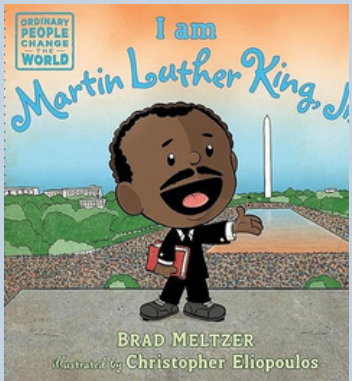


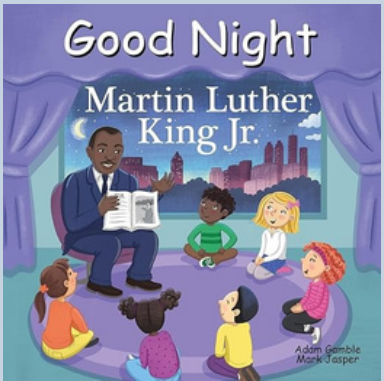
Kid-Friendly Language

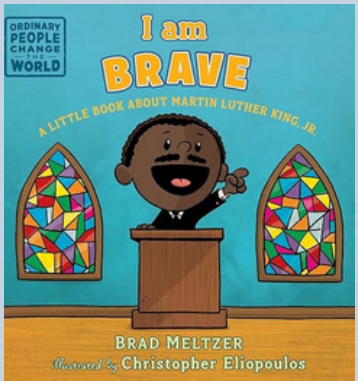
Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a time to celebrate a leader who dreamed of fairness, kindness, and love for all people. Families may remember him by learning his story, helping others, or spending time together. Some families celebrate this day, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

Activities by Group:

1. **Willows (18–24 months):**
   a. **Music Exploration:** Play "This Little Light of Mine" and encourage clapping, rocking, or gentle marching in place.
   b. **Photo Discovery:** Display smiling photos of Dr. King with children and families.
   c. **Color Play:** Use bright blocks or toys to "build dreams" together.
2. **Laurels (2–3 years):**
   a. **Peace Doves:** Children create handprint doves using white paint or cutouts.
   b. **Read Aloud:** *Good Night Martin Luther King Jr.* (revisit pages or read in short sections across the week). After reading, invite children to point to "happy," "peaceful," or "family" moments in the pictures.
   c. **Friendship Circle:** Sit in a circle, pass a soft ball, and say one kind word (teachers can model first).
3. **Chestnuts (3–4 years):**
   a. **Dream Clouds:** Children draw their own dreams for a kinder world on cloud-shaped paper. Hang them on a "Dream Wall."
   b. **Story Rug:** Read *I Am Brave: A Little Book About Martin Luther King Jr.* by Brad Meltzer. Discuss what it means to be brave at school (helping a friend, trying something new).
   c. **Kindness Path:** Make paper footprints; each footprint shows a child's idea for helping a friend. Create a class "path of peace."
4. **Jr. Pre-K (4+):**
   a. **Living Museum:** Post simple quotes with pictures of MLK leading marches or speaking. Invite children to notice: "He is speaking. People are listening. They are walking together."
   b. **Peace March:** Children make simple signs with words like "LOVE" or "FRIEND." Lead a short indoor or outdoor march while singing This Little Light of Mine.
   c. **Story Connection:** Read *I Am Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Brad Meltzer. Discuss: "What do you notice about how he helped people?" Children can then draw themselves helping someone.







Hello February

- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - Black History Month
    - Valentine's Day
    - Start of Ramadan*
    - Lent may begin in February (Ash Wednesday)*
- **Overview**
  - February affirms Black leaders, artists, and everyday heroes while also including seasonal holidays and observances.
- **Why Dates Vary**
  - Ramadan follows the Islamic calendar, moving back about 10 days each year.
  - Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which changes because Easter's date changes with the spring moon.
- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - Teachers can use February to highlight Black History throughout while pausing for joyful nods to Valentine's and noting when Lent or Ramadan begins.
- **Sample Activities for Valentine's Day:** Make kindness cards for classmates. Create a friendship chain of hearts.
- **Sample Activity for Ash Wednesday:** Invite children to share or draw one hope for spring.

February is BLACK HISTORY month

Kids-Friendly Language

Black History Month is a time to celebrate the history, stories, and accomplishments of Black people. We learn about leaders, artists, scientists, and everyday heroes who have made our world a better place.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play classic songs by Ella Jenkins or soothing gospel music, encouraging gentle clapping or rocking.
2. **Photo Discovery:** Display images of Black families and children in joyful everyday moments.

Laurels (2–3 years)

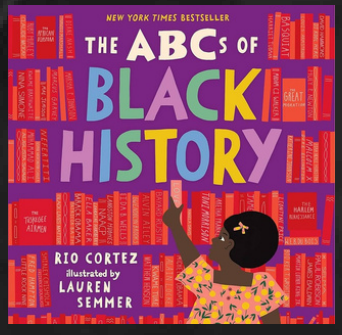
1. **Art with Purpose:** Create a collaborative finger-paint "unity canvas" using bright, bold colors.
2. **Board Book Reading:** Read books like *Hair Love* or *Please, Baby, Please* that show love and care in families.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Hero of the Week:** Introduce a "hero board" each week featuring a Black leader, artist, or inventor with a picture and one fun fact.
2. **Music and Movement:** Dance to age-appropriate songs by Black artists to celebrate joy and culture.
3. **Kindness Links:** Start a "kindness chain" to honor people who make a difference in their community, adding a link for every kind act.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum:** Create a rotating "museum wall" with short bios and images of Black leaders, letting children ask questions or share reflections.
2. **Science and Invention Play:** Explore inventions by Black scientists (like traffic lights or peanut butter) with simple, playful activities.
3. **Story and Art Connection:** Read *Mae Among the Stars* and create space-themed art to honor Mae Jemison's work.







RAMADAN & EID AL-FITR

Kid-Friendly Language:

Ramadan is a special month for many Muslim families. It last for 30 days. They spend time with loved ones, share meals, and help others. When Ramadan ends, families celebrate a big holiday called Eid, which is full of food, music, and joy. Some families celebrate Ramadan and Eid, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

2026:

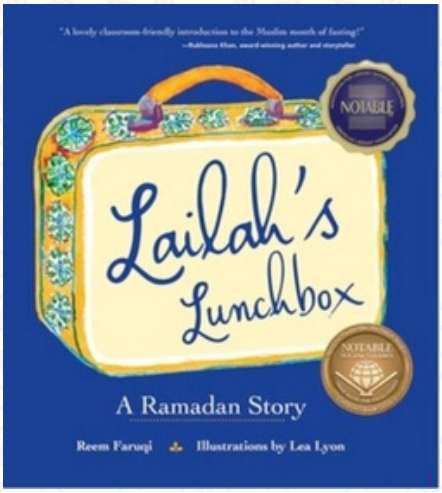
- **Ramadan is expected to start the evening of Tuesday, February 17th, and will end with Eid al-Fitr on Friday, March 20th, 2026.**

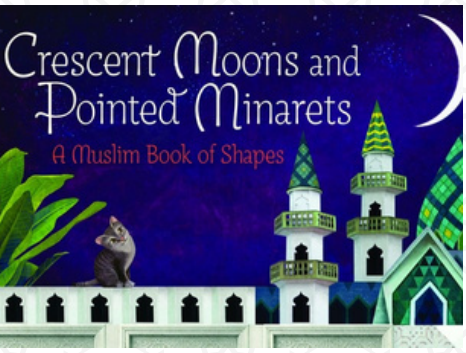
2027:

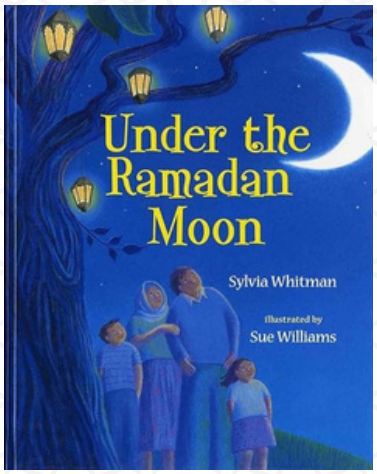
- **Ramadan is expected to begin the evening of Monday, February 8th, with Eid al-Fitr on Wednesday, March 10th, 2027.**

2028:

- **Ramadan is expected to begin around January 28th and conclude around February 26th with Eid al-Fitr with Eid al-Fitr around February 26th.**







Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Lantern Light Play: Use safe, battery-operated tea lights inside paper cups to create a gentle "Ramadan lantern glow," letting children explore the lights in a darkened corner.**
2. **Family Photo Discovery: Display pictures of Muslim families enjoying iftar (the evening meal), showing children eating, laughing, and spending time together.**
3. **Soothing Song Time: Play lullabies or soft drum rhythms from Muslim traditions while encouraging rocking or clapping.**

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Moon & Star Collage:** Children place foil stars and crescent shapes onto blue construction paper to make a collaborative "night sky."
2. **Read Aloud Connection:** Read *Crescent Moons and Pointed Minarets* and invite children to find shapes (circle, square, star) in the classroom.
3. **Date Tasting:** Offer a simple taste of a date (with family permission) or another sweet fruit, connecting to how many families break their fast.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Ramadan Lantern Craft:** Use pre-cut paper shapes, tissue paper, and glue sticks to make colorful lanterns to hang in the classroom.
2. **Kindness Jar:** Add a pom-pom each time a child shows kindness, linking to Ramadan's focus on generosity and caring for others.
3. **Story time Movement:** Read *Lailah's Lunchbox* and talk about how children can support friends who do things differently, then do a "friendship circle" where children hold hands and sing a short song.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Moon Phases Exploration:** Use a flashlight and foam balls to demonstrate how the moon changes shape, connecting to the lunar calendar of Ramadan.
2. **Ramadan Around the World Wall:** Post images of families celebrating Ramadan in different countries, with short captions. Invite children to point out foods, clothing, and decorations they notice.
3. **Eid Celebration Party:** Host a simple classroom "Eid" with special snacks (fruit, honey cookies), colorful scarves for dancing, and children making and exchanging paper "Eid cards."

Lent & Easter

2026
- **Lent begins: Wednesday, February 18**
- **Easter: Sunday, April 5**

2027
- **Lent begins: Wednesday, February 10**
- **Easter: Sunday, March 28**

2028
- **Lent begins: Wednesday, March 1**
- **Easter: Sunday, April 16**

Kid-Friendly Language:
Lent and Easter are special times for many Christian families. Lent is a time when people practice kindness and helping others. Easter is a joyful holiday that celebrates new life. Families may go to church, share meals, decorate eggs, or have egg hunts. Some families celebrate Lent and Easter, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Purple Color Play:** Explore soft blocks, scarves, or toys in purple (the color often linked with Lent) to practice color recognition.
2. **Spring Sensory Bin:** Fill a bin with grass-like paper, plastic eggs, and small plush animals for safe exploration.
3. **Music Exploration:** Listen to gentle springtime or nature-inspired songs with clapping and swaying.

Laurels (2–3 years)

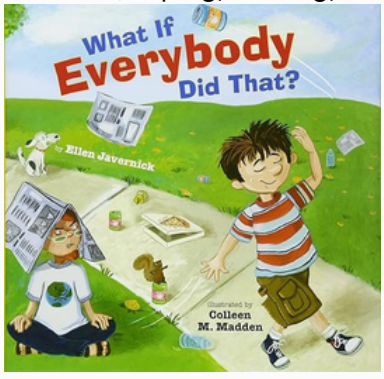
1. **Egg Sound Shakers:** Make egg shakers with plastic eggs filled with rice or beans. Children can shake and compare sounds.
2. **Kindness Circle:** Pass a ball around and each child says one nice thing about a classmate or teacher.
3. **Read Aloud:** Share books like Happy Easter, Mouse! or Have You Filled a Bucket Today? and talk about kindness

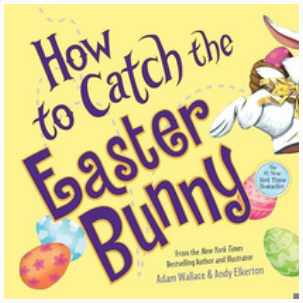
Chestnuts (3–4 years)

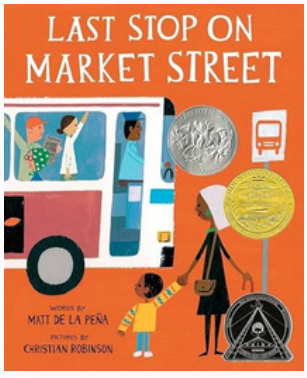
1. **Growing Garden Project:** Plant seeds in small cups and water them daily, connecting to new life and growth.
2. **Kindness Path:** Add a footprint or flower to a classroom path each time someone shows kindness, building a “kindness journey” through Lent.
3. **Egg Decorating:** Use crayons, stickers, or washable paint to decorate paper or wooden eggs, celebrating creativity.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Butterfly Transformation Craft:** Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and make butterflies from coffee filters to represent change and growth.
2. **Egg Hunt with Meaning:** Hide eggs filled with stickers, kindness notes, or positive words, and have children share what they found.
3. **Acts of Care Calendar:** Create a simple class chart where children choose a daily act of kindness (helping, sharing, including a friend).







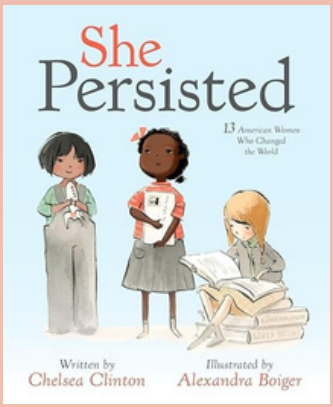
Hello March

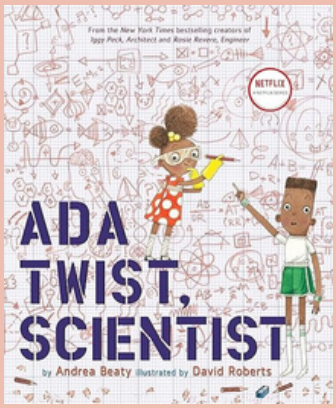
- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - Women's History Month
    - Irish American Heritage Month & St. Patrick's Day
    - Greek American Heritage Month
    - Holi*
    - Ramadan & Eid al-Fitr*
    - Lent & Easter*
- **Overview**
    - March is rich with celebrations of heritage, women's history, and multiple religious holidays.
- **Why Dates Vary**
  - Holi follows the Hindu lunar calendar but usually falls in March.
  - Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr follow the Islamic lunar calendar.
  - Lent and Easter shift because Easter is tied to the spring full moon.
- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - This is one of the busiest months. Teachers should rotate highlights, choosing one or two activities per observance spread across the weeks.



Kid-Friendly Language

March is Women's History Month is a time to celebrate the amazing things women and girls have done in history and today. Families may share stories about leaders, artists, scientists, and everyday heroes who make the world better. Some families celebrate Women's History Month, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.







Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play songs by women singers like Ella Jenkins (folk for children) or Dolly Parton's Peaceful Songs for Kids. Encourage clapping, rocking, or swaying.
2. **Photo Discovery:** Show photos of women caring for children, painting, teaching, or playing instruments.
3. **Color Play:** Offer scarves and dolls of different skin tones and celebrate "strong girls and boys."

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Hero Picture Cards:** Show simple photos of women leaders like Rosa Parks, Amelia Earhart, and Malala with one fact (e.g., "She flew planes," "She was brave").
2. **Read Aloud:** *She Persisted: A Picture Book* by Chelsea Clinton. Invite children to point out what the women are doing.
3. **Dress-Up Play:** Provide scarves, hats, or toy stethoscopes so children can pretend to be leaders, pilots, or doctors.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Hero of the Week Board:** Feature one woman leader (like Mae Jemison, Frida Kahlo, or Maya Angelou) with a picture and a fun fact.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *Ada Twist, Scientist* by Andrea Beaty. Do a simple science exploration, like mixing baking soda and vinegar to make bubbles.
3. **Kindness Chain:** Add a paper link each time a child shows courage or care, building a chain to celebrate everyday heroes.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

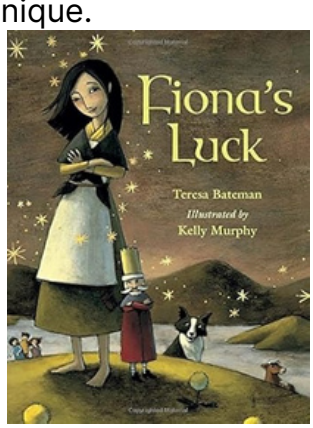
1. **Living Museum:** Display images of women inventors, artists, and activists. Add short captions: "She painted," "She helped people vote," "She was an astronaut." Invite children to share what they notice.
2. **Story Connection:** Read *Comet Chaser: The True Cinderella Story of Caroline Herschel, the First Professional Woman Astronomer* by Pamela S. Turner. Afterward, children can draw comets, stars, or "dream skies."
3. **Role Play Corner:** Create a play space where children can pretend to be teachers, scientists, or pilots.

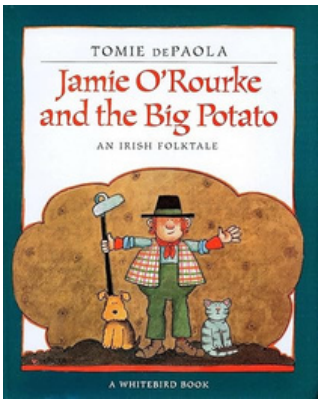
Irish American Heritage Month & Saint Patrick's Day

Kid-Friendly Language

Irish American Heritage Month and St. Patrick's Day **(March 17th)** are times to celebrate families with roots in Ireland. Families may share music, dancing, food, parades, and stories. Some families celebrate these holidays, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.







Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play traditional Irish harp or fiddle tunes; encourage gentle clapping or swaying.
2. **Block Play:** Build towers with green and gold blocks.
3. **Photo Discovery:** Show joyful images of families at St. Patrick's Day parades with bagpipes, drums, and dancing.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Shamrock Stamps:** Dip potato halves or sponges into green paint to stamp shamrock shapes.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Goodnight Ireland* by Adam Gamble and Mark Jasper. Point to shamrocks, rainbows, and castles together.
3. **Rainbow Snack:** Share fruit slices in rainbow order (strawberries, oranges, bananas, blueberries, grapes).

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Rainbow Collages:** Use tissue paper or construction paper scraps to create large rainbow murals. Add "gold coins" (yellow circles) at the end of the rainbow.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *Jamie O'Rourke and the Big Potato* by Tomie dePaola. Ask: "What makes this story silly?"
3. **Dance Play:** Teach a simple Irish step dance move like gentle stomping in rhythm to lively fiddle music.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

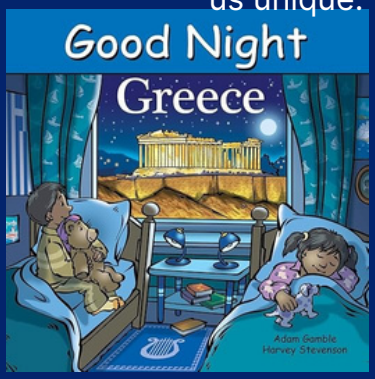
1. **Living Museum:** Display images of Irish American leaders, writers, and musicians. Add simple captions: "She wrote poems," "He played music," "They led marches." Invite children to share what they notice.
2. **Story Connection:** Read *Fiona's Luck* by Teresa Bateman. Discuss: "What does luck mean to you — kindness, friendship, or fun?"
3. **Art & Symbols:** Color in outlines of Celtic knots or shamrocks with crayons and markers.



Kid-Friendly Language

Greek American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate families with roots in Greece. Families may share stories, food, music, and dancing. Some families celebrate this month, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.







Greek bouzouki

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play gentle bouzouki or Greek lullabies; invite clapping or swaying.
2. **Block Play:** Build towers with blue and white blocks (colors of Greece's flag).
3. **Photo Discovery:** Show pictures of Greek families celebrating with food, dancing, or music.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Olive Branch Art:** Children use green stamps or paintbrushes to make "olive leaves" on paper branches.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Goodnight Greece* by Adam Gamble and Mark Jasper. Point out colors, boats, and foods in the pictures.
3. **Dance Play:** Play simple Greek circle dance music and walk in a small circle holding hands.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

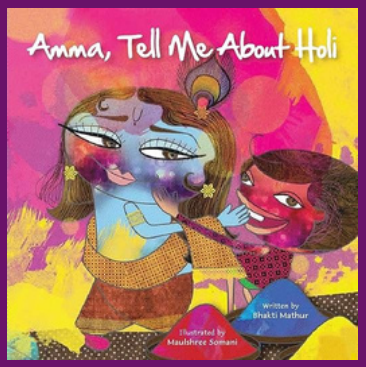
1. **Laurel Wreaths:** Make crowns from paper leaves glued onto headbands, inspired by ancient Greece.
2. **Story Rug:** Share a simple retelling of a Greek myth (like Hercules being strong or Athena being wise). Invite children to act it out with simple motions.
3. **Shape Hunt:** Look for triangle and column shapes in the classroom or on printed photos of Greek buildings.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum:** Display images of Greek American leaders, artists, and athletes. Add short captions: "She painted," "He ran races," "They led."
2. **Story Connection:** Read *Yiayia's Kitchen* by Maria Gianferrari. Invite children to share a food that reminds them of home or family.
3. **Art & Symbols:** Color large outlines of Greek columns or geometric designs with crayons, inspired by ancient architecture.

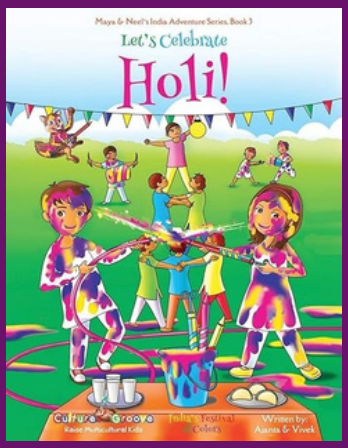


2026: March 3
2027: March 22
2028: March 11



Kid-Friendly Language

Holi is a spring festival celebrated by many families in India and around the world. People celebrate with colors, music, dancing, and sweets to show love, joy, and new beginnings. Some families celebrate Holi, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.





Activties by Group:

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play gentle Bollywood or folk songs; encourage clapping or swaying.
2. **Photo Discovery:** Show joyful photos of families celebrating with colors.
3. **Sensory Bin:** Offer a bin of safe colored pom-poms for children to scoop, pour, and sort.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Color Collage:** Glue bright tissue paper squares onto paper to make rainbow art.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Festival of Colors* by Kabir Sehgal and Surishtha Sehgal. Invite children to point to colors on each page.
3. **Dance Play:** Play upbeat Bollywood children's music and invite children to dance in a circle with ribbons.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Spray Art:** Use spray bottles of diluted watercolor on large paper outside to mimic Holi's splashes of color.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *Let's Celebrate Holi* by Ajanta Chakraborty. Ask: "What colors do you see? How are people celebrating?"
3. **Friendship Bracelets:** Twist colorful yarn into simple "bracelets of friendship" for children to exchange.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum:** Display photos of Holi celebrations in India and around the world. Invite children to notice the colors, dancing, and families celebrating together.
2. **Story Connection:** Read *Amma, Tell Me About Holi!* by Bhakti Mathur. Afterward, children can draw how they celebrate spring (with flowers, family, or play).
3. **Outdoor Color Toss:** Use crushed chalk or colored powder in small cloth bags to create safe, washable "color clouds." Children toss them together outdoors.

Hello April

- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - Passover*
    - Easter*
    - Arab American Heritage Month
- **Overview**
  - April includes Arab American heritage alongside major Jewish and Christian holidays.
- **Why Dates Vary**
  - Passover follows the Hebrew calendar.
  - Easter changes based on the spring full moon.
- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - Teachers can weave Arab American heritage across the month while spotlighting Passover and Easter when they fall

Passover

Kid-Friendly Language

Passover is a special holiday for many Jewish families. It remembers a story about freedom and hope. Families gather for a meal called a Seder, where they eat special foods, sing songs, and share stories. Some families celebrate Passover, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

2026: Wednesday, April 1 - Thursday, April 9
2027: Wednesday, April 21 - Thursday, April 29
2028: Monday, April 10 - Tuesday, April 18

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Matzo Exploration:** Let children see, touch, and taste matzo (plain crackers) as a sensory snack.
2. **Song Time:** Play and clap along to simple Jewish children's songs like "Dayenu" or "Let My People Go."
3. **Family Photo Discovery:** Display pictures of Jewish families sharing meals at a Seder table.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Frogs Everywhere:** Create simple frog puppets (paper bags or popsicle sticks) to connect with the Passover story of freedom. Sing silly frog songs.
2. **Story Basket:** Place toy items in a basket (a toy lamb, plastic egg, toy cup) to spark storytelling about special foods at the Seder.
3. **Read Aloud:** Share *Is It Passover Yet?* by Chris Barash and talk about spring signs.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Freedom Chain:** Build a paper chain where each link represents something children are thankful they can do (play, sing, hug family). Connect this to the idea of freedom.
2. **Matzo Painting:** Use matzo as a canvas, painting on it with food-safe, colorful spreads (cream cheese, jam).
3. **Storytime Connection:** Read The Passover Story (Miriam Nerlove) and invite children to share what they notice about family traditions.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Seder Plate Exploration:** Show a (plastic or picture) Seder plate and talk about each item. Invite children to create their own plate with drawings or paper cutouts.
2. **Building Bridges Craft:** Children work together to build a "bridge" out of blocks or cardboard, connecting to the story of crossing the Red Sea.
3. **Passover Celebration Snack:** Share matzo with spreads or apple slices with honey to honor spring and celebration.

Arab Heritage Month

Kid-Friendly Language

April is Arab American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the stories, traditions, and creativity of Arab people and families. Some Arab American families trace their roots to countries like Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and many others. Families may celebrate with special food, music, or art. Some families do not celebrate this month, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play traditional oud (pronounced ood) music, a deep, soothing sound from one of the world's oldest string instruments. Families in countries like Egypt, Lebanon, and Morocco love its music. Invite children to clap or sway as they listen to the gentle rhythms.
2. **Colorful Scarf Play:** Provide soft scarves in bright colors (gold, blue, red, green) for babies to wave, toss, and feel.
3. **Photo Discovery:** Display joyful images of Arab American families together at meals, celebrations, and in everyday life.

Laurels (2–3 years)

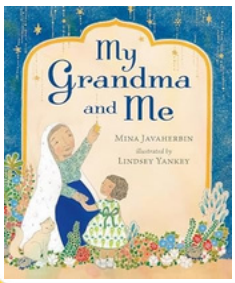
1. **Shape Art:** Use paper cutouts of stars and geometric shapes to make collages inspired by Arab art patterns.
2. **Board Book Reading:** Read *Lailah's Lunchbox* by Reem Faruqi (story of belonging and pride) or *My Grandma and Me* by Mina Javaherbin (family and traditions).
3. **Food Exploration:** Show pita bread and hummus, letting children touch and (with permission) taste, connecting to shared meals.

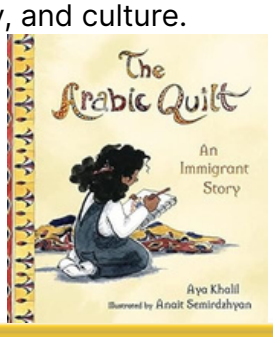
Chestnuts (3–4 years)

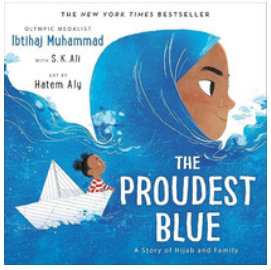
1. **Story Rug:** Read *The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story* by Aya Khalil, then let children decorate their own "quilt squares" with a picture of something important to them.
2. **Music and Movement:** Dance to upbeat Arabic drumming (tabla rhythms) with shakers or hand claps.
3. **Kindness Tree:** Add a leaf each time a child shows kindness, connecting to Arab proverbs about generosity and community.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum:** Display images of Arab American inventors, artists, or leaders (like astronaut Sultan bin Salman or poet Naomi Shihab Nye) with simple captions. Invite children to share what they notice.
2. **Calligraphy Art Play:** Explore the beauty of Arabic letters by tracing pre-printed calligraphy outlines with crayons or markers.
3. **Food & Story Connection:** Read *The Proudest Blue* (Ibtihaj Muhammad, co-written with S.K. Ali) and connect the story to pride, family, and culture.







hello May

- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
    - Jewish American Heritage Month
    - Feelings and Friendship Month
    - Eid al-Adha*
    - Memorial Day
- **Overview**
  - May highlights multiple communities, emphasizes emotional well-being, and honors remembrance.
- **Why Dates Vary**
  - Eid al-Adha follows the Islamic lunar calendar, moving about 10 days earlier each year.
- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - Teachers can rotate weekly highlights. Memorial Day can be marked with gratitude, and Eid al-Adha can be named with generosity activities.
- **Sample Activity for Memorial Day:** Make a gratitude wreath or peace garden.
- **Sample Activity for Eid al-Adha:** Invite children to draw or share something they would give to a friend.



Cinco de Mayo

Kid-Friendly Language

Cinco de Mayo (5th of May) is a holiday that began in Mexico and is now celebrated in many places. It remembers an important victory in history, and today families celebrate with music, food, and pride. Some families celebrate Cinco de Mayo, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play mariachi or traditional Mexican folk music; invite clapping and swaying.
2. **Color Discovery:** Explore red, green, and white scarves (colors of the Mexican flag).
3. **Photo Discovery:** Display joyful photos of Mexican families celebrating with food and music.

Laurels (2–3 years)

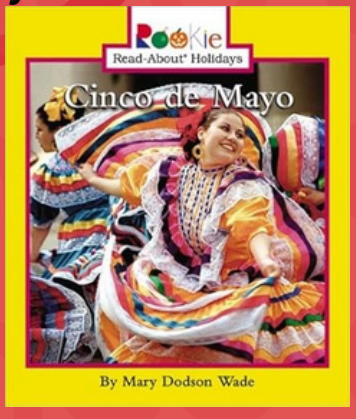
1. **Tissue Paper Flowers:** Children crumple colorful tissue paper into simple flowers.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Round Is a Tortilla* by Roseanne Greenfield Thong, shapes in Latino culture.
3. **Food Exploration:** Taste tortilla chips with guacamole or salsa (mild).

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Flag Collage:** Make group collages with red, green, and white construction paper.
2. **Dance Play:** Teach a simple folk-dance step with clapping to upbeat mariachi rhythms.
3. **Story Rug:** Read *Cinco de Mayo* by Mary Dodson Wade and talk about celebration and pride.

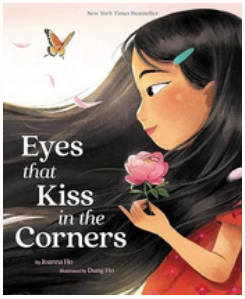
Jr. Pre-K (4+)

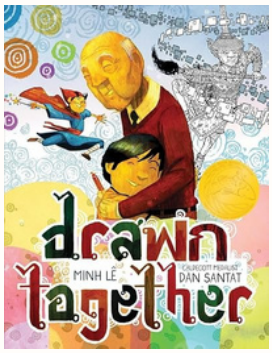
1. **Living Museum:** Share images of Mexican leaders, artists, and inventors.
2. **Cooking Play:** Pretend kitchen play with tortillas, avocados, and pretend fiesta meals.
3. **Celebration Day:** Host a class fiesta with music, dancing, and decorations.





Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month







Kid-friendly Language

May is Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month is in May and is a time to celebrate families with roots in many countries, like China, Korea, India, the Philippines, Japan, Hawai'i, and many more. People celebrate with food, art, music, and traditions. Some families celebrate this month, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play gentle Hawaiian lullabies (E Huli Makou) or Chinese guzheng harp music. Encourage rocking, clapping, or swaying.
2. **Scarf Dancing:** Use scarves in red, gold, and blue while listening to traditional island drumming.
3. **Photo Discovery:** Display joyful images of Asian American and Pacific Islander families sharing meals, dancing, or playing music.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Paper Lantern Play:** Create simple lanterns by folding red paper tubes; children can decorate with stickers or stamps. Hang them around the room.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho, then invite children to look in mirrors and notice what makes their eyes unique.
3. **Food Exploration:** Offer rice crackers or small slices of mango to taste and talk about how foods are different around the world.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Lei Making:** String large paper flowers or straw beads onto yarn to make pretend Hawaiian leis. Children can give them to friends as a sign of love and welcome.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *My First Day by Phùng Nguyên Quang*, then let children draw a picture of a time they felt brave.
3. **Drum Circle:** Use classroom drums (or buckets) to copy simple Tahitian or Japanese taiko drum patterns.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum:** Display images of AANHPI leaders like astronaut Ellison Onizuka, poet Cathy Park Hong, and Olympic athlete Chloe Kim. Encourage children to share what they notice.
2. **Origami Animals:** Fold simple origami dogs or boats with teacher support; children decorate them with crayons.
3. **Story Connection:** Read Drawn Together by Minh Lê and discuss how families can connect even when they speak different languages. Then invite children to draw themselves doing something with a family member.



Kid-Friendly Language

May is Jewish American Heritage Month is in May and is a time to celebrate Jewish families and traditions. Families may light candles, share special meals, tell stories, or sing songs. Some families celebrate Jewish holidays, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play simple klezmer tunes with clarinet or fiddle; encourage rocking or clapping along.
2. **Toy Play:** Stack toy challah loaves (pretend bread) or wooden bagels in play kitchen time.
3. **Photo Discovery:** Display joyful family photos from Shabbat meals or lighting candles.
4. **Cozy Corner:** After reviewing a page from *Jewish Mindfulness for Kids*, practice one simple breath together (smell the flower, blow out the candle).

Laurels (2–3 years)

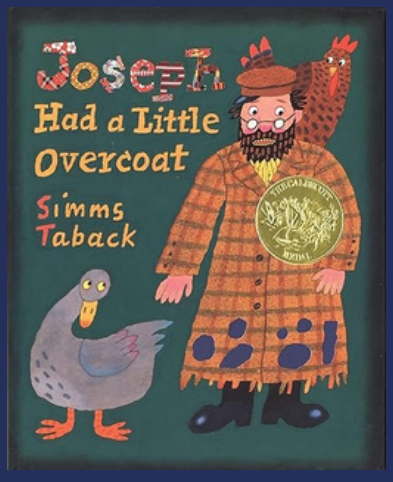
1. **Overcoat Story Play:** Read *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback. After reading, give children pieces of fabric or paper scraps to glue into a class "overcoat collage."
2. **Feelings in the Body:** From *Jewish Mindfulness for Kids*, guide children in putting hands on their belly to notice how it moves when breathing.
3. **Friendship Circle:** Children pass a stuffed animal around the circle, giving it a gentle pat or hug to show care.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Story Rug:** Read *Tía Fortuna's New Home* by Ruth Behar. Invite children to draw something that makes their own home feel special.
2. **Paper Stars:** Create blue and yellow star collages with stickers or stamps.
3. **Music & Dance:** Play klezmer fiddle or clarinet pieces and teach a simple circle dance, holding hands

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Mindful Moment:** From *Jewish Mindfulness for Kids* by Danya Ruttenberg, try mindful listening with a bell or chime. Children raise their hands when they can no longer hear the sound.
2. **Living Museum:** Display images of Jewish American inventors, writers, and leaders like Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Albert Einstein, and Emma Lazarus. Ask: "What do you notice about these people?"
3. **Art Activity:** Create braided playdough to represent challah bread.







Feelings & Friendship Month

(modified for early learners, as May is Mental Health Awareness)

Kid-Friendly Language

May is Feelings & Friendship Month is a time to learn how to care for our hearts and minds. Everyone has feelings, happy, sad, mad, or excited, and it's okay to feel them all. We can practice ways to help ourselves and our friends feel better, like taking deep breaths, asking for a hug, or sharing kind words. Some families celebrate this month, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Feelings Faces:** Use laminated cards with happy, sad, mad, and surprised faces. Children can point to how they feel.
2. **Music & Mood:** Play happy songs (like "If You're Happy and You Know It") and calm songs (lullabies). Clap, sway, or rock together.
3. **Stuffed Animal Comfort:** Provide soft toys for children to hug during story time or quiet play.

Laurels (2–3 years)

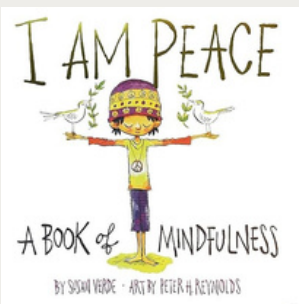
1. **Mirror Play:** Children look in mirrors and make different faces, happy, silly, sleepy. Talk about how faces show feelings.
2. **Read Aloud:** *The Color Monster* by Anna Llenas. After reading, children can place colored paper squares into matching "feelings jars."
3. **Friendship Circle:** Pass a ball and say one nice thing about a friend, or simply say "thank you" when it's your turn.

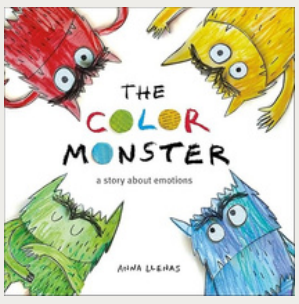
Chestnuts (3–4 years)

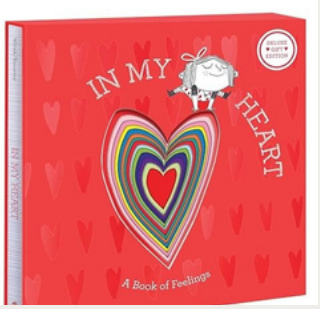
1. **Feelings Chart:** Create a daily "How I Feel Today" board where children move their name or picture to show their mood.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek and talk about when they feel "big" feelings.
3. **Calm Corner:** Create a cozy corner with pillows, books, and sensory bottles where children can rest when they need a break.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Breathing Buddies:** Practice deep breathing by lying down with a stuffed animal on their belly, watching it rise and fall.
2. **Acts of Care Chain:** Each time a child helps a friend, add a paper link to a "Friendship Chain" that grows through the month.
3. **Story Connection:** Read *I Am Peace* by Susan Verde and practice one mindfulness activity, like listening quietly to sounds in the room.







Hello June

1. **Celebrations & Heritage**
    a. This Month
        i. Caribbean American Heritage Month
        ii. Juneteenth
        iii. Pride Month
2. **Overview**
    a. June celebrates freedom, heritage, and identity with joy.
3. **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
    a. Teachers can spread celebrations across the month: highlight Juneteenth explicitly, and uplift Pride and Caribbean heritage through music, stories, and art.

PRIDE MONTH

Kid-Friendly Language

Pride Month is in June and is a time to celebrate love, kindness, and being proud of who you are. Families celebrate Pride in many ways with parades, rainbow flags, music, and time together. Some families celebrate Pride, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Rainbow Scarf Play:** Give children rainbow-colored scarves to wave and toss while playing upbeat music.
2. **Photo Discovery:** Display images of joyful families (two moms, two dads, or other LGBTQ+ families) doing everyday things like cooking, playing, or hugging.
3. **Music Exploration:** Play children's songs about love and friendship, like "The More We Get Together."

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Rainbow Art:** Children finger-paint rainbows on large paper.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Lesléa Newman, a gentle story about family and love.
3. **Friendship Circle:** Pass a ball around and each child says a kind word about a friend (or teachers model with simple prompts like "You are funny," "You are kind").

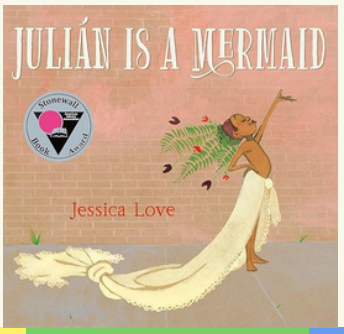
Chestnuts (3–4 years)

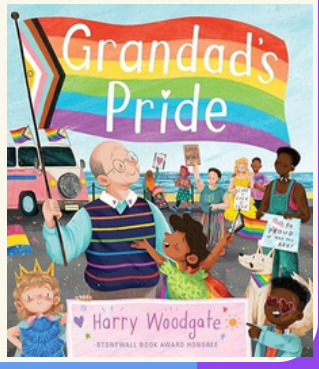
1. **Mini Pride Parade:** Provide toy instruments, rainbow flags, or scarves. Children march in a circle to music.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *Julian Is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love. Invite children to draw themselves in clothes or costumes that make them happy.
3. **Kindness Tree:** Add a leaf to a classroom tree for each act of care or inclusion children show during the month.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum of Families: S**et up a wall or table with pictures of different families — two moms, two dads, single parents, grandparents, adopted families. Next to each picture, add one short sentence (e.g., "This is a family who loves to cook together," "This family loves to play soccer"). Invite children to walk around, look, and share what they notice about how families are the same and different.
2. **Art Collage:** Work together to create a "Love Makes a Family" poster with drawings of different kinds of families.
3. **Story Connection:** Read *Grandad's Pride* by Harry Woodgate. After reading, ask children: "What do you notice about how Grandad and his family show love?" Invite them to draw their own family at a celebration or doing something they love together.







CARIBBEAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

JUNE



Kid-Friendly Language

Caribbean American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate families with roots in places like Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, and many other islands. Families may celebrate with food, music, dancing, and colorful festivals. Some families celebrate this month, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play gentle reggae or calypso tunes. Encourage children to clap, bounce, or sway along.
2. **Color Play:** Explore scarves in bright tropical colors (yellow, green, red, blue).
3. **Photo Discovery:** Display joyful photos of Caribbean families enjoying music, food, or beach gatherings.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Drum Play:** Give children small drums, shakers, or overturned buckets to tap simple rhythms to Caribbean beats.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Goodnight Brazil* by Adam Gamble and Mark Jasper. Invite children to point to the things they see in the pictures (boats, markets, beaches).
3. **Food Exploration:** Offer small tastes of tropical fruit like mango, pineapple, or coconut (with family permission).

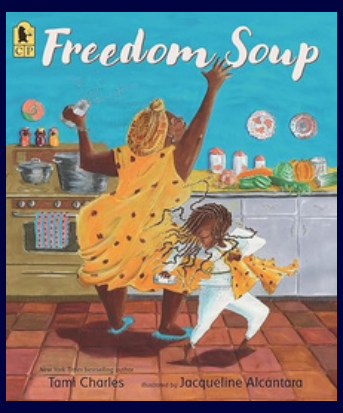
Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Carnival Masks:** Children decorate paper masks with feathers, glitter, and bright colors, inspired by Caribbean Carnival.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *Islandborn* by Junot Díaz. Ask children, "What do you notice about Lola's neighborhood and family?"
3. **Dance Party:** Play upbeat soca or reggae songs and let children dance freely with scarves or ribbons.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum of Islands:** Post a simple map of the Caribbean with pictures of flags from countries like Jamaica, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Invite children to notice the colors and symbols.
2. **Story Connection:** After reading *Freedom Soup* by Tami Charles, invite children to help "cook" with pretend kitchen play, stirring pots, pretending to add vegetables, and talking about family meals.
3. **Art & Music:** Make maracas with plastic eggs and rice, then use them to play along with calypso rhythms.







June Teenth



Kid-Friendly Language

Juneteenth (June 19th) is a holiday that celebrates freedom. A long time ago, not everyone in the United States was free. On June 19, 1865, many people finally learned they were free, and families celebrated with joy. Today, families celebrate Juneteenth with food, music, parades, and time together. Some families celebrate Juneteenth, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play gentle spirituals or freedom songs like “This Little Light of Mine” and invite children to clap or sway.
2. **Color Play:** Explore red, black, and green scarves (colors often connected with Juneteenth and African heritage).
3. **Photo Discovery:** Display joyful images of families celebrating together at Juneteenth parades or picnics.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Flag Collage:** Children glue red, green, and black paper squares to create a group Juneteenth flag collage.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Juneteenth for Mazie* by Floyd Cooper. After reading, ask: “What makes Mazie happy with her family?”
3. **Food Exploration:** Share a small taste of red fruit (like watermelon or strawberries), connecting to Juneteenth traditions of red foods.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Freedom Chains:** Create paper chains in red, green, and black. As each link is added, children say something they enjoy about being free to play, sing, or learn.
2. **Story Rug:** Read Juneteenth for Mazie by Floyd Cooper. Ask: “What makes Mazie proud and excited with her family?”
3. **Music & Dance:** Play upbeat gospel songs like “Oh Freedom” or jazz classics like Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World.” Lead children in a dance circle with clapping and swaying.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum:** Display pictures of Juneteenth parades, picnics, and community celebrations across the U.S. Invite children to notice colors, music, and togetherness.
2. **Story Connection:** Read *Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free* by Alice Faye Duncan. Ask: “How do people in the story celebrate freedom together?” Children can then draw their family at a celebration.
3. **Art & Community:** Make a collaborative mural with handprints in red, green, and black to represent unity and freedom. Play upbeat jazz like Duke Ellington’s It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing) or Ella Fitzgerald’s Cheek to Cheek while children work.

Hello July

- **Celebrations & Heritage**
  - This Month
    - 4th of July Disability
    - Pride Month
- **Overview**
  - July combines national traditions with a focus on inclusion and pride.

- **Navigating Multiple Celebrations**
  - Teachers may briefly mark the 4th of July while spending more time affirming Disability Pride through stories and everyday heroes



Kid-Friendly Language

July is Disability Pride Month is a time to celebrate people with all kinds of abilities. Some people use wheelchairs, hearing aids, glasses, or other tools to help them. Some people learn or play in different ways. All of us are important, and together we make our school community strong.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play songs with shakers, bells, or drums so every child can participate in their own way.
2. **Photo Discovery:** Display joyful pictures of children using wheelchairs, hearing aids, service dogs, or sign language.
3. **Movement Play:** Encourage clapping, tapping, and moving however feels comfortable; all movements are celebrated.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Feelings in Hands:** Teach one simple sign language word (like "friend" or "thank you") and practice together.
2. **Read Aloud:** *We Move Together* by Kelly Fritsch. Talk about how friends can help each other.
3. **Adaptive Art:** Tape paintbrushes or crayons to different objects (blocks, spoons) so children can experiment with many ways of creating.

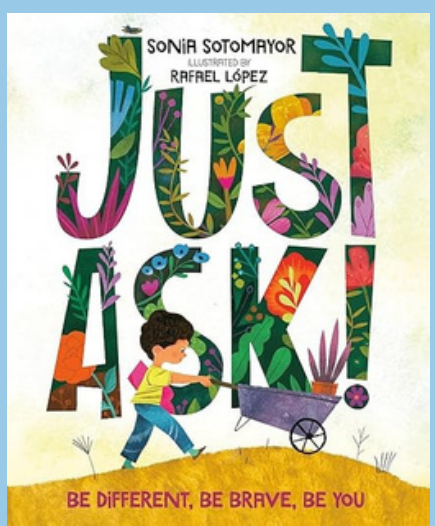
Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Accessibility Hunt:** Walk around school and look for ramps, elevators, wide doors, or other tools that help people move. Celebrate each discovery.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *All the Way to the Top* by Annette Bay Pimentel (Jennifer Keelan's story of the Capitol Crawl). Ask: "What do you notice about Jennifer's bravery?"
3. **Inclusion Game:** Play "Follow the Leader" but change the leader's movement each round hopping, crawling, spinning, clapping showing that all kinds of movement are important.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum of Leaders:** Display photos of disability rights leaders like Judy Heumann or Ed Roberts, with simple captions: "She helped schools be fair," "He worked to make buses accessible." Invite children to share what they notice.
2. **Story Connection:** Read *Just Ask!* by Sonia Sotomayor. Invite children to share one thing that makes them unique.
3. **Kindness Web:** Sit in a circle with yarn. Each child says one way they can include others, then passes the yarn. By the end, the group has made a "web of kindness."







4TH OF JULY
Independence Day

Kid-Friendly Language

The 4th of July is a holiday when many families in the United States celebrate independence, which means having the freedom to make choices. Families often celebrate with parades, fireworks, and picnics. Some families celebrate the 4th of July, some celebrate other holidays, and some do not celebrate any, and all of that is special. At school, we learn about many celebrations to understand and appreciate what makes each of us unique.

Activities by Group

Willows (18–24 months)

1. **Music Exploration:** Play marching band music like Stars and Stripes Forever or jazz classics like Louis Armstrong's What a Wonderful World. Encourage clapping and gentle marching in place.
2. **Parade Blocks:** Use red, white, and blue blocks to build "parade floats" or towers.
3. **Photo Discovery:** Display joyful images of families at parades, picnics, and fireworks.

Laurels (2–3 years)

1. **Flag Collage:** Glue red, white, and blue tissue paper squares to make a group flag.
2. **Read Aloud:** *Blue Sky White Stars* by Sarvinder Naberhaus invite children to point to colors and shapes they see.
3. **Drum Circle Parade:** Give children small drums or buckets and march in a line while playing simple rhythms together.

Chestnuts (3–4 years)

1. **Fireworks Art:** Dip sponges or straws in bright paint to stamp "firework bursts" on dark paper.
2. **Story Rug:** Read *Apple Pie 4th of July* by Janet S. Wong. Ask: "What food do you eat on special days?"
3. **Picnic Pretend Play:** Set up a play picnic blanket with toy food and let children "host" a holiday picnic for friends.

Jr. Pre-K (4+)

1. **Living Museum:** Display photos of different American families celebrating the 4th of July in parades, parks, or backyards. Invite children to notice similarities and differences.
2. **Community Mural:** Work together to create a mural of fireworks, flags, and favorite summer activities.
3. **Story Connection:** Read *We Came to America* by Faith Ringgold. Invite children to share what makes their own family special.



