

Interreligious Understanding Guidebook

Changing Seasons, Changing World

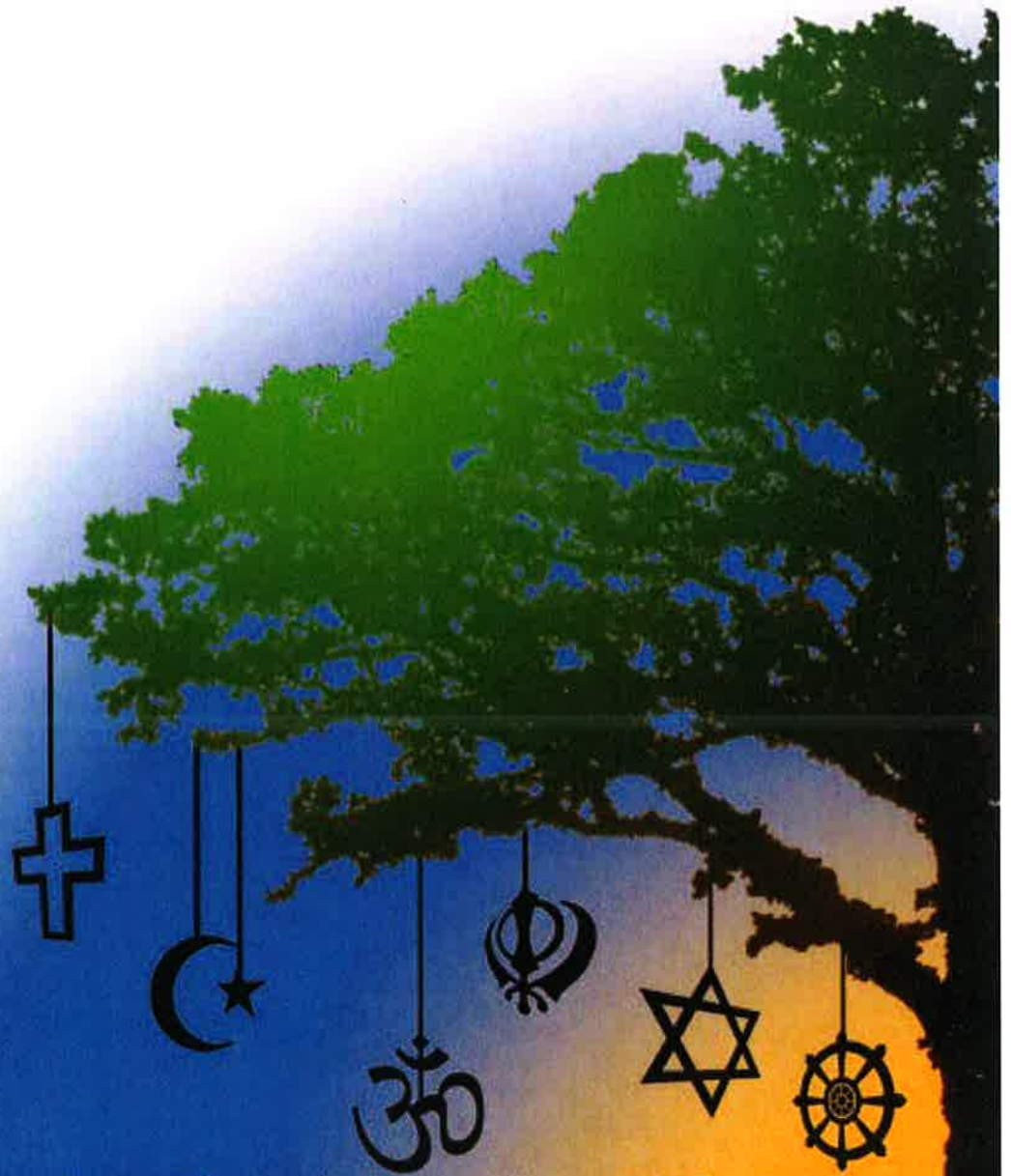


Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding	
Letter to the Educator	
Acknowledgements	
Tanenbaum Center Educational Commitments	
Note on the Guidebook	
UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION – SETTING THE FOUNDATIONS	23
Lesson 1: Respecting Each Other	
Lesson 2: Tell Me More!	
Lesson 3: What Makes a Family	
UNIT 2 AUTUMN – THANKFULNESS AT HARVEST TIME	37
Lesson 1: Seasons of the Autumn Equinox	
Lesson 2: Researching Biomes and Ecosystems	
Lesson 3: Animal Habitats	
Lesson 4: The Talking Stick and the Tree of Gratefulness	
Lesson 5: Fall Interreligious Festivity Feast	
UNIT 3 WINTER – CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORLD	71
Lesson 1: The Winter Solstice	
Lesson 2: Animals in Chinese Culture: The Chinese New Year	
Lesson 3: Animals in Religious Stories	
Lessons 4 & 5: Holiday Games, Poetry and Music	

UNIT 4	SPRING- FESTIVALS OF REBIRTH	108
Lesson 1:	Seasons and the Spring Equinox	
Lessons 2 & 3:	What are the Effects of the Changing Environment & How Can We Help?	
Lessons 4 & 5:	Endangered Animals	
Lesson 6:	An “Eggxcellent” Adventure	
Lesson 7:	Iranian Festival	
Lesson 8:	Passover & Holi	
UNIT 5	SUMMER– SPOTLIGHT ON ME!	140
Lesson 1:	Seasons and the Summer Solstice	
Lesson 2:	Why Should We Help?	
Lesson 3:	What You Can Do to Help: Recycling	
Lesson 4:	Vegetarianism in Religion	
Lesson 5:	Getting to Know You	
Conclusion		193
Annotated Bibliography of Recommended Books		

UNIT 3: WINTER CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORLD

LESSON 1: The Winter Solstice

Overview: Lesson introduces the winter season through *The Winter Solstice* books. By reading the book as a class, children will learn about the different ways the winter is and was celebrated around the world by people of different cultures and religions. Then, students will engage in an activity where they explore the different ways winter is experienced.

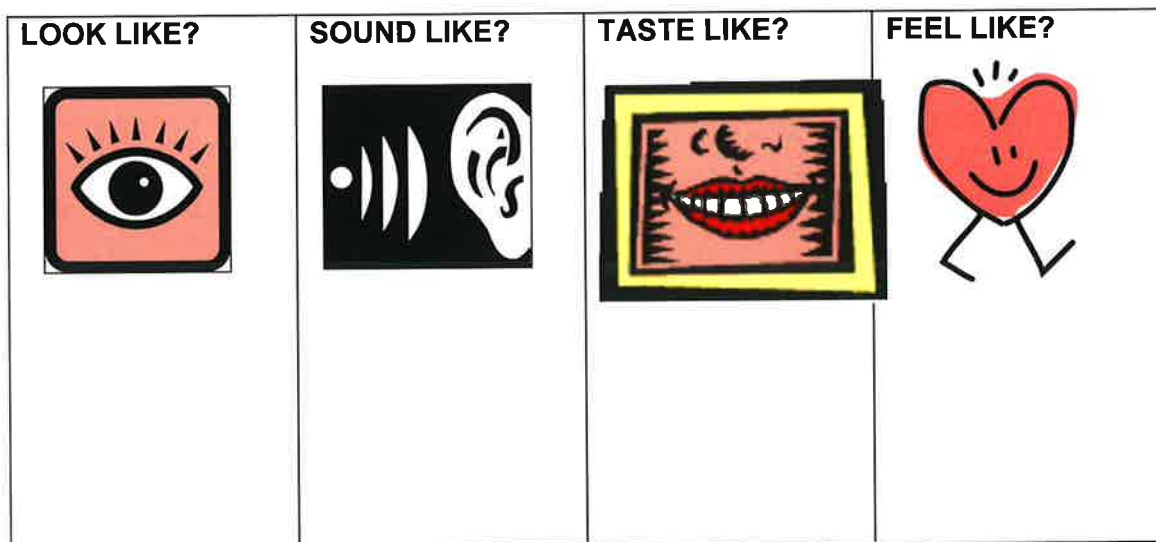
Objective: Expose students to different types of celebrations of the winter season.

Concepts: Teach All Children, Promote Social Justice, Teach and Learning about Cultures, Winter, Seasons, Multicultural Celebrations

Skills: Literacy, Art, Geography, Social Studies,

Materials: *The Winter Solstice* by Ellen Jackson; Paper, pencils, coloring pencils/markers/crayons

Preparation: Write/draw the following diagram on the board to allude to for the day's activity.



Other Recommended Books/ Materials: *Children Just Like Me (Series): Celebrations!* By Barnabas and Anabel Kindersley; *Festivals Together* by Sue Fitzjohn, Minda Weston, Judy Large; *Celebrating the Great Mother: A Handbook of Earth-Honoring Activities for Parents and Children* by Cait Johnson and Maura D. Shaw.

PROCEDURE:

Step One: Engage a discussion where children talk about their knowledge of the winter season, similar to the autumn discussion. Discussion questions may include:

- *What was the last season we covered?*
- *What is this new season we are beginning?*
- *What are the differences between the two?*
- *How do you know?*

After the discussion, explain that these are some of the things they will learn and explore throughout the unit.

Step Two: People all over the world celebrate the seasons for different reasons. Explain that they will learn about some of these as you read the book *The Winter Solstice*. Read the book to the class/as a class. Ask the children to pay particular attention to some of the places and ways people celebrate the winter.

Step Three: Engage in a small discussion posing the following questions:

- *Who were some of the people that celebrated the winter solstice?*
- *What were some of the celebrations that they had?*
- *Have you ever celebrated any of these?*
- *What are ways you and your family have celebrated the winter?*
- *How does nature play a part in the celebrations?*

Through the discussion emphasize 1. The role of nature in the variety of celebrations the book talks about and 2. The variety of places people come from in the celebrations explored.

Step Four: Point to the diagram on the board. Have a short brainstorm where children offer up responses to the questions of “What does winter look/smell/taste/feel like?” Write answers on the board in their appropriate category.

Step Five: Explain that everyone is going to do an activity with the elements of winter that they just describe and demonstrate the activity. For the following activity, the children will use paper and coloring pencils/markers/crayons. They are to write their names down on the piece of paper, and use each letter of their name to describe one attribute of winter. The teacher can write his/her name on the board and demonstrate. i.e.:

J ingling bells
S n O w
H ot cocoa
N ature

Encourage the children to use as many of the different categories (look, taste, feel, smell) in their descriptions of winter. Have them decorate the page.

Step Six: Distribute paper and art materials to complete activity.

Step Seven: At the end of the lesson, distribute “Ancestor Celebrations” sheet. Ask students to take it home, fill it out and bring it back for the next lesson. Explain that the goal of the exercise is to see where their ancestors came from, what winter celebrations took place there and the role of nature in those celebrations.

Follow up/Extension/Connection

Students can share their name winter description drawings and show what they chose for each letter and how many descriptions of winter they were able to include in their name.

Unit 3 Lesson 2

Name:
Date:

Ancestor Celebrations

Ask an adult at home the following questions. Write down and consider their answers:

Where were you born? (City/Country)

What celebrations took place in the winter time there? On what date?

How was nature a part of these celebrations?

Where were your parents born?

Where were their parents born?

Do you know of any celebrations that they took part in during the winter time?

How was nature a part of these celebrations?

