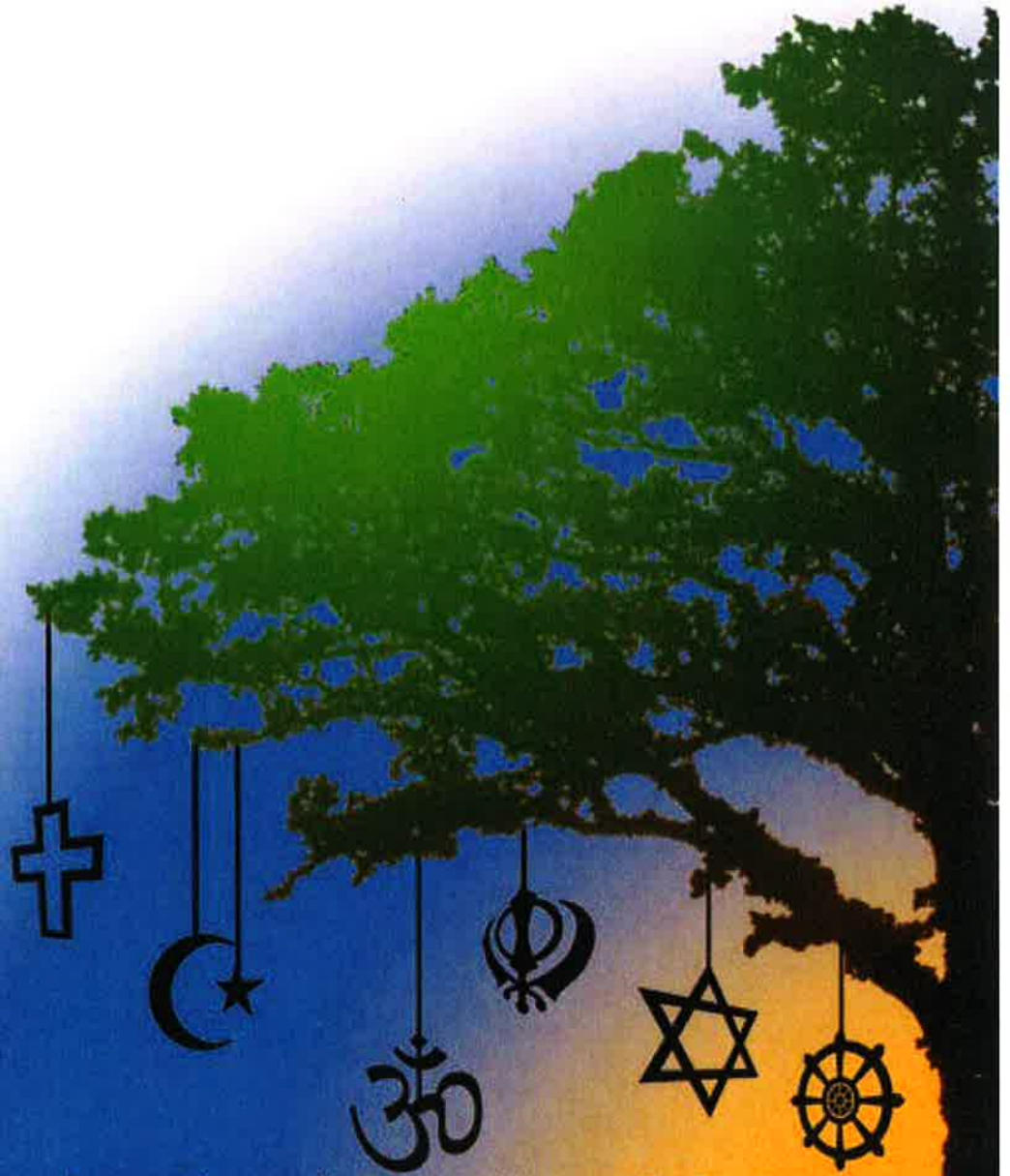


Interreligious Understanding Guidebook

Changing Seasons, Changing World



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UNIT 4: SPRING – FESTIVALS OF REBIRTH

LESSON 7: Iranian New Year Feast

Overview: Based on “No Ruz,” the first day of the Iranian New Year which is held on the first day of the Spring Equinox, students will participate in a feast and a cleaning project for the classroom.

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

Concepts: Teach All Children, Teach and Learning About Cultures, Spring, Seasons, Celebrations

Skills: Geography, Social Studies, Food Preparation, Nutrition

Materials: cleaning materials for the classroom, fresh flowers, seven foods beginning with the letter “s”, cookies or sweets to be brought home to parents/care-givers, materials to make small cards for parents/care-givers

Preparation: Bring in seven food items beginning with the letter ‘S.’ Also make sure you have proper cleaning and organization supplies for the classroom ‘spring’ cleaning. (Examples of foods might include: salad, sandwiches, sweet potatoes, strawberries, spinach, soup.)

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 (www.religioustolerance.org).

PROCEDURE:

Step One: Remind students of the story you read in the *The Spring Equinox* book about “No Ruz”, the Iranian New Year which is held on the first day of the spring equinox. (You may want to reread this particular vignette from the book). Explain to students that you are going to celebrate No Ruz in your classroom. Ask students to find Iran on the map, so they are aware of where it is located prior to beginning the lesson.

Step Two: Because “No Ruz” is a time of hope and renewal, it is important to clean and repair what has become broken over the winter. Students will brainstorm a list of things on the board that need to be repaired in the classroom. The teacher will keep track of what can be fixed by the students, and what needs to be fixed by school maintenance staff. Teacher will then brainstorm with the students (on the board) what cleaning and chores need to be completed in the

classroom. Students will divide up the different tasks and begin cleaning their classroom in preparation for the “No Ruz” celebration.

Step Three: After students have completed the spring cleaning, explain that they will partake in the celebration. Typically in Iran, “No Ruz” would be celebrated by eating seven items that begin with the letter “s” in the Persian language. These items can be placed on a communal table. Ask students to name what each item is, and remind them that they represent happiness and good fortune.

Remember to place the fresh flowers on the table, and if possible, after the feast, bring students outside to commemorate the spring equinox.

Step Four: After students have celebrated “No Ruz” as a classroom community, explain that they will be making “No Ruz” presents for older members of their families. They can use whatever sweets the teacher has brought in. They should design small cards to wish their parents/care-givers “Happy No Ruz”.

Step Five: Rejoin as a class and discuss how they liked celebrating “No Ruz” and what messages of hope and renewal they put on their cards for the families.