

Winter Holidays: Celebrating Diversity With Clifford

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Woof! Woof! The focus of this lesson is to teach the value of respect and appreciation of diversity by introducing children to new holiday celebrations, customs, and traditions through reading, language, and art.

Clifford's Big Idea: Have Respect

When children become aware that our world is made of many unique cultures and traditions, they grow in accepting that diversity is a good thing and something worth celebrating!

The following activities nurture essential:

- language and literacy skills
- critical thinking and problem solving skills
- multicultural awareness
- social and emotional skills
- art appreciation skills

Directions

Day 1: Christmas Around the World!

Step 1: Explain to children that people around the world celebrate the Christmas season in many different ways and that it's important to respect the cultural traditions of others.

Step 2: Introduce cultural celebration names: Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa.

Step 3: Ask students what they already know about each celebration. Record their answers on the whiteboard or chart paper.

Step 4: Read these books aloud to the class to help bring meaning to each celebration's traditional customs:

Christmas

- [Clifford's Christmas](#) by Norman Bridwell
- [The First Night](#) by B.G. Hennessy

Hanukkah

- [It's Hanukkah!](#) by Jeanne Modesitt
- [What is Hanukkah?](#) by Harriet Ziefert
- [The Eight Nights of Hanukkah](#) by Judy Nayer

Kwanzaa

Step 5: After reading, encourage children to express something new that they learned about each celebration. Add these to the whiteboard or chart paper lists.

Day 2: Cultural Christmas Wrap!

Step 1: Explain to students that they will be celebrating diversity by making holiday wrapping paper representing Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa.

Teaching Tip: Create a classroom environment that encourages children to explore diversity! By setting up travel centers, learning simple words or greetings from foreign languages, studying children around the world, and showcasing posters and art objects with cultural significance, your students can discover the richness of diverse cultures and better understand their own uniqueness in the world.

Step 2: Organize areas for dipping sponges in shallow pans of paint. Provide children with cut out shapes of symbols representing each celebration:

- **Christmas:** trees, stockings, North Star, Santa Clause, candy cane, reindeer, etc.
- **Hanukkah:** Menorah (candle holder), Star of David, dreidel (top), etc.
- **Kwanzaa:** Muhindi (ear of corn), Mkeka (straw mat), Kinara (candle holder), etc.

Step 3: Have students dip the sponges in paint and press the sponges onto the backs of left-over rolls or pieces of wrapping paper (the backs are usually white), grocery sacks, large squares of fabric, or white paper.

Step 4: Set the stampings aside to dry.

Optional: Wrap gifts made in the classroom and encourage children to share what they have learned about each culture with family and friends during the holiday season.

Lesson Extensions

Giving never goes out of season!

- Encourage children to bring in canned goods to donate to the local food bank.
- Invite an older class to read holiday books to your students.
- Study maps skills by tracking Santa's anticipated journey around the world...fun!

Clifford's Library

These books support Clifford's Big Ideas and reinforce valuable early literacy skills:

Also check out the [Clifford the Big Red Dog Book List](#).

- Part of Collection:

[Christmas Is Coming, Clifford the Big Red Dog](#)

- Subjects:

Language Arts, Discovery and Learning, African and African American, Family Activities, Arts and Crafts, Early Social Skills, Creativity and Imagination, Communication and Language Development, Judaism, Winter, Jewish Experience, Motor Skills, Individuality, Kindness and Compassion, Respect, Tolerance and Acceptance, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Winter Themes, Understanding Self and Others

- Skills:

Development of Reading Comprehension, Social Studies, Listening Comprehension