

Holiday Poetry and Music

Children will create poetry about holidays they celebrate in November and December and explore the similarities and differences both within and between traditions. The lesson culminates with the children doing a poetry reading to the accompaniment of hand-crafted musical instruments.

Grades: 2- 6

Skills: Comparative Analysis, Music, Poetry, Oral Communication

Materials:

Chart Paper, Pencils/Pens

Markers/Crayons/Colored Pencils

Poetry Templates

Directions for Making Instruments

Construction Paper

Scissors

Glue

Masking Tape

Contact Paper (optional)

Decorative Materials

For Instruments

Shakers: Cardboard tube, Different types of dried beans, lentils, rice, Cardboard

Drums: Small round container (metal or cardboard), Rubber balloons, Rubber bands, Thin sticks (for drumsticks)

Recommended Resources: Children Just Like Me (Series): Celebrations! By Barnabas and Anabel Kindersley; Festivals Together by Sue Fitzjohn, Minda Weston, Judy Large

Preparation:

- The teacher should make his/her own musical instruments to use in the activity

PROCEDURE:

Step One: Ask students to think about one holiday that falls between November and December that they celebrate. If there are no holidays that the students celebrate during this time, they can pick another one that they celebrate at another time of the year. If students do not celebrate any

holidays, they can pick a favorite family tradition (for example, a family dinner etc.) to write about.

Step Two: Explain that students will write a poem about this holiday and then read it out loud to the accompaniment of hand-made instruments. Help students write their poems about the holidays they have chosen. If desired, students can use the templates included at the end of the lesson to structure their poem.

Encourage the children to be as specific and descriptive as possible in their writing.

Step Three: Once all of the students have had a chance to write their poems, explain that students will read them out loud, to the accompaniment of handmade musical instruments. Show students the musical instruments that you have made in advance.

Have the class come together in a circle. Ask students to pick one instrument that they like, and have a volunteer act as the accompanying musician. Each student can take a turn to read their poem out loud while the volunteer softly plays the instrument that was chosen in the background. If desired, you can give the students a few minutes to practice in pairs.

Step Four: After each student shares their poem, ask the other students:
What did you find most interesting about _____ 's poem and why?
What is important to _____ about his/her holiday?
What is important to you about your holiday?
How are these similar?
How are they different?

Emphasize that not everybody who is of the same religion or culture celebrates the same holiday in the exact same way. For instance, there are variations in how different sects of the same religion or different regions in the same country celebrate the same holiday. Families may have unique traditions of their own or may not observe a particular holiday at all.

Step Five: After all of the students have shared their poems with the class, help students make their own musical instruments. Set up two tables, each with materials for making a different kind of musical instrument.

Split the class up into small groups to make the musical instruments. Make sure there are appropriate materials at each table, including directions for making the instruments. Be careful of safety concerns when younger students work with scissors, balloons etc.

Poetry Templates

Acrostic Poem: A modified example of an acrostic poem that can easily be set to music is given below:

Eid
E is for Everybody
I is for Invitations to visit
D is for Dressing up

Five Senses Poem: A five senses poem captures all the sensations involved with a celebration, as shown below:

Pongal
Pongal is
Green and Purple Sugarcane
Pungent, Smoky Fires
Banging, Clattering, "Pongal!"
Sweet, Ripe, Crunchy
Special, Family, Fun
To me.

The template for this poem is below:

Name of the Holiday
_____ is
3 words that have to do with how it looks
3 words that have to do with how it smells
3 words that have to do with how it sounds
3 words that have to do with how it tastes
3 words that have to do with how it feels
to me.

Make your own Shaker!



Materials:

Cardboard tube

Cardboard

Scissors

Masking tape, Contact paper (optional)

Different types of dried beans, lentils, rice etc.

Markers

Directions:

Cut two pieces of cardboard into circles the size of the ends of the cardboard tube. Fix one of the circles on one side of the tube and tape it tightly shut. Save the second cardboard circle to close the other end later.

Through the open end, fill the tube partially with beans, lentils or rice. Each will produce a different sound.

Tape the open end of the tube with the second cardboard circle and seal it with more tape.

Decorate the tube using markers. If the masking tape is difficult to decorate, try covering it with contact paper.

Hold your brand-new instrument and shake it up and down or turn it upside down slowly. Listen to its beautiful sounds!

Make your own Drum!



Materials:

Small round container (can be metal or cardboard)

Scissors

Rubber balloon

Strong rubber band

A thin stick

Masking tape, Contact Paper (optional)

Markers

Directions:

Remove the lid of the container and clean it off. A small container works best for this activity.

Cut out the narrow end of the balloon and stretch the balloon over the opening of the container. Secure it tightly with a rubber band and tape.

Decorate the drum using markers. If the drum is difficult to decorate, try covering it with contact paper.

Use the stick to beat on the rubber surface of the drum. Listen to its beautiful sounds!