

"Kwanzaa Celebration"

Celebrating Family, Community & Culture

LESSON INTENTION

Is to celebrate our origins and culture.

History:

By Laura Walker

Kwanzaa was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966. It is celebrated through singing, speaking, dancing and reciting traditional. Kwanzaa is built on seven principles that are commonly known as "Nguzo Saba". These principles are:

1. umoja - unity
2. kujichagulia - self-determination
3. ujima - collective work and responsibility
4. ujamaa - cooperative economics
5. nia - purpose
6. kuumba - creativity
7. imani - faith

Kwanzaa was developed from elements of the African heritage. The African celebration of Kwanzaa was a ceremony of appreciation for the "first fruits of harvest". The four elements that made up the original African meaning of Kwanzaa were unity, awareness of ancestry and heritage, recommitment to traditional values, and reverence for creator and the creation.

The modern celebration of Kwanzaa lasts seven days, from December 26 to January 1. Each of the seven days of the celebration is dedicated to one of the seven principles. Each day one candle is lit that represents each principle.

Day 1 - middle candle - Black - Umoja - Unity
Day 2 - innermost red candle - Kujichagulia - Self-determination
Day 3 - innermost green candle - Ujima - Collective Work and Responsibility
Day 4 - middle red candle - Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics
Day 5 - middle green candle - Nia - Purpose
Day 6 - outermost red candle - Kuumba - Creativity
Day 7 - outermost green candle - Imani - Faith

There are many symbols of Kwanzaa. The Kwanzaa candelabra is called a kinara. The straw mat that the kinara is placed on is a mkeka. Ears of corn are also placed on the mat, one to represent

each child in the household. They are called the vibunzi (or muhindi). A fruit basket is placed on the mkeka, and is called the mazao. The unity cup is also placed on the mkeka, and is called the kikombe cha umoja. The seven candles that are placed in the kinara are called the Mishumaa Saba. Finally, all the gifts are called the zawadi and are traditionally given on Imani - the last day of Kwanzaa.

On the evening of Kuumba (December 31) there is a feast called Karamu. This is the main focus of Kwanzaa where cultural expression is encouraged. This is practiced to bring all participants closer to their African roots. The program for the Karamu generally involves a welcome, a remembrance of ancestry, a reassessment of situations, a recommitment to values, a rejoicing, a farewell statement, and a call for greater unity.

The last day of Kwanzaa, or "Imani", focuses on honoring traditions and reaffirming self worth through gift giving. Gifts are often made rather than bought because Kwanzaa emphasizes creativity or "kuumba" - one of the seven principles.

The point of Kwanzaa is not one of gift giving or religious celebration, but a commemoration of heritage and togetherness. Family and friends should find Kwanzaa to be a time of sharing and pulling together. The guiding principles teach values we tend to lose in a more modern and solitary society. Since the original ideas were to bring forth the harvest, the guiding principles bring people together to remind us how important we are to each other.

The Celebration

Share the Story

"Seven Candles for Kwanzaa" By Andrea Davis Pinkney

Read the story to the children and pause after each page that describes a candle being lit to invite one of the children to light a candle on our Kinara.

As each candle is lit invite the candle lighter to say, **"I light this Kwanzaa candle for ____ (The principle) ____.... _____ (the Swahili word) _____"**. Then invite the rest of the children to repeat the Swahili word together.

The black center candle is lit first; then the red one closest to it; then the green one closest to the center. Candle lighting then proceeds, alternating red and green, lighting from the inside candles out.

Closing Thought

Like the Twelve Powers of God that we study in Unity, these seven principles can be seen as different qualities of God expressing through the people of African heritage. As these qualities are expressed, the light of God shines brightly within each person.

Creative Expression

Kwanzaa Blessings

Materials: Plenty of Black, Red & Green foam sheets; red & green glitter glue; markers; pens; and glue

Using the details below – review what each of the principles means to our everyday life. Then invite the children to use the foam sheets and colors of Kwanzaa to create pictures of how we can use the Kwanzaa principles to create a better world. One idea might be to choose one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa and create a written blessing or picture of how they see that principle expressing in the people or in the world; or they could choose a principle and create a picture of how they would like to see in happening in our world.

1 - Umoja – Unity

- ♥ What do we have in common?
- ♥ How are we all one?

2 - Kujichagulia - Self-determination

- ♥ How do we define ourselves?
- ♥ What are beliefs that are important to us?

3 - Ujima - Collective Work and Responsibility

- ♥ What can we do together to make the world better?
- ♥ What are we responsible for in our lives? (*Spiritual Principles?*)

4 - Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics

- ♥ Create a service project that we can all save money for that will benefit others.
- ♥ What can we make that will serve others?

5 - Nia – Purpose

- ♥ What is your purpose at this point in your life?
- ♥ What is it about you that makes you glad to be who you are? How can you use that in service?

6 - Kuumba – Creativity

- ♥ Do something creative – make up a dance, a song or a poem...

7 - Imani – Faith

- ♥ What do you have faith in?
- ♥ Do you believe that the world is a good place?
- ♥ What do you believe in?

Food

Sue's Lemon Puddingcakepie

"Kwanzaa, an African-American Celebration of Culture and Cooking" - Eric V. Copage

You know those lemon sponge puddings, the kind that develop a delicious cake layer on top after baking? Mavis Young uses the pudding as a zesty filling for her famous pie, and what a match made in dessert heaven!

Pie Dough

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup vegetable shortening, chilled, cut in small pieces
1/3 cup ice water (about)

Or buy a ready pie crust

Filling

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature

1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs, separated, room temperature
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
grated zest of 2 large lemons
4 1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups milk

To make the dough: In a large bowl, whisk together the flour and salt. Using a pastry blender or two knives, cut in the shortening until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Tossing the flour mixture with a fork, sprinkle in the ice water, mixing just until the dough is moist enough to hold together when pinched between your thumb and forefinger. (You may have to add more ice water). Gather the dough up to form a thick flat disk, and wrap it in waxed paper. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight. Position a rack in the lower third of the oven, and preheat to 425 degrees.

To make filling: In a medium bowl, using a hand-held electric mixer set at high speed, beat the butter until creamy, about 1 minute. Add the sugar and continue beating until the mixture is crumbly and pale yellow, about 2 minutes. Beat in the egg yolks, lemon juice and zest, flour and salt. On low speed, beat in the milk.

In a grease-free medium bowl, using a hand-held electric mixer (with clean beaters) set at low speed, beat the egg whites until foamy. Increase the speed to high and beat just until the whites form stiff peaks. Stir about one fourth of the beaten whites into the lemon mixture, then fold in the remaining whites.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to form a 14-inch circle about 1/8 inch thick. Transfer it to a 10-inch round pie plate. Fold over 1-inch of the excess dough and flute the edges decoratively. Pour in the filling, and place the pie plate on a baking sheet.

Bake for 10 minutes at 425 degrees. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees and continue baking until the top of the pie is deep golden brown and springs back when pressed in the center, about 35 to 40 minutes. Cool the puddingcakepie completely on a wire cake rack before serving. Serves 8.