

Let's Celebrate!



LEVEL: Grades PreK-6

SUBJECTS: Social Studies, Mathematics, Language Arts

SKILLS: Collaborating, collecting data, communicating, comparing similarities and differences, computing, creating and interpreting graphs, describing, developing cultural awareness, developing self-understanding, discussing, interviewing, recording, thinking creatively, valuing

MATERIALS

Drawing paper and supplies; pictures or posters of people celebrating in various ways (include Thanksgiving, Kwanzaa, American Indian Corn Dances, and other harvest festivals, if possible); special celebration items brought in by students and you (such as decorations, photographs, symbols, flags, greeting cards, music tapes); two or three ears of dried corn, and pictures of celebrations that use corn (such as American Indian Corn Dances - Hopi piki; Thanksgiving - cornbread stuffing; Kwanzaa - cornbread; Cinco de Mayo - corn tortillas); large drawing paper and writing materials; transparency or photocopies of the attached **Favorite Celebrations!** sheet. **Optional:** popcorn for the class for Session Three.

VOCABULARY

celebrations, festival, harvest, maize

RELATED LESSON

Gala Fiesta Jamboree

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

People have always needed and enjoyed times for getting together to have fun. Through the centuries they created celebrations of all kinds. Even today, new celebrations are created almost every year. Some celebrations honor special events in the lives of friends or family, such as birthdays, graduations, weddings, and anniversaries. Many families cel-

brate days important in their religions, such as Christmas and Hanukkah. Other celebrations honor great leaders or historical events such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, and more. (See **World Calendar of Events and Holidays**, located in the Appendixes, for a partial list of celebrations.)



Part of what makes celebrations so fascinating is that celebrations are influenced by the cultures from which they originate. As people moved to the United States, they brought many of their celebration customs with them. Many of these celebrations enrich our culture today.

In Session One and Session Two, you and your students will discover that even though the names and ways of doing things may be different, celebrations often have many things in common, such as:

- a reason, focus or theme;
- music and dancing;
- a special date or time of year;
- activities to bring people together to have fun such as games, contests, parades, displays, entertainment, parties, children's events;
- special foods;
- clothing, costumes, decorations; and
- cultural traditions (religious observances).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Students explore in their own lives and in the lives of others the role of celebrations and important foods involved, with a focus on corn.

OBJECTIVES

The student will:

- tell why people have celebrations;
- gather and analyze information about favorite celebrations;
- make and interpret a picture graph or bar graph displaying information gathered;
- describe three or four things people do to celebrate;
- identify at least two harvest celebrations and explain why they are celebrated;
- tell how corn is an important food in at least two celebrations; and
- recognize how beliefs and values affect how cultures celebrate differently.

ESTIMATED TEACHING TIME

Session One: 30 to 45 minutes.

Session Two: 30 minutes.

Session Three: 45 to 60 minutes.

Food is a big part of many celebrations. Some celebrations are all about food. That's not surprising. After all, food means survival. Many communities and countries hold celebrations and festivals that honor and give thanks for foods. Some of these festivals have been happening for thousands of years. Many take place in the fall when the harvest is in. People feel thankful for a good harvest that gives them food now and for the long, cold winter months ahead. You have probably heard of food festivals that honor foods grown or processed (changed into a form we can use) in various communities. There are celebrations that use symbols such as pumpkins, strawberries, rutabagas, apples, pea soup, watermelons, garlic, artichokes, peppers, sweet corn, pickles, saguaro (sa-WAHR-o), cherries, sauerkraut, spinach, cantaloupes, dairy products, and others. Which ones happen in your area?

Several harvest celebrations in the United States also can be festive cultural events. Thanksgiving, American Indian Corn Dances, and Kwanzaa are examples. Each of these celebrations has unique features, but they all have one thing in common: corn as an important part of the festivities. Corn is a grain that is tens of thousands of years old. Eighty-thousand-year-old corn pollen grains were found in rocks about 200 feet below present day Mexico City. Most archaeo-botanists agree that corn migrated from Mesoamerica into South and North America. The word "corn" is used generically for grain in many other countries and is also the word used for the most important grain a country grows. In many countries of the world, "corn" is wheat, oats, barley, or rye. In Session Three of this lesson, you and your students will explore the wonderful role of corn in American celebrations.

The background that follows focuses on corn as a harvest and celebration food because of its importance in history and culture. The Resources lists many appealing and helpful resources to share with students, but if you are not able to collect them, the information below will help you explore these celebrations. And it's sure to spark your thinking about the important role certain foods play in celebrations throughout the world.



American Indian Corn Dances

Although many American Indians were hunters, some tribes' survival depended even more on their skills as farmers. They cultivated corn, beans and squash. But corn - or "maize" as it is known in other countries - was by far the most important crop and played an important part in their lives. (The Pilgrims called maize "Indian corn" and Americans have called it corn ever since. Today corn is still correctly called maize.) They ate many wonderful foods prepared from corn. (Recipes for some of these are included with this lesson for your group to try.) They used other parts of the corn plant as well to make useful and necessary things. From the dried fibers or husks they made clothing, mats and baskets for storing nuts and berries. They decorated masks with corn silk. They used corn cobs and husks for making dolls. Corn was sacred to American Indians and they had a special reverence for it. They believed that any plant that was so useful, dependable and able to grow in a few months must be under the care of something celestial. The importance of corn was clear to Columbus and other early European explorers. They took this plant back to Europe, and its cultivation spread from there to Africa, India and China. Most American Indians had three major corn ceremonies: a planting ceremony, a green corn ceremony, and a harvest ceremony. Corn was so important to their survival that some of their most important religious festivals celebrated corn.

Here is the story of the Green Corn Festival of the Cherokee people. Newly ripened corn is known as green corn. Traditionally, the great celebration was held just when the first ears of corn turned sweet and yellow. The Green Corn Festival was a feast of thanksgiving, and it marked the beginning of the new year. Modern Cherokees call this festival Itse Selu (it-say shay-LOO). Before leaving their houses in late afternoon for the feast and celebration, the Cherokee people swept the houses clean and put out all the old fires from the past year. Putting out all the old hearth fires and setting new fires was one of the most important acts in the Green Corn Festival. The people gathered outside the council house. Inside, the priest created a new, pure fire by rubbing two sticks together. This new fire was kept burning in the temple of the people for the rest of the new year. Families took coals from the new fire to start their own new fires at home. The priest said a prayer to the Great Creator in thanks for a year of good harvest and hunting. He prayed for food again in the new year, and all quarrels were forgiven so the new year would start with a happy spirit. Then the feast began. Each family brought some of their freshly picked corn to the feast.

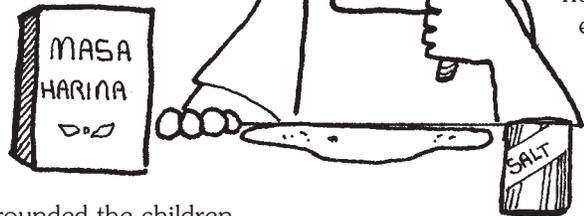
After they ate, sundown was the time for dances. The dancers performed until sunrise. Storytelling and games were part of the night's entertainment. The adults stayed awake through the night, but they awakened the children at sunrise, just in time for the Green Corn Dance. The drumming and singing began. The corn dancers stepped slowly and solemnly in rhythm to the drum as they danced. The sacred dance was a prayer of thanksgiving for this year's corn and was timed to end just as the sun rose. Sunrise symbolized springtime, the season when next year's corn would be planted. After the dance ended it was time to go home. Mother carried a glowing coal from the new year fire in a special clay pot. It was her duty to use the coal to start the family's new year fire and keep it burning for a whole year. The powerful beauty of the dance surrounded the children as they snuggled in their blankets to sleep, hearing the whisper of "Happy New Year." The new fire would burn to warm them and cook their food until next year's Itse Selu.

Many other American Indian tribes also held a Green Corn Dance when the ears of corn were nearly ripe, before the main harvest. They did not eat or touch the corn until the time of the Green Corn Ceremony. A corn dance, games, and a feast of corn, venison, and other meats and vegetables were often part of the celebration. Some tribes, such as the Santo Domingo Pueblo in New Mexico, have similar celebrations today. In early August, the American Indians of Santo Domingo hold a very large corn dance as they dance from sunrise to sunset. Certain dancers dance the roles of the corn gods and bless the homes of the pueblo. Other American Indians also include the corn dance at harvest dances and powwows.

Kwanzaa

One of the world's new harvest festivals is Kwanzaa (KWAHN-zuh). This holiday is loosely based on African harvest festivals and is celebrated by Americans of African descent. The name Kwanzaa comes from the Kiswahili phrase meaning "first fruits." It started in 1966 when Dr. Maulana Karenga and a group of organizers, friends and family joined in Los Angeles to commemorate their African heritage. Lasting from December 26 through January 1, this celebration was the beginning of the Kwanzaa tradition. Dr. Karenga believed that African Americans needed to connect with their African ancestry, combining the old traditions with a set of principles from the new community. Corn is an important symbol in the celebration of Kwanzaa. Each child in the family is represented by one ear of this precious food.

Kwanzaa has seven days, seven symbols and seven principles. Each day, families gather together and light a candle. They think and talk about one of the seven principles developed by Dr. Karenga. These principles and their meanings are umoja (oo-MOH-jah), togetherness or unity; kujichagulia (koo-ji-cha-goo-LEE-ah), self-determination; ujima (oo-JEE-mah), cooperation; ujamaa (oo-jah-MAH), cooperative economics or buying things from each other; nia (NEE-ah), purpose; kuumba (koo-OOM-bah), creativity; and imani (ee-MAH-nee), faith.



The seven symbols are an mkeka (em-KAY-kuh), or woven straw mat laid on a low table to symbolize tradition; a kinara (kee-NAH-rah), or seven-branched candleholder to represent African ancestors; mishumaa sabe (me-shew-MA SA-ba), or seven tall candles that symbolize the seven ideals or principles, which correspond to the seven days of the celebration; a basket of mazao (ma-ZA-oh), containing fruits and vegetables that stand for the harvest; one muhindi (moo-HIN-dee), or ear of dried corn for each child in the family; a kikombe cha umoja (kee-KOM-bay cha ooh-MO-juh), or community cup, which is a symbol of unity, or staying together; and zawadi (za-WAH-dee), or gifts, which are given to children on the final day of Kwanzaa.

Throughout Kwanzaa, friends and family gather to celebrate and to ask, "Habari gani?" This means "What's the news?" Each day, a different principle is the answer to that question. A child is chosen to light the mishumaa sabe in the kinara and talk about the principle for the day. On the sixth day of Kwanzaa, people have a big feast. It may include peanut soup, chicken stew, collard greens, black-eyed peas, fish, fruits, and bread.

Thanksgiving

We celebrate one of the oldest and most universal of human celebrations every fourth Thursday in November. It's Thanksgiving, and there are many Thanksgiving stories to tell. There have been Thanksgiving stories of one kind or another since the beginning of human history. These celebrations were about thanks for the harvests of the land. Since it has always been a time of people coming together, thanks is also for the gift of friendship among us. In the United States, the Thanksgiving holiday season is a time when American Indian history and culture are frequently discussed in

school. This is a good time to reinforce how essential the assistance of the American Indians was to the Pilgrims' survival and a good chance to focus on the importance of corn in celebration.

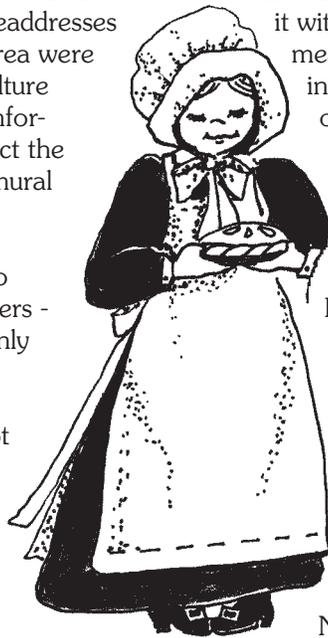
When the Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1620, they landed on the rocky shores of a territory where the Wampanoag (Wam-pa-NO-og) Indians lived. The Wampanoags were part of the Algonkian-speaking peoples, a large group that was part of the Woodland Culture area. They lived in villages along the coast of what is now Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The basic dress for men was a length of deerskin looped over a belt in back and in front. Women wore deerskin wraparound skirts. The people wore deerskin leggings and fur capes in colder seasons and deerskin moccasins on their feet. Both men and women usually braided their hair. Men often wore a single feather in the back of the hair. The large feathered headdresses worn by people in the Plains Culture area were not worn by those of the Northeast Culture area where the Pilgrims settled. (This information will help students correctly depict the American Indians as they create their mural in Session Three.)

The custom of the Wampanoags was to help visitors. They treated the newcomers - the Pilgrims - with courtesy. It was mainly because of the Wampanoags that the Pilgrims survived at all. The Pilgrims brought wheat to plant, but it would not grow in the rocky soil. They needed to learn new ways for a new world, and the man who came to help them was Squanto.

Squanto was originally from the village of Patuxet (Pa-TUX-et), which once stood on the exact site on which the Pilgrims built Plymouth. Squanto had learned English thanks to his friendship with an English explorer named John Weymouth. He went to England with Weymouth and, while there, met Samoset of the Wabanake (Wab-ah-NAH-key) tribe. Samoset had also left his native home with an English explorer. Squanto and Samoset returned together to Patuxet in 1620. When they arrived, they found the village deserted. Everyone had died from contagious illnesses they caught from the British slavers. The diseases were new to the American Indians and proved deadly. So Squanto and Samoset went to stay at the neighboring village of the Wampanoags.

In the springtime of the next year, 1621, Squanto and Samoset were startled to discover people from England - the Pilgrims - in their deserted village. They observed

the newcomers from a distance for several days. Finally, they decided to visit them. The Pilgrims were very surprised to meet two Indians who spoke English. They saw that the Pilgrims were not in good condition. They were living in dirt-covered shelters, suffering from a food shortage, and many of them had died during the winter of 1620-1621. They badly needed help, and the two men were a welcomed sight. Squanto stayed with the Pilgrims for the next few months to teach them how to survive in this new place. He brought them deer meat and beaver skins. He taught them how to cultivate corn and other new vegetables and how to build Indian-style houses. He pointed out poisonous plants and showed the Pilgrims how other plants could be used as medicine. He taught them to stuff mattresses with corn husks, burn corncobs for fuel, and even make corncob pipes and corn-shuck dolls. Eventually the Pilgrims learned how to roast and boil corn; cook it with meat, beans, and squash; grind it into cornmeal and bake it into cakes; mash its juicy kernels into puddings and breads; and hold some kinds over the fire and pop them into popcorn. Squanto taught them how to dig and cook clams, to get sap from the maple trees, to use fish for fertilizer, and dozens of other skills they needed for survival.



By autumn 1621, life was much better for the Pilgrims, thanks to the help they had received. The corn they planted had grown well. There was enough food to last the winter. They were comfortable in their Indian-style wigwams and also had managed to build one European-style building out of squared logs. This was their church. They were healthier, and they knew more about surviving in this new land. The Pilgrims had celebrated thanksgiving feasts in November in England for many years, so they decided to have a thanksgiving feast to celebrate their good fortune in the New World.

Captain Miles Standish, a leader of the Pilgrims, invited Squanto, Samoset, Massosoit (the leader of the Wampanoags), and their immediate families to join them for a celebration. Not knowing how big Indian families could be, they were overwhelmed at the turnout of 90 relatives that Squanto and Samoset brought with them. They were not prepared to feed such a large gathering of people for three days. Massosoit saw this and within the first hour of his arrival gave orders to his people to go home and get more food. It turned out that the Indians supplied most of the food for the Plymouth Thanksgiving: five deer, many wild turkeys, fish, beans, squash, corn soup, corn bread, and berries. For three days they feasted. It was a special time of friendship between two very different

groups of people. Massasoit and Miles Standish made a peace and friendship agreement giving the Pilgrims the clearing in the forest where the old Patuxet village once stood to build their new town of Plymouth. And corn became so important that today the United States grows 36 percent of all corn grown on Earth.

More About Corn

Many varieties of corn have thick seed coats protecting each corn kernel. Too tough to grind and too thick to eat when boiled, they had to be removed. It certainly wasn't a job anyone had time to do by hand. Luckily, some ancient Indians discovered that lye would eat away the hull and not damage the inside. Such lye was easily produced from wood ashes. So the Indian cooks learned to soak the corn in a solution of water and wood ashes. The Indians called the hulled corn "hominy" in the Algonkian language or "mote" in Latin America. They ate the hominy as it was or dried it and ground it to make hominy grits, which became popular in the American South as grits, a completely Indian dish. For some reason, neither hominy nor grits ever caught on with people in the North. Finally, Dr. William K. Kellogg of Battle Creek, Michigan, introduced the world to cornflakes by industrializing the roasting, drying, tempering, flavoring, flaking, and re-toasting the flake. Thus began the American breakfast-cereal industry. (See the Supporting Information in the FLP lesson "Breads Around the World" to learn more about corn history, growing conditions, the variety of foods and nonfood products made from corn, and the nutrients provided by corn.)

GETTING STARTED

Several days before the lesson, ask students to bring things from home that represent celebrations that their families enjoy. Bring some of your items too. Make a bulletin board or table display of the items. Collect two or three ears of dried corn and pictures of celebrations that use corn. Decide if you want to use the ***Favorite Celebrations!*** sheet. Photocopy as needed or make a transparency. (Note: Students who do not celebrate can still participate in this lesson. See Session One, Step 3, Session Two, Step 4, and Session Three, Step 3.)

PROCEDURE

SESSION ONE

1. Write "Celebrations" in a visible place and assemble the celebration pictures and items. Have students gather near the display of celebration items. Ask:
 - What is a celebration?
 - What are some reasons people celebrate? (See

Supporting Information.)

- How do celebrations make you feel?
 - Why do you think these people are celebrating? (Show and discuss pictures of different celebrations.)
 - What are some things we do to make homes and other places look like a celebration? (*Public decorations, decorations at home, lights, flags, streamers, balloons, and more.*)
2. Have students show and discuss celebration things from home. Share your own things too. Ask:
 - What celebrations do you have in your family?
 - What are some things your family does to make these celebrations special?
 - What celebration do you like best? Why?
 - What celebrations do you think people you know like best?
 - How could we find out?
 3. Distribute the ***Favorite Celebrations!*** sheet or use the transparency. Explain that each student will interview four people about their favorite celebrations, the reasons they enjoy those celebrations, and the favorite food at the celebrations. Students should ask an adult for help to complete their sheets, if needed. If you are not using the ***Favorite Celebrations!*** sheet, ask students to find the same information orally. (Note: For those students who do not celebrate, have them interview four people about their favorite food and the reasons they enjoy those foods. Adjust their ***Favorite Celebrations!*** sheet accordingly.)

SESSION TWO

1. Discuss the information students collected during their interviews. List and tally the times each celebration was selected. Total the results. Have students make a simple bar or picture graph to show the favorite celebrations. Have students make their own symbols for Christmas, Valentine's Day, and other holidays.
2. Using the information on the celebrations sheets, discuss reasons why favorite celebrations are important.

- Have students state their favorite celebration food. As students name favorites, have them group themselves with others liking the same foods. Ask "How could we arrange the people in the groups to look like a 'living graph' of favorite holiday foods?"

Now have students make the living graph. (One possibility is to arrange students in lines.) Tell them to look at the living graph, and then ask, "Which is the favorite holiday food of our group?"

- Make living graphs with the information students collected in their interviews. (Students who do not celebrate can make a living graph of favorite foods.) Ask, "How do our favorite foods compare with the favorite foods of the people we interviewed?"

SESSION THREE

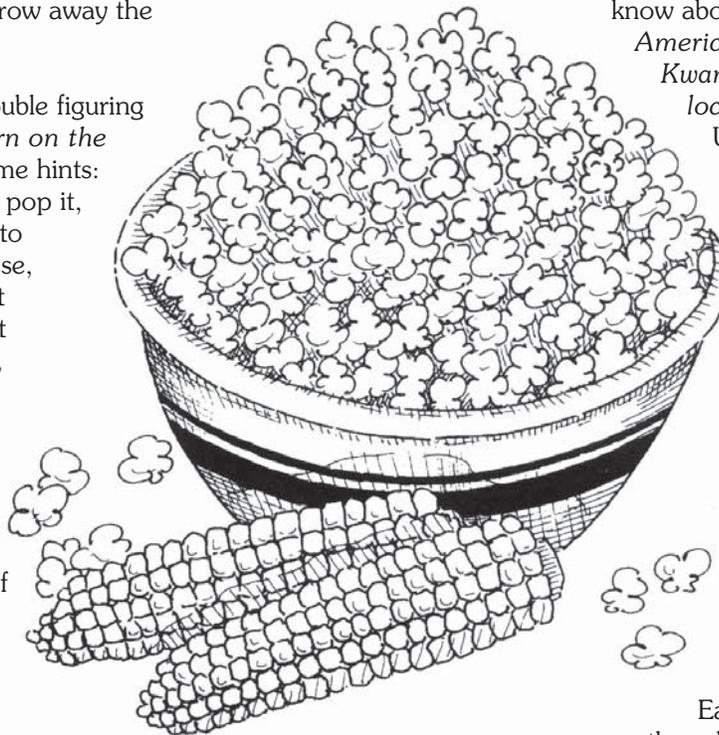
- Popping a fresh batch of popcorn to share together is a good way to get attention for this session that focuses on the importance of corn as an everyday food and a celebration food. Challenge students with this fun riddle.

You throw away the outside, cook the inside, eat the outside, and throw away the inside. What is it?

If students have trouble figuring out the answer (*corn on the cob*), give them some hints: It's yellow. We can pop it, roast it, and boil it to eat. Pigs, deer, geese, and raccoons like it too. We often eat it at festivals, picnics, celebrations, and holidays. It's hard to eat without your two front teeth.

- Show actual ears of corn or pictures of corn to the group. Ask:

- What are your favorite ways to eat corn?
- When is corn harvested? (*Late spring in southern climates, summer and fall.*)



- What is "harvest time"? (*Season when agricultural crops are picked and gathered.*)
- Why do you think people have celebrations at harvest time?
- How can you tell if a celebration is a harvest festival? (*It's about foods that we grow. It usually takes place at a time of year when foods are harvested or in the fall after farmers have harvested all their crops for the year. It usually includes a part about being thankful for food.*)
- How is corn a part of the celebrations? Why? (*Corn is one of the most important food crops grown today. People throughout the world depend on it heavily for their survival.*) What might people do to celebrate? (*Dance, eat, drink, and play games.*)
- Look at the other pictures of corn festivals and ask yourself, "How does your celebration differ from the others?"

- What are some harvest festivals you know about? (*Include Native American harvest festivals, Kwanzaa, Thanksgiving, and local festivals based on food.*)

Use pictures, celebration items, and audiovisual materials if possible. See Supporting Information and Resources.

- How are harvest festivals (celebrations) in different countries or neighborhoods alike? Different?

- After students have seen pictures and heard stories about Kwanzaa, the first Thanksgiving, and the Green Corn Dance, divide them into three groups.

Each group is assigned one of these holidays and works on one section of a mural depicting corn as part of their celebration. (Note: Students who do not celebrate can make a mural of favorite foods.) Put the mural together and display it.

EVALUATION OPTIONS

1. Use students' mural from Session Three. Have them describe orally why the people are celebrating and how they feel about the event.
2. Have students give three reasons why people have celebrations and describe the ways or things people do to celebrate.
3. Have students name or draw two harvest celebrations and tell why people celebrate harvests.
4. Have students tell how corn is important in at least two celebrations.

EXTENSIONS AND VARIATIONS

1. Have students write a description of a celebration that would be meaningful to them. It can be one they actually celebrate or one they make up. Ask them to include such ideas as why they would celebrate, who would participate (family, community, and more), what they would do, and especially what foods they would serve.
2. Ask students to pretend they could have a harvest festival celebrating corn. Encourage them by saying, "How would you celebrate? Who would celebrate with you? How would you decorate? At what time of year would you celebrate? Draw or paint a picture of your celebration. Make it a big celebration. Fill your whole paper!"
3. Have students create and hold their own class celebration, using what they have learned about celebrations.
4. Cook corn in honor of the important role it plays in many festivals and celebrations. See recipes on the attached **Ears to Corn** sheet.
5. Conduct Session Three using a different food and celebrations. One possibility is the egg. What are some of the different ways eggs are eaten? What celebrations include eggs? What is the symbolism of the egg in celebrations? Have students research various egg decorating processes such as Batik, Ukrainian Pysanky, Bavarian, or Fabergé.
6. Make and display a yearlong timeline of celebrations observed by families of the students. Also, you could create a classroom calendar focusing on special events and a variety of celebrations. See **World Calendar of Events and Holidays** located in the Appendixes. Draw attention to each day as it arrives, inviting students to describe their days.

7. Thirty-six percent of the corn grown on Earth is grown in the United States. Much of the corn comes from a part of the country often called the Corn Belt. Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Minnesota, Indiana, and Wisconsin are the top six producers of corn. Find these states on a map. Ask students why they think these are Corn Belt states.
8. Enjoy celebration music and dances from various cultures throughout the world. Perhaps you can enlist your music teacher's expertise. Libraries generally have folk song and folk dance materials. Many music and tape stores have international or world music sections. Some families may have favorite music to share. Play music often. Challenge students to identify a range of cultures with their music. Have students present a harvest celebration musical for another class, parents, or a parent/teacher organization meeting. Possible selections for any of the above include:

"Harvest." *Share the Music*. Macmillan, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. 1995. A Georgia folk song.

"Grinding Corn." *World of Music*. Silver Burdett & Ginn. A Hopi Indian Song.

"Ay-lye, lyu-lye." *World of Music*. Silver Burdett & Ginn. A Yiddish folk song; English words by Richard Morris.

"Big Beautiful Planet." *Share the Music*. Macmillan, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. 1995. Words and music by Raffi.

9. Challenge students to do some fun research on more celebrations and festivals. Include the obscure, the weird, the humorous. *Chase's Calendar of Annual Events*, a common reference in public libraries, can be a place to start. Or create



EDUCATOR'S NOTES

mystery celebration cards using the **World Calendar of Events and Holidays** partial listing located in the Appendixes. Have students first predict the who, what, when, where, why, and how of their celebration. Students then research their celebration and give a report to the rest of the class.

10. See the FLP lesson "Gala Fiesta Jamboree" for more about celebrations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bassachs, Anna, Isabel Sanz Muelas and Monica Marti Garbayo. *Celebrations: Creative Activities for Young Children*. Barrons Juveniles. 1998. ISBN: 0764107429.

Celsi, Teresa. *Squanto and the First Thanksgiving*. Econo-Clad Books. 1999. ISBN: 0785788387.

Clapp, Patricia. *Constance: A Story of Early Plymouth*. Beech Tree Books. 1991. ISBN: 0688109764.

Daughterty, James. *Landing of the Pilgrims*. Random House Children's Publications. 1987. ISBN: 0394846974.

De Paola, Tomie. *The Popcorn Book*. Holiday House. 1988. ISBN: 0823403149.

Hatch, Jane M. *The American Book of Days*. H.W. Wilson. 1978. ISBN: 0824205936.

Hunter, Sally M. *Four Seasons of Corn: A Winnebago Tradition*. Lerner Publications Company. 1996. ISBN: 0822526581.

Kroll, Steven. *Oh, What A Thanksgiving!* Scholastic Trade. 1989. ISBN: 0590406167.

Livingston, Myra Cohn. *Celebrations*. Holiday House. 1987. ISBN: 0823406547.

National Corn Growers Association. 122 C St NW, Washington, DC 20001. (202) 628-7001. <http://www.ncga.com>

Ross, Kathy. *Crafts for Thanksgiving*. Millbrook Press. 1995. ISBN: 156294682X.

Skrepcinski, Denice, Melissa Stock and Lois Lyles. *Silly Celebrations!: Activities for the Strangest Holidays You've Heard of*. Aladdin Paperbacks. 1998. ISBN: 0689820038.

Dear Parent,

We are learning about celebrations at school. Your child has been asked to interview four people about their favorite celebrations. Please help your child record the responses on this page (if needed). Have him or her return it to school by _____. Thank you!

FAVORITE CELEBRATIONS

Name: _____

Name favorite celebration	Why?	Favorite food at celebration
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

EARS TO CORN

Corn Pudding

You'll need

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 can cream-style corn (16-ounce)
- 1/4 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 onion, chopped



What to do

1. Place eggs, milk, and cream-style corn in a large bowl. Mix well.
2. Add cornmeal. Mix well.
3. Add onion. Mix well.
4. Pour in a greased casserole.
5. Bake in a preheated, 350° oven for one hour.
6. Spoon into servings. Serves six.

Corn Tortillas

You'll need

- 4 cups masa harina*
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/2 cups hot tap water



What to do

1. Using your hands, mix the masa harina, salt, and water together in a bowl until the dough comes together in a soft ball. If using right away, divide the dough into 18 golf-ball-size pieces. Cover with plastic wrap to keep moist while pressing or rolling out the tortillas. If using later, wrap the whole dough ball in plastic wrap. Set aside until ready to press out, or refrigerate, and use within one day.
2. To form the tortillas, place a ball of dough between two pieces of plastic wrap. Press with a tortilla press or roll with a rolling pin to make a 6- to 7-inch round between 1/16 and 1/8 inch thick. Set aside in the plastic wrap until ready to cook. The tortillas may be formed in advance and refrigerated overnight.
3. To cook the tortillas, heat a heavy cast-iron frying pan or griddle to medium-high heat. Peel off the plastic wrap and place the tortillas in the pan, one at a time or as many as will fit without overlapping. Cook for 30 seconds, then turn over. Cook for one minute, then turn again to the first side. Cook for 30 seconds, until the tortilla puffs slightly, but is still pliable. Remove and continue with another round until all of the tortillas are cooked. The tortillas may be cooked in advance, stacked, wrapped in plastic, and refrigerated overnight. Reheat just before serving. Makes 18 6- to 7-inch corn tortillas. Takes 40 to 60 minutes, depending on your equipment.

Tips

- Corn tortilla dough dries out extremely rapidly. It is important to cover the dough with plastic wrap as soon as you make it and keep it covered as you work.
- If the tortillas crack around the edges when pressed or rolled, you can smooth them out by pressing on the plastic wrap with your fingers. Or trim the tortillas into even rounds with a knife.
- Corn tortilla dough does not suffer from being made in advance and refrigerated overnight as long as it is well wrapped.

* *Masa harina* is not the same as cornmeal or polenta. These products are simply ground corn. In *masa harina*, the corn has been soaked in lime to break down the hulls, then the kernels are ground into a fine flour. Quaker brand *masa harina* is the easiest to find.