


## An Educator's Guide to: Holiday Traditions Around the World



Holiday Traditions Around The World is a fast paced rollicking musical that takes a joyous 'round the world tour of the dances, songs and stories from Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and many more. Students will sing, clap and tap along as they learn new and old traditions, customs and folklore that instill the magic of the season. This wonderful jubilee creates a memorable and heartwarming experience that celebrates the true spirit of cultural diversity.

Special Note: While some school districts frown on the celebration or study of holidays, the following activities provide more of a social studies or historic perspective on holidays rather than a religious one. Also note that although students will be learning about holidays around the world; they will not actually be celebrating them.

 Throughout the study guide, this symbol means that specific Florida Standards are being addressed that correlate activities directly to Florida Assessments. As new standards are created and approved by the Florida Department of Education, this may change. The Standards listed here are currently the most up to date. Please visit [www.floridastandards.org](http://www.floridastandards.org), or [www.cpalms.org](http://www.cpalms.org) for more information and to customize this guide to your specific grade level.



## THE THEATRE IS A SPECIAL TREAT

Let us concentrate for a moment on a vital part of youth theatre: the young people. Millions of youngsters attend plays every season, and for some the experience is not particularly memorable or entertaining. The fault may lie with the production – but often the fault lies in the fact that these youngsters have not been properly briefed on appropriate theatre manners. Going to the theatre is not a casual event such as flipping on the TV set, attending a movie or a sports event. Going to the theatre is a SPECIAL OCCASION, and should be attended as such. In presenting theatre manners to young people we take the liberty of putting the do’s and don’ts in verse, and hope that concerned adults will find this a more palatable way of introducing these concepts to youngsters.

### MATINEE MANNERS

by PEGGY SIMON TRAKTMAN

**The theatre is no place for lunch,  
Who can hear when you go “crunch?”  
We may wear our nicest clothes  
When we go to theatre shows.  
Do not talk to one another  
(That means friends or even mother)  
When you go to see a show,  
Otherwise you’ll never know  
What the play is all about  
And you’ll make the actors shout  
Just to make themselves be heard.  
So, be still - don’t say a word  
Unless an actor asks you to...  
A thing they rarely ever do.  
A program has a special use  
So do not treat it with abuse!  
Its purpose is to let us know  
Exactly who is in the show  
It also tells us other facts  
Of coming shows and future acts.  
Programs make great souvenirs  
Of fun we’ve had in bygone years  
Keep your hands upon your lap**

**But if you like something you clap  
Actors like to hear applause.  
If there is cause for this applause.  
If a scene is bright and sunny,  
And you think something is funny  
Laugh- performers love this laughter  
But be quiet from thereafter.  
Don’t kick chairs or pound your feet  
And do not stand up in your seat,  
Never wander to and fro -  
Just sit back and watch the show.  
And when the final curtain falls  
The actors take their “curtain calls”  
That means they curtsy or they bow  
And you applaud, which tells them how  
You liked their work and liked the show.  
Then, when the lights come on, you go  
Back up the aisle and walk - don’t run  
Out to the lobby, everyone.  
The theatre is a special treat  
And not a place to talk or eat.  
If you behave the proper way  
You really will enjoy the play.**

## HOLIDAY DIRECTORY

Refer to the following holiday directory for help with activities. Obviously these are only a few samples of the hundreds of worldwide festivals that are celebrated in the Winter months. Feel free to embellish this list, as there are hundreds of great resources for information. (see reference page)

### Hanukkah

For eight days each December, Jews light candles in a special candleholder called a menorah. They do this to remember an ancient miracle in which one day's worth of oil burned for eight days in their temple. On Hanukkah, many Jews also eat special potato pancakes called latkes, sing songs, and spin a top called a dreidle to win chocolate coins, nuts or raisins.

### St. Lucia Day

To honor this third-century saint on December 13, many girls in Sweden dress up as "Lucia brides" in long white gowns with red sashes, and a wreath of burning candles on their heads. They wake up their families by singing songs and bringing them coffee and twisted saffron buns called "Lucia Cats."

### Christmas

People celebrate this sacred holiday by going to church, giving gifts, and sharing the day with their families. Throughout the world, Christians honor the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago.

### Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa, which means "first fruits," is based on an ancient African harvest festival and celebrates ideals such as family, life and unity. During this spiritual holiday, celebrated from December 26 to January 1, many African-Americans dress in special clothes, decorate their homes with fruits and vegetables, and light a candleholder called a kinara.

### Chinese New Year

Many Chinese children dress in new clothes to celebrate the Chinese New Year. People carry lanterns and join in a huge parade led by a silk dragon, the Chinese symbol of strength. According to legend, the dragon hibernates most of the year, so people throw firecrackers to keep the dragon awake.

### Diwali

Diwali is a Hindu festival that lasts five days. It is one of the happiest of the Indian festivals and is celebrated all over the country. Diwali has similar traditions of Thanksgiving and Christmas rolled into one huge celebration.

### Ramadan

During the ninth lunar month, Muslims avoid food and drink between the hours of sunrise and sunset. They mark the end of this period of fasting with "Eid-al-Fitr" a celebration that lasts three days. At "Eid" Muslims exchange gifts, give food to the poor and spend time with family and friends.

## HOLIDAY FUN FACTS

## The North Pole or Turkey?

Santa Claus got his name from Saint Nicholas, a bishop of the town of Myra, who was known for being especially kind to all children. Today, Myra is part of the country of Turkey.

## All Ears

During Kwanzaa, families set out ears of corn to show how many children there are in the family. People without children set out one ear of corn to show that they are parents of their community.

## 12 Lucky Animals

In the Chinese lunar calendar each of the 12 years is named after an animal. According to legend, Lord Buddha asked all the animals to come to him before he left the earth. Only 12 animals came to wish him farewell, and as a reward Buddha named a year after each one

## Moooooo!

To celebrate the Hindu holiday of Diwali, farmers dress up their cows with decorations and treat them with respect. The farmers show their thanks to the cows for helping the farmers earn a living.

## Camels in Puerto Rico?

Early in the Christmas season, carolers begin going from house to house. They wear homemade costumes the Magi might have worn and sing Spanish carols called aquinaldos. At each house they are rewarded with food and drink. Gifts arrive on Christmas morning and again on the Epiphany. On January 5<sup>th</sup> in the evening, children leave water, grass and grain under their beds for the camels. The next day they find presents in the place of the feed.


## La Befana or Baboushka

The nativity scene originated in Italy. St. Francis of Assisi commissioned Giovanni Vellita to build a manger scene. Italy's big celebration centers around the Epiphany. According to legend, the Magi stopped and asked an old woman for food and shelter during their journey. She refused them. A few hours later the woman had a change of heart, but the Magi were gone. La Befana, which means Epiphany, still wanders the earth in search of the Christ Child. She brings presents to the good and punishment to the bad. Throughout the world La Befana is known as the Christmas witch. Epiphany (January 6) is when she delivers the gifts. **Russia** has a similar legend, but the old lady is named Baboushka!

# THE ACTIVITIES

## BEFORE THE PLAY

1. Ask your students to discuss the difference between television and live theatre. It is important that they know about theatre etiquette, or manners. Refer to the poem above on Matinee Manners.

 **TH.1.C.1:** Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret and create with artistic intent.

**TH.1.S.1.1:** Exhibit appropriate audience etiquette and response.

2. Have students learn the following vocabulary words and listen for them during the play. See how many words they can recall and how they were used in the context of the play.

albatross	authority	boast	boughs	Christmas
culture	defective	diversity	Diwali	diye
don	dreidle	emblem	embraced	equator
fasting	freedom	Hanukkah	harvest	jolly
Kwanzaa	lunar	menorah	miracle	partridge
plea	Ramadan	shelter	sleigh	temple
vanity	ward	weary	Yuletide	

**LAFS.1.RI.4.10** With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

**LAFS.1.L.1.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**LAFS.1.RI.2.4:** Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.

3. A legend is a story from the past about a subject that was, or is believed to have been, historical. Legends concern people, place, and events. Usually, the subject is a saint, a king, a hero, a famous person, or a war. A legend is always associated with a particular place and a particular time in history. Many worldwide holiday traditions come from legends.
- Discuss with your students the above elements that make a story a legend.
  - Have the students think of as many holidays as they can that come from legends. Compare and contrast these holidays.
  - Every town in the United States has legends. Write a story about a local legend.


**LAFS.1.RL.2.5:** Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types .

**LAFS.2.RI.3.9:** Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic. .

**LAFS.2.RI.1.1::** Ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why,* and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

4. Have the students look and listen for patterns during the play. See how many patterns they can recall and how they were used in the context of the play. Encourage students to be aware of patterns that may occur in music, dance, scenery, costume fabric and dialogue. Students may also notice architectural patterns in the theatre.


**MAFS.3.OA.4:** Solve problems involving four operations and identify and explain patterns in arithmetic.


 **WL.K12.NH.7.2:** Use maps, graphs, and other graphic organizers to facilitate comprehension and expression of key vocabulary in the target language to reinforce existing content area knowledge.

## AFTER THE PLAY

### Part I


1. Discuss the production with your students. What did they like or dislike about the play? Why? Have the students draw a picture or write a letter to the cast of “Santa’s Holiday Revue” telling them what they learned.

 **LAFS.1.W.1.3:** Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.


 **WL.K12.IM.5.6** Produce writing that has been edited for punctuation and correct use of grammar, in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.


2. There are many alliterations, puns, rhymes, wise sayings and historical references in the dialogue and in the lyrics of the songs in Santa’s Holiday Revue. Example: Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer,

- Have the students listen for these and other fun plays on words during the performance.
- Back at the classroom, write down as many examples as you can recall.
- Write a letter to the cast using one of the word play examples.
- Act out a holiday of your own using some of these references. Be creative and assign a director, actors, prompter, etc.

 **TH.2.S.3.1:** Create imagined characters, relationships, and environments using basic acting skills.

3. During the play, the elves visited many different countries and talked about many different cultures. See how many the students can think of and locate on the map or globe. Have students make dioramas or scrapbooks with flags, maps, costumes, and other symbols of the cultures that they have learned about during the show.

 **SS.1.G.1.4:** Identify a variety of physical features using a map and globe.

 **SS.2.G.1.4:** Use a map to locate the countries in North America (Canada, United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean Islands).

4. This play is a multi-cultural and musical journey around the world. Discuss with your students the differing types of music that they have encountered. Have the students analyze and describe the music from the show.

✍ **MU.1.H.1:** Through study in the arts, we learn about and honor others and the worlds in which they live(d)..

✍ **MU.1.C.1.4:** Differentiate between music performed by one singer and music performed by a group of singers.

**Part II Relevant Themes:**

1. **Technology = learning**
2. **True meaning of holidays**
3. **USA = freedom to be diverse**

Refer to the themes listed above. Ask the following questions to relate the themes to everyday life:

1. One of the best ways to learn about cultures and traditions is to utilize internet resources.
  - a. As you begin to study holidays celebrated around the world, what better way to learn about a country's traditions and festivals than from the people of the country. The internet provides you with a perfect vehicle for making a friend in a far away land. Go to [www.epals.com](http://www.epals.com) and connect with an epals classroom to learn more about foreign cultures. Compare your traditions with students from other nations and cultures. Now write about it.
  - b. Do you think everyone around the world celebrates the same holidays as you do? As technology makes the world a smaller place, it's easy to forget that we live on a multi-cultural, diverse planet. Visit the following website to view holidays and festivals from many countries. <http://www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/MCC/>

✍ **LAFS.3.SL.1.2:** Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively and orally.

✍ **LAFS.3.SL.2.4:** Report on a topic or text, tell a story or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

✍ **LAFS.3.W.2.5:** With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing

✍ **WL.K12.IM.1.4** Identify essential information and supporting details on familiar topics presented through a variety of media.

2. The commercialism of the holidays has most children (and many adults) so wrapped up in gift giving that the original intention of the event is lost. Have a question and answer session in your classroom about the following topics:
  - a. Excluding the giving of presents, what do all the holidays in Santa's revue have in common? (spirit of love, family, helping the poor, etc.)

- b. “It’s the thought that counts, not the gift itself.” How many times have we heard this old adage? What does it mean? Are gifts from the heart more important than expensive material items? Why?

✍ **LAFS.3.SL.1.3** Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

✍ **LAFS.3.SL.1.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 *topics and texts*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

3. Believe it or not the USA is one of the few countries where cultural diversity is looked upon as a great strength.

- a. Discuss the basic concepts of freedom of religion and free speech with your students.
- b. How do our differences make us stronger?
- c. Think of 5 great humanitarians who have helped America become the greatest symbol of freedom and human rights that civilization has ever known.

✍ **LAFS.K.SL.1.1**: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *kindergarten topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups..

✍ **LAFS.2.SL.1.3**: Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

✍ **SS.2.C.2.4**: Identify ways citizens can make a positive contribution in their community.

## The Art of Florida Assessments

Contributed by Patricia Linder

✍ Visual and Performing Arts Field Trips provide an excellent source of support for the development of skills necessary for success on the Florida Assessments. We invite you to use these instructional strategies to enhance preparation through your theatre field trip.

### Theatre Activities



## Cognitive Level I

Read the story (or play) your field trip performance is based on.

Name the main character.

List all the characters.

Identify the setting.

List the story events in the order they happened.

Describe a character (or setting).

Explain the problem (or conflict) in the story.

Explain how the actors used stage props to tell the story (or develop characterization).

Discuss how the blocking, or positioning of the actors on stage affected the performance.

Discuss how unusual technical elements (light, shadow, sound, etc.) were used in the performance.

Draw a picture of a character.

Illustrate or make a diorama of a scene from the performance.

Draw a poster to advertise the performance.

Work with other students to act out a scene.

Demonstrate how an actor used facial expression to show emotion.

Write a narrative story to summarize the plot of the performance story.

Use a map and/or timeline to locate the setting of the story.

Make a mobile showing events in the story.

## Cognitive Level II

Would the main character make a good friend? Write an expository essay explaining why or why not.

Create a graph that records performance data such as: female characters, male characters, animal characters or number of characters in each scene, etc.

Compare/Contrast a character to someone you know or compare/contrast the setting to a different location or time.

Solve a special effects mystery. Use words or pictures to explain how "special effects" (Lighting, smoke, sound effects) were created.

Image the story in a different time or place. Design sets or costumes for the new setting.

You're the director. Plan the performance of a scene in your classroom. Include the cast of characters, staging area, and ideas for costumes, scenery, and props in your plan.

Create a new ending to the story.

Did you enjoy the performance? Write a persuasive essay convincing a friend to go see this production.

Write a letter to the production company nominating a performer for a "Best Actor Award." Explain why your nominee should win the award.

Create a rubric to rate the performance. Decide on criteria for judging: Sets, Costumes, Acting, Lighting, Special Effects, Overall Performance, etc.

## THE PRODUCER

**STAGES PRODUCTIONS** is a professional theatre ensemble that specializes in bringing classic fairy tales to over 150,000 young people each year throughout the Southeast.

STAGES' show credits include critically acclaimed performances of: *Numbers Don't Lie*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*. Be sure to join us for our 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary season featuring, *School House Rock Live*, *Holiday Traditions Around the World* and *Rapunzel*.

STAGES PRODUCTIONS is dedicated to making drama an integral part of education, and lesson plans help incorporate these plays into the student's curriculum. Thank you for supporting this mission by choosing a STAGES PRODUCTIONS play!

## THE REFERENCES

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