

ROBERSON MUSEUM AND SCIENCE CENTER

Pre-visit Lesson Plan

Marking Milestones: Rites of Passage

Grade Level: Grades Pre-K through 2

New York State Standards: ELA 1; Arts 1 - 4; SS 3

Pennsylvania State Standards: A&H 9.1, 9.2, 9.4; G 7.3, 7.4; H 8.4

Objectives: To introduce students to the concept of a milestone and to provide students with an in depth exploration of one kind of milestone (of the teacher's choice).

Materials:

Choose one of the following books (an annotated bibliography follows):

- Beeler, S. (1998) Throw Your Tooth on the Roof. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

The question, "What do you do with your tooth?" is answered in this book from around the world. For example, in Yupik a mother wraps her child's tooth in some food, such as meat or bread, and then the child feeds it to a female dog and says, "Replace this tooth with a better one."

- Coutts, J. (1997) Sikh Festivals. Illinois: Heinemann Library.

In this book, one can explore the Sikh religion through reading about a Sikh's history and rituals. There are chapters on Guru Nanak's birthday, his prophetic vision and mission, as well as the daily aspects of a Sikh's life, such as food and music. The book also provides a list of vocabulary used in the glossary.

- Erricker, C & J. (1997) Buddhist Festivals. Illinois: Heinemann Library.

Buddhist Festivals briefly introduces many aspects of Buddhism. There is information on becoming a Buddhist, monk and nun, a calendar of Buddhist festivals, western Buddhist orders and customs. In addition to this information, the authors also explain the philosophy of Buddhism. The book also provides a list of vocabulary used in the glossary.

- Goldin, B. (1995) Bat Mitzvah. New York: Viking.

Written to give contemporary Jewish girls a sense of connection with their foremothers, Bat Mitzvah is actually two books in one. The first part, "The Women's Story," is a glance at various Jewish women throughout history, while the second part, called "Ceremony and Celebration," describes preparation and ceremonies from historical viewpoints.

- Ingpen, R. and Wilkinson, P. (1996) A Celebration of Customs & Rituals of the World. New York: Facts on File, Inc.

A large and intriguing assortment, Customs & Rituals covers ceremonies, initiation rites, wedding feasts, harvest celebrations, religion rituals and funeral rites that take place all over the globe. The book is organized by custom, instead of background, giving room for the young reader to make connections and compare cultures. This book will be helpful in a class of mixed ages. There are many vibrant illustrations as well as detailed descriptions.

- King, E. (1998) Quinceanera. New York: Dutton Children's Books.

A book about coming of age, Quinceanera is a commentary on the excitement and anticipation of a fifteen year old girl as she prepares for a long awaited day. The ceremony is a way for Latinas to enter into womanhood, allowing them to date, as well as dress differently. Quinceanera is quite charming, in that the author vividly describes the careful preparation, nerves and enthusiasm that go into one special, yet very significant, event.

- Kleven, E. (1996) Hooray, A Piñata! New York: Dutton Children's Books.

A lesson in friendship and thoughtfulness, Hooray, A Piñata! describes the events of little Clara preparing for her birthday party by choosing a piñata. While her friend suggests that she get a large, scary piñata, Clara is attracted to a colorful little dog and chooses it instead. Clara spends most of her time imagining that the paper dog is alive and treating it as though it were a real dog. Tragically, when the day of the party arrives, Clara discovers that she is too attached to her new friend and expresses her reluctance to smash it. A sweet ending to the story, Clara's friend comes to the party with a different piñata, so that she will not have to sacrifice her beloved dog piñata.

- Reynolds, J. (2006) Celebrate! New York: Lee & Low Books Inc.

Covering a wide variety of cultures, Celebrate! uncovers the diverse rituals and reasons for celebrating. The book covers different activities that take place in the act of "celebrating" such as gathering, eating and drinking, decorating, music and dance.

- Richardson, J and Parnell, P. (2005) And Tango Makes Three. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Same sex marriage and adoption are themes explored in this book through penguins in a zoo. Silo and Roy are not like the other penguins, as they are both boys and share a close relationship. In the course of witnessing the other penguins hatch their eggs together, Silo and Roy try to do the same, but fail. A nearby zookeeper notices their attempts and kindly sneaks an orphaned egg into their nest. The happy ending arrives with Silo and Roy adopting their egg, hatching it and lovingly caring for the infant penguin.

- Thompson, J. (1997) Christian Festivals. Illinois: Heinemann Library.

Christian Festivals talks about the religion and practices of a Christian. The majority of the traditions listed in the book are rooted in Catholicism. The book fully covers the liturgical calendar, describing customs throughout the year such as Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. There is also a list of vocabulary used in the glossary.

- Thong, R. (2008) Wish. California: Chronicle Books.

Bright and colorful, Wish is filled with an assortment of short facts about wishing traditions around the world. For example, Brazilian children make wishes by offering flowers to the goddess of the deep and jump seven waves in the ocean. Each page is filled with illustrations of the traditions and cultural diversities.

- Wood, A. (1997) Jewish Festivals. Illinois: Heinemann Library.

Jewish Festivals touches upon the philosophy and lifestyle of a Jewish American. It covers festivals, prayers, Yom Kippur, Passover and much more. The book also provides a list of vocabulary used in the glossary.

Procedure:

- 1) Choose one of the books listed above and read it aloud to the students.
- 2) After the book has been read ask discussion questions similar to the following:

For Example:

Book: Ingpen, R. and Wilkinson, P. (1996) A Celebration of Customs & Rituals of the World. New York: Facts on File, Inc.

- What is a custom or ritual?
- Why do we have customs and rituals?
- What makes customs and rituals special?
- What kinds of things do you do that is a custom or ritual?
- What kinds of things in this book would you enjoy doing?
- What kinds of things seemed strange or different and why?

3) After you are finished discussing what has been read, have the children split into groups and re-enact something from the book.

Example: group 1 chooses example of hunting (pg. 116)

Children can gather objects around the classroom for the use of their re-enactment.

-Animal: Pillow

-Bow or spear: A ruler or any long (blunt) object.

Before performing their re-enactment, the children should be able to explain why hunting is important and why it would be special for a boy (for example, only young men of a certain age are allowed to hunt).

4) After children have completed their dramatic play, have the students discuss how it would feel to do something like that in real life. Also discuss with the students how it relates to or contrasts with rituals of their own lives (for example, a student might parallel hunting with being allowed to help prepare a meal).

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