

## Festival of Lights Around the World

### Hanukkah – Began at sundown on December 1, 2010

Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, is a holiday celebrated by Jewish people around the world. It celebrates the victory of the Maccabees and the miracle of the oil that burned for eight days. In America, families observe Hanukkah by giving and receiving gifts, decorating their houses, entertaining friends and family, eating special foods, and lighting the holiday menorah.



### St. Lucia's Day – December 13th

St. Lucia's Day is celebrated in Sweden. According to folk tradition, December 13th follows the longest night of the year in Sweden. During the winter, there are only a few hours of sunlight each day. St. Lucia is honored this day with a wreath of candles. On this day, the oldest girl in the family is declared St. Lucia on December 13th and dresses up in a white robe with a red sash and a wreath with candles on her head. All dressed up, she serves the family St. Lucia buns (Lussekatter) and coffee in bed. Boys and girls also participate in celebrations by portraying traditional characters in the Lucia choir show.

### Christmas – December 25th

Observed around the world, Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas lights and candles are symbols representing the light that Jesus brought to the world. Placing candles on windowsills on Christmas Eve originated in the Middle Ages in remembrance of the star of Bethlehem. This tradition was also intended to guide travelers or pilgrims to Christian homes and served as a sign that they would be welcome in the houses that displayed candles.

### Kwanzaa – December 26–January 1

Kwanzaa is a celebration of African-American heritage. This holiday is similar to the harvest festivals of Africa, with a focus on the traditional African values of family, community, responsibility, and unity. Encourage interested children to share what they know about Kwanzaa and ways their families may celebrate the holiday. You may want to share that the word *Kwanzaa* means "first fruits" and explain that red, black, and green are used in Kwanzaa decorations. You may also want to use the following information as you describe the symbols of Kwanzaa.

- mkeka (mm-KAY-kah) – woven straw mat
- muhindi (moo-HEEN-dee) – ear of corn for each child in a family, displayed on the mkeka
- karamu (kahr-AH-moo) – a large dinner on the last day of Kwanzaa to which everyone contributes a dish

## Pomander Balls

(taken from [Everything for Winter](#))

### Materials and Preparations:

- Oranges, lemons, or apples
- Unbent paperclips
- Whole cloves
- Create your own combination of spice mixtures using ground cinnamon, allspice, cardamom, cloves, etc.
- Shallow pan to hold spice mixture
- Yarn or ribbon for hanging



### What To Do:

- Supervise closely as children use paperclips to puncture holes in the skin of the fruit about ¼" apart. (Only necessary when using thick-skinned fruit)
- Press whole cloves into the holes, or directly into the fruit, working to cover the entire skin of the fruit. This project can be completed over several days.
- When the entire fruit is studded with cloves, roll the fruit in the spice mixture.
- Knot two pieces of yarn or ribbon together at the middle and place the pomander over the knot. Take up the four ends, tie them together in a firm knot and then a bow.

## Noisy Collages

(taken from [Curriculum for Threes, Let's Pretend](#))

### Materials and Preparations:

- Construction paper, art tissue (all colors), aluminum foil, wax paper, colored cellophane, craft sticks
- Glue in shallow dishes, old paintbrushes, tape

### Learning Experiences:

- Even paper creates a sound when crunched. Give children small pieces of construction paper. Can they use the paper to make sound? How many different sounds can they make?
- Use a variety of paper and craft sticks to create noisy collages. Children can crunch, tear, cut, and paste the different materials to a piece of construction paper. Can they imitate the sounds made by the materials? For instance, can they make a sound like a piece of aluminum foil being crumpled? Which materials make loud sounds? soft sounds? no sound?

## Seasonal Trees

(taken from [Passports: Experiences for Pre-K Success, Trees](#))

### Materials and Preparations:

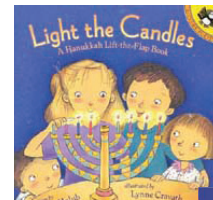
- Twigs
- Paper
- Glue
- Various art materials (white glitter, nontoxic tempera paint, construction paper, tissue paper, etc.)

### Learning Experience:

- Trees found in moderate geographical areas mark the passing of the seasons. With the children's help, collect many small fallen twigs. Children can glue the small twigs to paper to make "trees." Invite each child to create one or more trees to represent a particular season. For example, children could sprinkle white glitter on the branches to make a winter tree, paint dabs of pink paint on the ends of the branches to show flowers blossoming in spring, cut small green leaves from construction paper for a summer tree, or tear and glue pieces of colored tissue paper to represent fall leaves.

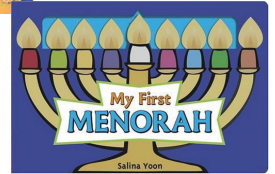
**Adaptation:** Some children with fine motor delays may be more successful using mounds of clay to serve as tree trunks for their twig branches and by using large fallen leaves for their seasonal tree.

## Books to Share



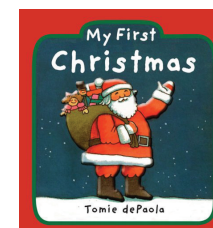
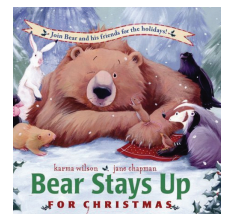
*Light the Candles:  
A Hanukkah Lift-  
the-Flap Book* by  
Joan Holub

*My First  
Menorah* by  
Salina Yoon



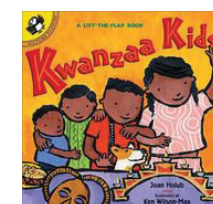
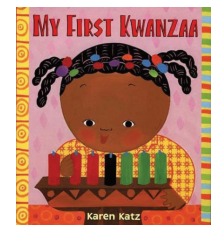
*Lucia Morning in  
Sweden* by Ewa  
Rydåker

*Bear Stays Up  
for Christmas* by  
Karma Wilson



*My First Christmas*  
by Tomie dePaola

*My First Kwanzaa*  
by Karen Katz



*Kwanzaa Kids*  
by Joan Holub

*Snowbear's  
Winter Day*  
by Dorothea  
Deprisco

