



IN HISTORY: IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC HERITAGE

Lessons

Community Festivals and Events

Overview/Description

Many of the festivals and community events we celebrate were brought to America by our families or our ancestors from other countries. Understanding and sharing in these celebrations is an important way to establish closer ties among people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. This is an opportunity for students to identify and celebrate Indiana's diverse cultural heritage as a positive and enriching legacy of immigration. Equally important, it is also an opportunity to improve student research skills.

Grade Level

Elementary (grade 4), intermediate/middle school (grades 6, 7 and 8), and high school

Academic Standards for the Social Studies

- Indiana Standards (as of Jan. 2010):
 - Grade 4, History, Standard 1, Historical Knowledge, Growth and Development: 1900 to 1950 (4.1.12); Contemporary Indiana: 1950–Present (4.1.13); and Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Research (4.1.15); Geography, Standard 3, Human Systems (4.3.10)

- Grade 6, Geography, Standard 3, Human Systems (6.3.10)
- Grade 7, History, Standard 1, Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, analysis and Interpretation, Research (7.1.20 and 7.1.24)
- Grade 8, History, Standard 1, National Expansion and Reform: 1801 to 1861 (8.1.15 and 8.1.25)
- High School, History, Standard 2, Development of the Industrial United States: 1870 to 1900 (USH.2.1 and USH.2.5)
- National Standards (National Council for the Social Studies): I Culture; III People, Places, and Environments; IV Individual Development and Identity; IX Global Connections; and X Civic Ideals and Practices

Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Celebrations, cultural events, and ethnic celebrations

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Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will interview relatives asking questions about family celebrations, rituals, special foods, etc. They will then create a calendar that denotes special days. Students will use the Internet to search for state festivals and celebrations and place these events on their calendar.

Time Required

One to three hours

Materials Required

- Access to the Internet
- Pen and paper
- Photographs, if available
- Blank calendar sheets
- Student Handout: Create a Cultural Calendar

Background/Historical Context

Refer to the “INTRODUCTION: Ethnic History in America and Indiana” essay by John Bodnar from *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996). The “Introduction” section of the Indiana Historical Society’s “IN History: Immigration and Ethnic Heritage” Web site provides a free download of this essay in PDF format.

Teacher’s Instructional Plan

Introduction

Ask students to define “culture.” Engage student in a discussion of what constitutes culture and how they live it in their daily life. From this discussion introduce them to the following activities where they will be conducting interviews and doing Internet searches about family and community celebrations to create a cultural calendar. Working individually or in small groups, students will create a calendar that provides pictures, recipes, and information from their interviews and research. Note: This lesson compliments the “Family Food Favorites” lesson.

ACTIVITY 1

- Begin by taking a survey. Give students five minutes to write down the answers to the following questions:
 - What are your favorite holidays and celebrations?
 - What celebrations are unique to your family or community?
 - Why do you celebrate?
- Write student answers on the board and encourage students to discuss the similarities and differences in these events.
- Ask each student to write about a specific holiday or celebration that is unique to their cultural heritage. These may include family picnics or trips to a sports event, religious celebrations, festivals, or nationwide celebrations. Students should identify not only what happens, but why this is important to their identity.
- Ideas to keep in mind:
 - What is the purpose of the event—birth, coming of age, marriage, death, etc.?
 - Who are the participants? How old are they? What is their gender? What is their responsibility at these events?
 - What happens? Does unique food, clothing, or music that define this event? Where does it take place?
 - How often does this take place?
 - Why is this important to you and your family or community?
- Find a photograph of this event to share.

- From the student responses and research, create a cultural calendar using photographs, stories, recipes, and ideas suggested by the students. Ideally, this could be created and posted on the Internet, but making something tangible with paper and pencil also works well.

ACTIVITY 2

- Divide students into small groups.
 - Assign each group a specific holiday to research on the Internet.
 - Be sure that they answer these questions:
 - What is the purpose of the event—birth, coming of age, marriage, death, etc.?
 - Who are the participants? How old are they? What is their gender? What is their responsibility at these events?
 - What happens? Does unique food, clothing, or music that define this event? Where does it take place?
 - How often does this take place?
 - Why is this important to you and your family or community?
- Here is a brief list of holidays to research:
 - Cinco de Mayo
 - Divali
 - Juneteenth
 - Ramadan
 - Kwanzaa
 - Octoberfest
- Search the Internet for local heritage festivals near your town.
- When the search is completed, students should report back to the group or prepare a written report.

- The student should:
 - Make a list of ethnic/cultural festivals celebrated in your state.
 - Include dates and location.
 - Write a short description of the festival, include when and why it is celebrated.
 - For a local festival or cultural affairs, interview a sponsor or director to learn about the festival’s history.
 - Sample Web sites to search include:
 - City and state tourism sites
 - Indiana Office of Tourism Development at <http://www.VisitIndiana.com>
 - Festivals.com at <http://www.festivals.com>
 - Festivals and Events.com at <http://www.festivalsandevents.com>
 - Create additional pages for these events and include them in the Cultural Calendar from Activity 1.

Evaluation and Assessment

Consider using a rubric or checklist for evaluating student work.

Additional Resources

Refer to the “Resources” section of the Indiana Historical Society’s “IN History: Immigration and Ethnic Heritage” Web site for lists of educator and student resources on immigration and ethnic history.

Student Handout: Create a Cultural Calendar

Part I: Individual Project

Research and Write

- Research and write about one specific holiday or celebration that is unique to your cultural heritage. These may include family picnics or trips to a sports event, religious celebrations, festivals, or nationwide celebrations. Identify not only what happens, but why this is important to your identity. Consider the following:
 - Purpose of the event
 - Participants
 - Event activities
 - Unique foods, clothing, or music that defines this event
 - Location
 - Dates and how often it takes place
 - Importance of this event to you and your family or community
- Find a photograph of this event you can share.

Create a Cultural Calendar Page

- Use photographs, stories, recipes, and ideas from your research to create a cultural calendar page.
- Your teacher will provide additional guidelines for the calendar page.

Part II: Group Project

Research and Write

- Make a list of ethnic/cultural festivals celebrated in your state. Include dates and location. Here's a brief list of holidays you may want to consider for your project:
 - Cinco de Mayo
 - Divali
 - Juneteenth
 - Ramadan
 - Kwanzaa
 - Oktoberfest

- Search the Web for other heritage festivals in your state.
 - Visit city and state tourism sites, such as the Indiana Office of Tourism Development at <http://www.VisitIndiana.com>
 - Festivals.com at <http://www.festivals.com>
 - Festivals and Events.com at <http://www.festivalsandevents.com>
- When your research is completed, report back to the group with a written report.
 - Write a short description of the festival. Be sure to include when and why it is celebrated.
 - Try to interview a sponsor or director of a festival or cultural event to learn about the festival's history.

Create a Cultural Calendar page

- Use photographs, stories, recipes, and ideas from your research to create a cultural calendar of your state's ethnic/cultural festivals.