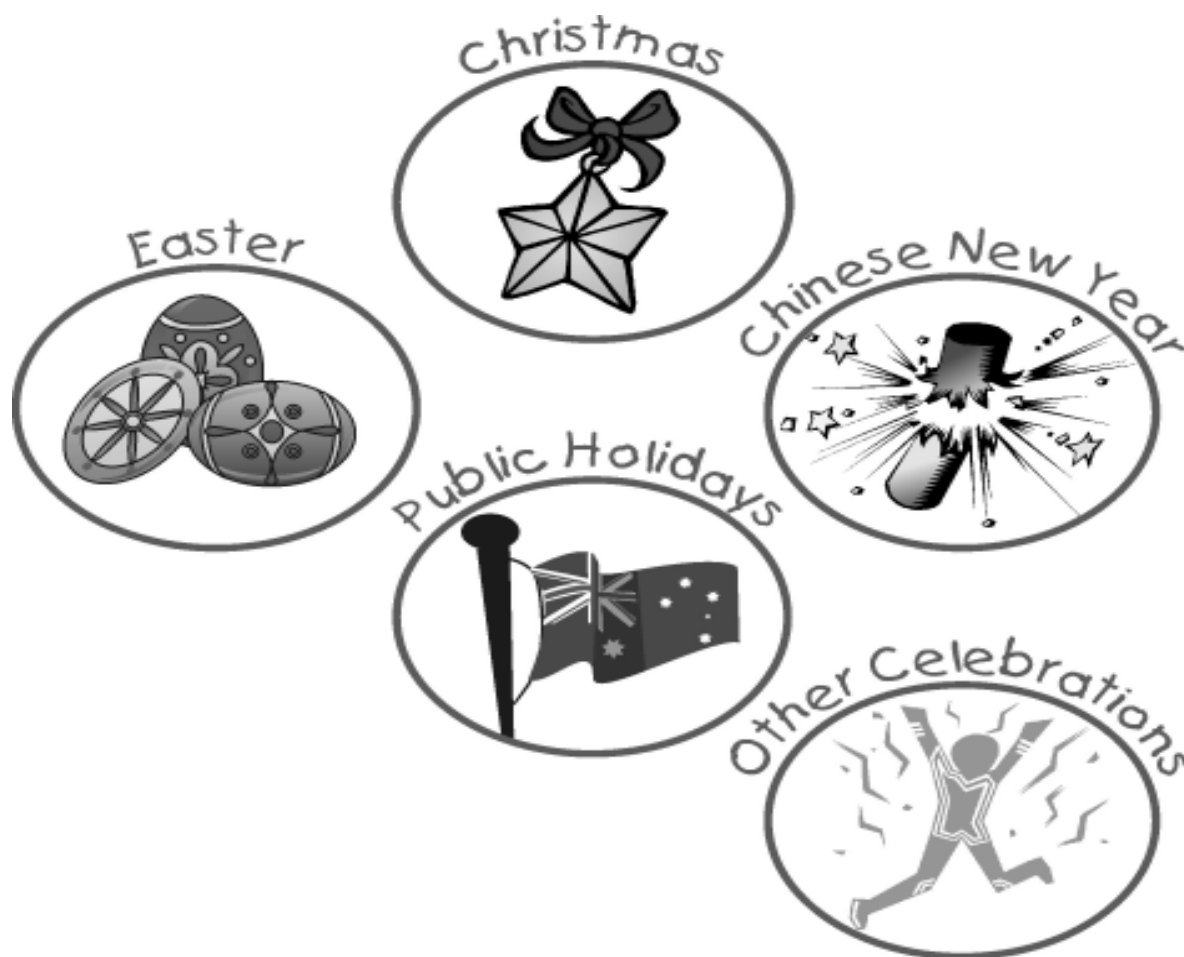


Integrated Themes for 4-8 Year Olds

Celebrations



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Introduction

Special Note

It is with some trepidation that I present this topic. So many festivals change their name and/or date over the years, a few take on a controversial nature and others may appear irrelevant. However, I believe it is important that children understand why we have public holidays and acquire a basic global perspective, particularly in our multi-cultural society, from an early age. All that is needed, in many cases, is a brief mention during morning news, perhaps a story and/or a worksheet or two. A great deal will depend on the multi-cultural nature of your class.

Some special days may be omitted – the choice is yours. In some cases a specific date has been included, sometimes only the month in which the festival occurs and a small group is included at the end of the Miscellaneous Section.

General Learning Outcome

- The children will demonstrate an awareness of why we celebrate special days and times through participation in discussions and practical activities.

General Concepts

- Just as we celebrate special anniversaries within our families, so countries, cultures, religious groups, states, towns and even neighbourhoods also celebrate special times with festivals of many kinds.
- Some festivals are held on the same date every year, while others may change from year to year.
- All people do not celebrate the same festivals.

Calendar of Special Days

❑ January

- 1 - *New Year's Day*
- 6 - *Epiphany/Twelfth Night*
- 26 - *Australia Day*
- (v) - *Chinese New Year* – (Jan/Feb)
(see “**Festivals in Other Cultures**”)

❑ February

- 3 - *Boy Scouts' Founder's Day*
(Baden-Powell)
- 14 - *St. Valentine's Day*
- (v) - *Shrove Tuesday*
The day before Lent commences, housewives make pancakes to use up ingredients which could not be used during Lent.
- (v) - *Mardi Gras*
In some countries a festival allows the people an opportunity for merry-making before Lent begins.
- (v) - *Ash Wednesday*
Lent commences
- (v) - *Muharram* (Islamic Faith)
First day of Islamic New Year

❑ March

- 1 - *St David's Day*
Patron Saint of Wales
- *Labor Day* (see “**Public Holidays**”)
- 17 - *St. Patrick's Day*
Patron Saint of Ireland
- (v) - *Palm Sunday*
Start of Holy Week. People laid palm fronds on the dusty road

before the donkey carrying Jesus into Jerusalem. A week during which the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish elders increased, culminating in His arrest and crucifixion.

❑ April

- (v) - *Easter* (March/April)
(see “**Easter**”)
- 1 - *All's Fool's Day*
- *Buddha's Birthday* (Japan)
- 7 - *World Health Day*
Why not make and share a healthy lunch and have a health and fitness/sport afternoon?
- 21 - *Queen's Birthday*
- 23 - *St George's Day*
Patron Saint of England
Read the story of St. George and the Dragon.
- 25 - *Anzac Day* (see “**Public Holidays**”)

❑ May

- 1 - *May Day*
- 8 - *World Red Cross Day*
Invite a member of the Red Cross society to talk about their work around the world.
Activity sheets are available from the Society.
- (v) - *Mothers' Day* – 2nd Sunday.
(see “**Other Celebrations**”)
- 23 - *Birth of Buddha*
(China & Vietnam)

(v) **Date varies each year**

June

- 5 - *World Environment Day*
(see “**Other Celebrations**”)
- (v) - *Arbor Day*
(see “**Other Celebrations**”)

July

- 4 - *American Independence Day*

August

- (v) - *Ramadan & Eid ul-Fitr*
(see “**Other Cultural Festivals**”)

September

- (v) - *Fathers’ Day*–1st Sunday
(see “**Other Celebrations**”)
- 8 - *World Literacy Day*
Hold a prose and poetry competition with books as prizes. Read selections from a variety of books.
- (v) - *Yom Kippur*
(see “**Other Cultural Festivals**”)

October

- 2 - *Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday*
(India)
- 4 - *World Animal Day*
Discuss care of pets, endangered species.
- (v) - *Blessing of the Fleet*
- 23 - *United Nations Day*
Discuss the work of the United Nations Organisation, and a united world.
- (v) - *Universal Children’s Day*
4th Wednesday in October.
Discuss children in other countries, consider those living

in countries where there is war or famine or where only the rich are educated. Identify students who were born in other countries. Invite migrant parents to talk about their childhood in their native country.

- 30 - *St David’s Day*
Patron Saint of Wales

Examine the Union Jack, explain how it is made up of the flags of Saints George, David and Andrew (i.e. England, Wales and Scotland).
- 31 - *Halloween*
(see “**Other Cultural Festivals**”)
- (v) - *Diwali* – October/ November
(see “**Other Cultural Festivals**”)

November

- 5 - *Guy Fawkes’ Night*
Commemorates Guy Fawkes’ attempt to blow up the British Houses of Parliament.
Appropriately celebrated with fireworks displays. Read L. Pender’s ‘Barnaby and the Rocket’.
- (v) - *Melbourne Cup* – 1st Tuesday
- 11 - *Remembrance Day*

December

- (v) - *Hanukkah/Chanukah*
(see “**Other Cultural Festivals**”)
- 25 - *Christmas Day* (see “**Christmas**”)

Also included in the “Other Celebrations” section:

- NAIDOC Week
- Children’s Book Week
- Agricultural Shows
- Arts Festivals



Section 1:

Easter

□ Introduction

Although the Easter celebrations are public holidays, the week preceding could be used to cover the topic. The children need to understand that this festival originated in pre-Christian times in the northern hemisphere where Easter occurs at the beginning of Spring. The first festivals were in honour of the Goddess of Spring, Eostre. Special cakes were baked – today's hot cross bun – a cross was added in Christian times. Eggs were a sign of new life. Flowers such as daffodils, tulips and crocuses were regarded as harbingers of spring. Perhaps one has to experience the long, cold winters to appreciate these early festivities.

In Christian times the week preceding Easter is called Holy Week, commencing on Palm Sunday (see Calendar Notes). On the Thursday, Jesus and his disciples retired to an upper room to celebrate what came to be known as the Last Supper. At this time Jesus tried to prepare his disciples for the days ahead. They then went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. It was here that Jesus was arrested and taken before Pontius Pilate and King Herod.

On the next day (Good Friday) he was crucified on the hill named Golgotha. His body was laid in a tomb and a huge boulder placed at the entrance, guarded by soldiers as the authorities were afraid Jesus' followers would try and steal the body. It is important to note that crucifixion was common at that time. Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath which Jesus' disciples and followers spent in prayer. Remember this was a traumatic period for them, as they had hoped to see Jesus as their King and free themselves of Roman rule.

Early on the Sunday the women went to the tomb to prepare the body for burial, only to discover the boulder rolled aside and the body gone. They ran to tell the disciples who went to see for themselves. At this time Jesus showed himself to Mary Magdalene, to reassure her, and later to his disciples and followers various times prior to his ascension.

Other Easter Symbols

The Cross:

To represent that used for Jesus' crucifixion.

Lamb:

Jesus was referred to as the Lamb of God. Lambs were sacrificed as part of the Jewish festival of the Passover which was being celebrated at that time. A symbol of new life.

Lights, Candles:

Jesus referred to Himself as the Light of the World. A Paschal candle is lit at Passover services from which all the other candles in the synagogue were lit. These are taken home to light candles there.

Countries and various sections of the Orthodox Church (Greek, Russian, Serbian) celebrate Easter in many different ways, not necessarily at the same time.

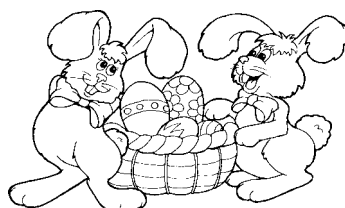
Easter

□ Activity Suggestions

- Make a collection of posters and pictures of Easter symbols – eggs, chickens, rabbits, candles, special Easter foods and activities.
- Explain the Easter story in simple terms.
- Organise an Easter bonnet parade.
- Decorate blown eggs in a variety of ways – dye, paint, cover with lace, braid, etc., give them human faces, hair, etc.
- Bake and eat hot cross buns.
- Make chickens and/or rabbits from dough and bake.
- Make Easter baskets, add a pom-pom chicken.
- Sing “*Hot Cross Buns*”, “*Lord of the Dance*”, and “*Santa Claus is Coming to Town*”, substituting Easter Bunny for Santa Claus.
- Draw a large candle on heavy card, make concentric circles around the frame, fill the circles with crumpled crepe paper, using a deep orange for the centre circle and gradually paler shades of orange and yellow for the other circles.

Internet Resources

- ▶ www.readyed.com.au/urls/easter.html - Ready-Ed Easter Links Page
- ▶ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter - Wikipedia Article
- ▶ www.easterbunnys.net/easteraroundtheworld.htm - Easter Around the World
- ▶ www.holidays.net/easter/ - Easter on the Net
- ▶ www.kidsdomain.com/craft/_Easter.html - Easter Craft
- ▶ resources.kaboose.com/games/easter.html - Easter Games
- ▶ akidsheart.com/holidays/easter/egames.htm - More Easter Games
- ▶ www.kidsites.org/search/primary/events_celebrations/easter/index.html - Easter Links
- ▶ www.kidsturncentral.com/holidays/easter.htm - Easter Fun
- ▶ www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/easter/stories.html - Easter Stories





Easter Eggs

■ There are ten easter eggs.

Colour in the eggs following these instructions.

Instructions

1. Colour the 1st and 10th eggs orange.
2. Draw blue stars on the 5th egg.
3. Draw green circles on the 3rd, 6th and 9th eggs.
4. Draw yellow triangles on the 7th egg.
5. Colour the 2nd, 4th and 8th eggs red.

