



After the Session Pack

The activities and lessons included in this December Dilemma Student Unit Packet can be used following the *Addressing the December Dilemma in Schools* webinar or as a stand-alone series of units. They address many of the key skills listed in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. These activities ask students to interpret and analyze new information, to conduct research and present their findings, to be conscientious speakers and attentive listeners and to think critically about the world around them. This Student Unit will help prepare students both academically and socially for their lives as citizens of our globally diverse 21st-century world.

This packet also includes several resources for educators, including assessments related to holiday inclusion and incorporation of religious diversity in curricula. Additional articles, lesson plans and guides from Teaching Tolerance and the First Amendment Center can be found on page 37.

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RESOURCES



December Dilemma Teacher Assessment

	Please rate, on a scale of 1-10, how well you think you do this (1 represents "I need to focus more attention on this", 10 represents "I do this well")	Please rate, on a scale of 1-4, how you prioritize these factors (1 represents the biggest priority, 4 represents the least)	Next Steps for Specific Factor:
When addressing the topic of identity in the classroom, I include religious and non-religious diversity as an element of identity.			
I address religious or non-religious holidays, celebrations or traditions equally and regularly throughout the year.			

I can explain to students, parents and colleagues why it is important to talk about religious and non-religious diversity.			
I encourage students to ask respectful questions about religious and non-religious diversity by modeling examples.			
I specifically design classroom lessons and projects that account for students' diversity, including religious or non-religious diversity.			
Resources			
General Notes			

When specifically addressing religion, I...

	Please rate, on a scale of 1-10, how well you think you do this (1 represents "I need to focus more attention on this", 10 represents "I do this well")	Please rate, on a scale of 1-4, how you prioritize these factors (1 represents the biggest priority, 4 represents the least)	Next Steps for Specific Factor:
Include multiple religious and secular traditions (e.g., not just one majority religion).			
Emphasize all backgrounds equally and avoid nominal representations of a tradition or custom (that could be perceived as tokenistic).			
Extend lessons and discussions beyond the "Five F's" (Food, Festivals, Facts, Famous People, Fashion) to address individual practices.			
Normalize differences in religious and non-religious contributions so that all students can feel that their holiday, custom or tradition is "regular" (and not perceived as strange or peculiar).			
Encourage meaningful participation by obtaining support from families in order to have students share their family's background, traditions or customs.			

<p>Remain mindful of “spokesperson syndrome” (asking someone to represent all people of a particular group). I provide the opportunity to share multiple stories, accounts and testimonies within a particular tradition.</p>			
<p>Emphasize that religion is always changing and internally diverse (e.g., the way people practice now may look different than how they practiced in the past or might practice in the future).</p>			
<p>Resources</p>			
<p>General Notes</p>			

Holiday Inclusion Planning Template

The following chart was designed to serve as a template to assist in your holiday inclusion efforts. You can keep track of all of the basic information pertaining to holidays and traditions observed by students in your classroom – from the dates of the holiday, to the students who may be affected by it, to which part(s) of your curriculum relate most directly to the holiday and provide the best opportunity for a “teachable moment.” Once you’ve identified this information and researched anything you do not know, you can plan for next steps and determine what further resources you may need. Refer to your completed chart throughout the year to stay up-to-date and prepare for upcoming observances.

Holiday	Date(s) [This year]	Religion(s)	Things to Know	Traditions	Potential Relevance to My Classroom Students	Topics Addressed in My Curriculum During this Time	School-wide Events Taking Place During this Time
Diwali E X A M P L E	November 1-5, 2013 (changes annually)	Hinduism Jainism	--Date changes each year (mid-Oct to mid-Nov) --“Festival of Lights” --Five days --Celebrated in families by performing traditional activities together in their homes (so students observing may miss school) --Greeting in English: “Happy Diwali”	--“Diwali” translates into “row of lamps” --Lighting of small clay lamps filled with oil to signify the triumph of good over evil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ (will miss school) • _____’s mother asked if she could make a presentation. • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to Indian immigration to the U.S. 	Ex: Election Day- November 5, 2013 (School Closed)
Next Steps:				Resources Needed:			

Holiday	Date(s) [This year]	Religion(s)	Things to Know	Traditions	Potential Relevance to My Classroom Students	Topics Addressed in My Curriculum During this Time	School-wide Events Taking Place During this Time

Next Steps:

Resources Needed:

UNIT ONE: RESPECT

Note: Units 1 and 2 help lay the groundwork for fostering a classroom of respect. You may choose to use these units at the beginning of the school year, or skip ahead to units 3 and 4.

Lesson One: Respecting Each Other

Rules of Respect

(Recommended grades: K-6)

Essential Question: Why is respect important? What do we agree is respectful behavior?

Background:

The Rules of Respect can be a great tool in creating a classroom culture of respect and reducing bullying and negative behavior. Use them throughout the year, adding to them or changing them where necessary. Start out your lessons by reminding students of the agreements. Encourage students whenever you see them behaving respectfully and refer to the agreements when students are acting disrespectfully. Call on them to follow their own agreements or “rules” when you observe discourteous behavior.

Procedure:

- 1) Ask the students if there was a time today when they felt happy and respected. What made them feel that way?
 - *K-2 students* can draw a picture of this time.
 - *3-4 students* can write a journal entry.
- 2) After giving students time to finish their work, debrief with a discussion. Suggested questions below:
 - Can you define respect?
 - Was there a time today when you were respectful to someone else?
 - How did that make you feel?
 - How did it make the other person feel?
- 3) Point out examples of respectful behavior that you noticed in class and have students write, draw or act out the situation.
- 4) Lead a discussion about what respect:
 - Looks like (i.e., raised hands)
 - Sounds like (i.e., “please”)

- Feels like (i.e., welcoming)
 - *Younger students* can share verbally.
 - *Older students* can use the worksheet (included with this lesson) to write down their ideas.
- 5) Have a group discussion about the students' conclusions about respect.
 - 6) Use the classroom chart of what respect looks like, sounds like and feels like as a Rules of Respect agreement or contract for your class.
 - 7) Lead a discussion about why this Rules of Respect agreement is important using the following questions as a starting point:
 - Why do we have these agreements?
 - How can we help ourselves follow these?
 - 8) Have students sign their names on the poster to indicate that they agree to the Rules of Respect that they brainstormed.
 - 9) You may want to laminate the agreement.
 - 10) Place the Rules of Respect agreement in a prominent place in the classroom.

What Does Respect....

LOOK LIKE?



SOUND LIKE?



FEEL LIKE?



Lesson Two: Please Tell Me More!

Respectful Questions

(Recommended grades: K-4)

Procedure:

1) Invite students to ask you questions to guess your favorite item in the categories below:

- Snack
- Holiday or Special Celebration
- Music to listen to
- Sport
- Game
- Book
- Season
- Family Activity

Wherever possible, emphasize some of your favorites that are counter to stereotypes that students may have, (i.e., a female athlete, a holiday not familiar to the students).

2) Once your students have asked a number of questions, thank them and point out examples of respectful questions they asked.

3) Ask the following questions to get students thinking about the way they speak:

- Did you learn something new about me?
- What did you learn?
- Why were these questions good examples of respectful questions?
- What are some other examples of respectful words we can use to ask questions?

4) Remind students that one part of respect is listening with full attention and asking questions in a respectful way.

5) Help students brainstorm examples of prompts for respectful questions, such as:

- What do you think about...?
- How do you feel about...?

One great prompt for students to learn is: Please tell me more about...

6) Ask students to brainstorm some questions that they would like to ask each other about their likes and dislikes, using "Please tell me more..."

Listening Circles

(Recommended grades: 3-6)

Procedure:

- 1) Ask students to form “listening circles” by doing the following:
 1. Split into two groups with equal numbers of people in each group.
 2. Form a circle such that one circle is inside the other circle.
 3. Have the two groups face each other, so that each of the students in the outer circle has a partner in the inner circle.

 - 2) Explain to students that they will have a few minutes to get to know each other. As described below, the circles can rotate so that partners will change for different questions.
 1. You (the educator) will ask the class a question about their interests, likes and dislikes, talents, family, background and beliefs. Some examples of questions to ask are below. Explain to the students that they will have a set time period to answer the questions (perhaps 2-5 minutes).
 2. Once the question is posed by the teacher, the student in the inner circle begins by asking the question (again) to the student in the outer circle.
 3. Students answering the questions will need a few seconds of “think time” to process their remarks.
 4. While the student in the outer circle is speaking, the student in the inner circle must listen carefully. Once the student in the outer circle has finished speaking, the student in the inner circle must ask a respectful question, such as “Please tell me more about...”
 5. After the first student has answered the question, it is the second student’s turn to answer the question, using the same format of asking respectful questions and listening attentively.
 6. After a set amount of time or a set number of questions, the outer circle moves clockwise one place so that each student now has a new partner. You (the educator) will pose a new question, and the activity continues. This can go on until every student from the outer circle has talked to every student from the inner circle.

 - 3) Questions for discussion can include many different topics. For example:
 - What do you like to do at home?
 - Who do you look up to?
 - Think of a challenge that you overcame. How did you overcome it?
 - Describe a time when you felt respected today. Why did you feel respected?
 - Describe your favorite holiday or celebration with your family.
-

UNIT TWO: MY IDENTITY AND MY FAMILY

Note: Units 1 and 2 help lay the groundwork for fostering a classroom of respect. You may choose to use these units at the beginning of the school year, or skip ahead to units 3 and 4.

What is a Family?

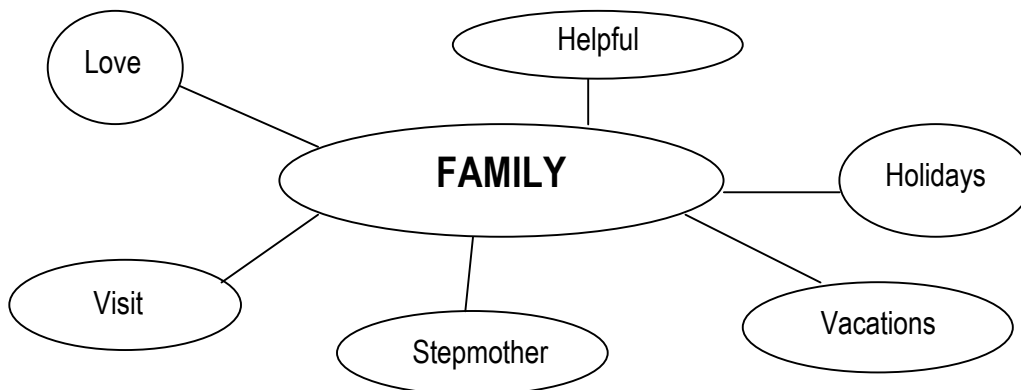
(Recommended grades: K-1)

Background:

Before beginning this lesson it is important to review the foundation for respect in the classroom so that students feel free to share more about their families. Remind students of the Rules of Respect.

Procedure:

- 1) Write the word “Family” on the blackboard or chart paper (this will turn into a word web).
- 2) Ask the students what comes to their minds when they think of the word “Family.”
- 3) Record the students’ responses in the form of a word web. It may look like the example below:



- 4) Ask students what bigger ideas emerge from the word web.

- 5) Explain that the class will be doing several activities to learn about the many different families that make up the class as well as the larger community.

Learning about the Diversity of Families

(Recommended grades: K-4)

Background:

It is very important that the pictures and books you choose for this lesson show many different kinds of family relationships.

Some suggested titles include:

- [*Families*](#) by Susan Kuklin
- [*In Our Family: Portraits of all Kinds of Families*](#) by Gigi Kaeser, Peggy Gillespie and Rebekah Boyd
- [*Of Many Colors: Portraits of Multiracial Families*](#) by Peggy Gillespie and Gigi Kaeser
- [*Love Makes a Family: Portraits of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Parents and Their Families*](#) by Gigi Kaeser and Peggy Gillespie

For additional book suggestions, please contact education@tanenbaum.org or refer to the *Religions in My Neighborhood* Chapter I (Unit 4) [reading list](#) (page 2).

Procedure:

- 1) Explain to the students that you will be exploring different types of families today.
- 2) Ask them to brainstorm a list of questions that they have about families. Generate a list on the blackboard/chart paper. If the list does not touch on the following topics, you may want to suggest some of the questions below:
 - How many members does a family have?
 - Do all family members live together in the same house?
 - Do all family members look alike?
 - Are all families religious?
 - For families that are religious, do all members practice the same religions?
 - Do all family members believe the same things?
 - Do all families live in the same country?
 - Do all family members speak the same languages?
 - Do you have to be born into a family to be a part of it?
 - How might you become a part of a family if you weren't born into it?
- 3) Divide the class into small groups of 2 or 3 students.

- 4) Assign each group 1 or 2 questions to investigate. Encourage them to conduct research with written and/or electronic materials. If appropriate, they can interview their own family members or other members of the community.

For younger students, instead of having small group conversations, you can lead a larger classroom discussion. The book [Families](#) by Susan Kuklin is a helpful resource. After the full group discussion, you may choose to skip directly to the following “Family Portraits” activity. Alternatively, you could modify the tasks below so that students engage more deeply with the images in *Families* or a similar book.

- 5) Distribute the pictures and books you have collected. Instruct students to look through the pictures and come up with an answer to your assigned questions.
 - *Younger students* may require guidance from adults to organize their thinking.
- 6) After each group of students has come up with answers to its questions, have the class come back together as a larger group. Have each group present on its findings and record its answers next to the questions.
 - Allow time for discussion of each question.
 - For each question, ask students to make connections to their own families.

Family Portraits

(Recommended grades: K-2)

Note: This activity is optional. It is particularly recommended for classes that are enthusiastic about art projects.

Background:

It is important to note that the students get to define their own family, and that they can include whoever that may be for them, whether it is a close friend, a pet, etc. Allow students to self-define family to include all variations of family make-up.

Procedure:

- 1) Tell students that you will be learning about the diversity of families in their classroom today by making family portraits.
- 2) Instruct students to consider the following questions as they plan to create a family portrait.
 - Who is in your family?
 - Why do you consider yourselves a family?
- 3) Allow students time to make their family portraits.
- 4) Once the portraits have been completed, ask students to either pair up or come together as a large group to share their family portraits.
- 5) Hang the finished portraits around the room to create a portrait gallery and ask students to think about the diversity of families they see.
- 6) Ask the students to share their ideas about what makes a family.
- 7) From the students' responses create a definition of the word "family" to be hung in the classroom with the family portraits.

Extensions:

Gallery Activity:

- 1) Give students the opportunity to walk through the gallery and to look at the pictures. Remind students to phrase respectful comments before you begin. Reference the "Rules of Respect" worksheet from Unit 1.
- 2) For older students, prepare sheets of paper next to each student's portrait and have students write their comments about that student's portrait.
- 3) Younger students can share orally.

Add additional diversity to the Gallery:

- 1) Add pictures of families not represented in student discussion to this lesson.

- 2) Invite other staff and community members to add their family pictures to the gallery.
- 3) The more family portraits that hang in the gallery, the greater diversity demonstrated.

Creating a Classroom Quilt

(Recommended grades: K-4)

Background:

In this activity you may use the family portraits from the previous activity, or ask the students to bring in pictures of themselves or their families (remind students to ask permission to bring in pictures). Another option is to bring in a camera and take photographs of the students in the classroom. Whether you are using previously made family portraits, photographs, or other student drawings, they should reflect your classroom diversity and the spirit of community.

Procedure:

- 1) Tell the students that they will be creating a classroom quilt.
- 2) Ask students “What is a quilt?” Explain that a quilt is a blanket made from patches of fabric stitched together.
- 3) Talk about other types of quilts such as peace quilts, AIDS quilts, and quilts made out of cultural or religious tradition (e.g. Amish quilts).
- 4) If you have prepared pictures of quilts or brought in a real quilt, share them with the students.
- 5) Use whichever form of picture or drawing you have chosen and make sure each student has a contribution to the quilt.
- 6) Ask the students to decide as a group how they want to arrange their pictures or drawings in the form of a classroom quilt.
 - Students can attach the pictures together using construction paper to form the frame of the quilt.
- 7) Once the students’ pictures or drawings have created the main section of the quilt, have them use the extra materials to decorate the rest of the quilt.
- 8) Display the quilt where the whole class can see it.
- 9) After all the students have had a chance to observe the quilt, begin a discussion about the diversity within their classroom as well as the community they have formed. Some suggested questions are below:
 - What do you notice about the portraits?
 - What do they have in common? What makes each special?
 - What was it like to work together to create this quilt?

If you used family drawings or pictures:

- What are some things that we can learn about families by looking at these portraits?

- After doing this activity and looking at the diversity of family representations from our own community, how do you think differently about what families look like across the U.S.? Around the world?
- What do all of the families have in common?

UNIT THREE: MY BELIEFS

Ancestor Celebrations; Poetry

(Recommended for grades 3 and up)

This lesson can also be combined with the “Exploring ‘Diversity within Diversity’” activity (Unit 4).

Background

Distribute the “Ancestor Celebrations” worksheet (included) as homework before beginning this lesson. Ask students to take it home, fill it out, and bring it back to use with this lesson. Explain that the goal of the exercise is to see where the interviewees come from and what celebrations took place there.

Note: Students should feel free to interview a neighbor, family friend, or another individual.

Fill out your own “Ancestor Celebrations” worksheet as an example for students.

If you can’t make copies of the worksheet for all students, have the children write down the questions.

Procedure

Step One: In class, have students sit in a circle. The students should have the answers to the interviews they conducted for reference. Have a world map up on the wall where everybody can see it.

You can provide the first example of telling students about one traditional holiday in your family. Make sure to record information about the holiday on chart paper and point out which country the holiday comes from on the map.

An excellent way to help students learn more visually is to create a “world-wide web”. Take a thumb tack with a piece of yarn. Place one end of the yarn at your present location (e.g., New York City), tacking it to the map. Now point out where the holiday your family celebrates is originally from and run the yarn to that place (making a connection point between the two points). Tack the other end as well.

Go around the circle and have all the students share their answers. As students share, repeat the same process, asking if anybody can identify the relevant locations on the map. For variety, different color yarn and thumbtacks can be used.

Step Two: Take a moment to examine the finished class chart paper of holidays and the world map. Ask students what they notice about the answers on the chart paper or about the map. Did anything surprise them? What did they learn?

Step Three: Ask students to pick one holiday to write a poem about. Some students may not celebrate any holidays. If this is the case, students can write about a favorite tradition (for

example, a yearly family reunion or going to the mosque for Friday prayers).

Explain that students will write a poem about this particular holiday or tradition. They will then have the opportunity to read their poems out loud to their classmates.

If desired, students can use the templates included at the end of the lesson to structure their poem. Help students write their poems about the holidays they have chosen. Encourage the children to be as descriptive as possible in their writing.

Step Four:

Have students come together in a circle. Each student reads his/her poem out loud.

Step Five: With younger students, after each student shares his poem, ask the other students:

What did you find most interesting about _____'s poem and why?

What is important to _____ about his/her holiday or tradition?

What is important to you about your holiday or tradition?

How are these celebrations similar?

How are these celebrations different?

For older students, have them think about respectful questions they can ask each other to learn more about what is important to their classmates about the tradition they wrote about.

Emphasize that not everybody who is of the same religion or culture celebrates the same holiday in the exact same way. For instance, there are variations in how different sects of the same religion or different regions in the same country celebrate the same holiday. In addition, each family may have unique traditions of their own for celebrating a holiday or may not observe a particular holiday at all.

Extension Activity: Students can make a collage representing the person that they interviewed. For instance, they can include a picture of the person, a picture of the country on the map, pictures of the landscape, neighborhoods and other major sites in that country, pictures of where the person lived, words in the language that he/she spoke, images relevant to the story, etc.

Ancestor Celebrations – Interview Template

(Recommended for grades 3 and up; younger students may answer some of the questions)

This lesson can also be combined with the “Exploring ‘Diversity within Diversity’” activity (Unit 4).

Before you begin:

Name of person being interviewed:

- How do you know this person? (Are you related? Are you neighbors? Etc...)

Questions to ask:

- Where were you born?

- Where were your parents or caregivers born?

- Where were your caregivers’ or parents’ parents born?

- Have you ever lived in another country/ies? Which one(s)? For how long?

- What is something that is different in your daily life now versus when you were younger or lived in another place?

- What language(s) did you speak when you were younger or lived in a different place?

- Who did you live with? (Why?)

- Who were your neighbors? How were they similar to you? Different than you?

- What is an important holiday or family tradition that you celebrate?

- How do you celebrate this holiday or tradition?

- Why is this holiday or tradition special to you/your family?

- Please share a story or memory that you have from a time that you observed this holiday or tradition.

On a separate paper, please cut and paste a picture from a magazine or other source that can help your friends and classmates visualize the experiences you learned about in your interview. If you cannot find any photos, you may choose to draw a picture instead.

Poetry Templates

(Recommended for grades 3 and up)

Acrostic Poem: A modified example of an acrostic poem that can easily be set to music is given below:

Eid

E is for Everybody

I is for Invitations to visit

D is for Dressing up

Five Senses Poem: A five senses poem captures the sensations involved with a celebration (seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting and feeling), as shown below:

Pongal

Pongal is

Green and Purple Sugarcane (seeing)

Pungent, Smoky Fires (smelling)

Banging, Clattering, "Pongal!" (hearing)

Sweet, Ripe, Crunchy (tasting)

Special, Family, Fun (feeling)

To me.

Name of the Holiday

_____ is

3 words that have to do with how it looks

3 words that have to do with how it smells

3 words that have to do with how it sounds

3 words that have to do with how it tastes

3 words that have to do with how it feels to me.

Garden of Beliefs

(Recommended for grades 4 and up)

Essential Questions: “What are some of the ‘Big Questions’ that have led to our various beliefs?” And “What are some of the different beliefs that different people have about some of the ‘Big Questions’?”

Background

A garden grows from many seeds into many species of plants and vegetables and uses many different nutrients in the soil. Thus, this is a powerful metaphor to help cultivate the garden of ideas, beliefs and experiences in your learning community. Using this garden metaphor, students can picture this wide range of perspectives living in a big metaphorical garden of human experience with lots from which to choose.

The students in your learning community may bring a wide range of perspectives to this activity. While this activity does make note of a range of diverse religious experiences, it does not cover every experience. One book or one lesson is never enough. This lesson can be used in connection with other lessons in this unit or from your broader curriculum.

It will be essential for the educator to affirm children who bring perspectives that may be unfamiliar to the class or that may be unique within your learning community. When in doubt, it is useful to follow the Rules of Respect that you set up in Unit One to serve as a guide. Consider the metaphor of a garden with many seeds, many species of plants and vegetables and many different nutrients in the soil as a way to help cultivate the garden of ideas in your learning community.

Procedure

1. Introduce the metaphor of a garden. Ask students about what is in a garden. Answers should include various types of plants, flowers and vegetables, of all different shapes, sizes and colors.
2. Explain to students that a garden can be seen as a metaphor for the diversity of our community. Just as there are many different types of people, with many different traditions, beliefs and other characteristics, so too are there different types of plants in a garden.
3. Invite students to create a seed, plant and environmental factor (such as rain or sunlight) to be part of a classroom garden mural. If you are pressed for time, you can project an image of a garden onto a screen or wall in your classroom.
4. Ask students to think of a belief that they have, or of a tradition that their family celebrates or observes.

5. Have students cut or use pre-sliced cut-outs to correspond to a piece of the garden mural, for each of the following three items:
 - a. Seeds – a tradition one’s family originally celebrated or a question students have
 - b. Plants – how the student’s family celebrates that tradition today or a belief that students hold as an answer to their question [the seed]
 - c. Environmental factors – how/why that tradition changed or factors that helped students develop their beliefs
6. Once students have filled out their cut-outs, they will take turns adding them to the mural or projection. They can read their cut-outs out loud to their classmates as they add them, or you can provide time for students to read each other’s cut-outs once all have been placed on the mural.
7. Students will likely have questions about what their classmates added to the mural. Lead the class in a discussion about “respectful curiosity” – how we can ask respectful questions to learn more about others’ beliefs and traditions. Then, allow students to “walk through the garden” to ask their classmates respectful questions to learn more about each other.
 - a. Depending on the age of your students, you may wish to brainstorm some respectful sentence starters before they begin asking questions of each other. Some examples:
 - i. What you said about _____ is very interesting. Can you please tell me more?
 - ii. I don’t know if I understand _____; can you please clarify it for me?
 - iii. I like what you wrote about _____. Can you tell me more about why you wrote that?

UNIT FOUR: OUR COMMUNITY

The activities below can be modified depending on the grade that you teach and the interests of your students. We recommend that you include at least one of these activities in your planning.

Discussion Questions

(Recommended for grades 3 and up)

Below are some suggested discussion questions for debriefing the activities in Unit Three, extending learning beyond the December holiday season and/or opening up students' learning to a broader exploration of religious diversity. These questions can be used for small or large group discussions, as writing prompts or as part of another activity.

- What other holidays/traditions do we have throughout the year?
- What are some questions that we can ask to learn more about each other's beliefs (beyond holidays/traditions)?
- How have traditions in your family changed over time?
- How have traditions in our community changed over time?
- How do the traditions represented in our classroom vary from one family to the next?
- How can we learn more about different holidays/traditions and beliefs that are not present in our classroom?
- How can all of our ideas and beliefs coexist in the same classroom, community, and world?
- What questions do you have about holidays/traditions or systems of belief that we have not discussed here?

Optional Homework Assignment: Using the template in the next activity, students can explore how members of the same religion or of the same family might celebrate holidays or practice traditions differently. This activity will help students better understand the concept of "diversity within diversity."

Exploring "Diversity within Diversity"

(Recommended for grades 4 and up)

Choose a holiday or tradition that you would like to explore more in-depth. Interview three people who observe that holiday/tradition – they can be three members of the same family, three people who attend the same house of worship or three individuals from the broader community. If you are unable to interview three people, you can research individual stories preserved online or in books, newspapers or magazines.

The holiday/tradition that I am researching is: _____

Person 1

Name:

Age:

Relationship to other interviewees:

Where were you born?

When did you start observing this holiday/tradition? What is one specific thing that you remember about the first time you participated in this observance? (If you were too young to remember, what is an early memory that you have of this observance?)

Do you still observe this holiday/tradition today? Why or why not?

What are three things that you do today when observing this holiday/tradition?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is your favorite part of this holiday/tradition? Why is it your favorite?

Person 2

Name:

Age:

Relationship to other interviewees:

Where were you born?

When did you start observing this holiday/tradition? What is one specific thing that you remember about the first time you participated in this observance? (If you were too young to remember, what is an early memory that you have of this observance?)

Do you still observe this holiday/tradition today? Why or why not?

What are three things that you do today when observing this holiday/tradition?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is your favorite part of this holiday/tradition? Why is it your favorite?

Person 3

Name:

Age:

Relationship to other interviewees:

Where were you born?

When did you start observing this holiday/tradition? What is one specific thing that you remember about the first time you participated in this observance? (If you were too young to remember, what is an early memory that you have of this observance?)

Do you still observe this holiday/tradition today? Why or why not?

What are three things that you do today when observing this holiday/tradition?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is your favorite part of this holiday/tradition? Why is it your favorite?

What do these three people have in common?

How are their observances different? List at least one thing that is unique to each individual.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think these individuals, who observe the same holiday/tradition, have different practices? In areas where they might have the same or similar practices, why do you think that is?

Classroom Calendar

(Recommended for grades K-6)

1. Now that students have learned a bit more about each other's holidays/traditions, they can create a multicultural, multi-religious calendar that makes note of everyone's special days. You may wish to consult your Teacher Planning Grid (see above, pages 8-9) to help ensure that an appropriate range of holidays are included. The grid can also be updated based on what students say about the particular holidays they add to the calendar.
2. Students will take turns adding their holidays, traditions or commemorations to the calendar.
3. Days off from school can be added, as well as other broader communal days of significance.
4. As holidays are added to the calendar, students can include their names by those days that are of particular significance to them.
5. Depending on the physical size of the calendar you are creating, students may add symbols for their special days; they can also create decorative borders that combine the symbols of the various days of significance within that month.

Classroom Ideals

(Recommended for grades K-6)

What does this respect for diversity *look* like, *sound* like and *feel* like? You may wish to revise the Rules of Respect created during the first lesson, or to create a new chart using the template included in that lesson. This activity serves as a framework for creating a set of "classroom ideals" that reflect the class's commitment to respecting, honoring and appreciating the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their classmates.

RESOURCES

Resources from Teaching Tolerance

[School Holiday Calendar Lesson](#)

Grades 3-5, 6-8, 9-12

This social justice-oriented lesson asks students to consider how certain religious holidays help shape the school year calendar. Students will explore themes of privilege and accommodation while considering possibilities for adapting the calendar to be more inclusive.

[“Avoiding the Holiday ‘Balance Traps’” Article](#)

This article offers several helpful tips for ensuring that holidays are discussed accurately and equally in the classroom.

[“Religious Holidays” Article](#)

This article provides further suggestions for how to address religious holidays, including guidance for studying holidays throughout the year and connecting them thematically.

[Respecting Nonreligious People](#)

Students often learn the importance of respecting people of different religions, and of respecting religious beliefs that are different from their own. But what about people who do not hold religious beliefs at all? Too often the right *not* to believe is excluded from lessons about tolerance.

[Understanding Religious Clothing](#)

In the United States, different types of religious clothing exist just about everywhere. In this lesson, students will explore how articles of clothing are linked to different religions. First they will research issues around some common articles of religious clothing, such as the hijab and the yarmulke. Then they will explore misconceptions and stereotypes associated with those articles of clothing.

[Taking a Closer Look at Religions Around the World](#)

This lesson includes activities and projects that are easily expanded upon through further research. It is designed to encourage continuous, in-depth study of these topics over a longer period of time.

Resources from The First Amendment Center

[Finding Common Ground](#)

This resource provides public schools with advice for how to address religious holidays.

Additional Resources

[Tanenbaum's World Religions Fact Sheet](#)

This resource provides a brief overview of several of the world's major religions.

[BBC World Religions](#)

Learn more about several major world religions with this general overview, which includes sections about arts and culture, beliefs, history, holy days, ethics, practices and more.

[Huffington Post Interfaith Calendar](#)

This list of many religions' holidays in 2013, with dates, can be a useful tool when planning for holiday inclusion. The 2014 edition will be available at the beginning of January.

[Ravel Unravel](#)

Project Interfaith offers this multimedia exploration of the tapestry of spiritual and religious identities that make up our communities and world.

[December Dilemma Legal Issues Webinar from ADL \(Recording\)](#)

Explore the legal issues of religious freedom and learn how you can help to create a school environment that respects different points of view, religious beliefs and practices.

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