

## Diversity Spotlight



### December spotlight on holiday celebrations

December is the end of the year and a time to celebrate many holidays! This month we will explore winter holiday celebrations!

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#### Resources To Get You Started!

Many holidays in the winter months focus on celebrations of light and bringing family together. Here is a list of different holidays and different ways to celebrate them!

#### Diwali



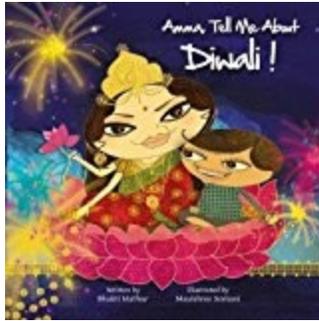
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/15451833>

Diwali is a Hindu celebration that actually occurs between October and November. The word Diwali comes from the word Deepawali which means rows of lights. The holiday primarily celebrates the return of deities Rama and Sita to Ayodhya, an ancient city in India. People light clay lamps called Diyas to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness or good over evil. Diwali lasts for five days and includes fireworks, gifts, sweets and artwork with colored sand. Goddess Lakshmi brings gifts and blessings to children.

Resources: <https://www.globetrottingkids.com/diwali-festival-of-lights/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQ-VIbZSKIo> This sweet five-minute video tells a story of children celebrating Diwali.

Read about it!

<https://coloursofus.com/top-10-diwali-childrens-books/>



Here is a list of books to get you and your family started!

<https://coloursofus.com/top-10-diwali-childrens-books/>

## Hanukkah



The Hanukkah 2020 postage stamp is available at [usps.com](https://usps.com) or check your local post office!

Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday celebrated for eight days beginning in the end of November or beginning to mid-December. This year it begins the evening of December 10<sup>th</sup>. On each day at sundown, families gather to light a single candle on a Menorah. The Menorah has nine candles, the one in the center is used to light each of the eight candles. The candles are meant to burn for the full eight days to celebrate the miracle of a small oil lamp that burned for eight days when Jewish people were escaping persecution, keeping them safe and reminding them of the power of light, strength, tenacity and hope. During Hanukkah, families exchange gifts on each of the eight nights, play a game called dreidel where they spin a special top with Hebrew symbols and sing a song. They also eat latkes, delicious fried potato pancakes.

Resources:

<https://www.parents.com/holiday/hanukkah/how-to-explain-the-story-of-hanukkah-to-kids/>

Here is a list of TV shows for children about celebrating Hanukkah:

<https://everydayjewishmom.com/2020/11/07/hanukkah-tv-episodes-for-kids-2020/>

[https://pjlibrary.org/hanukkah\\_archive](https://pjlibrary.org/hanukkah_archive)

Read about it!

PJ Library is an organization that sends free Jewish Children's books to families around the world who have Judaism in their lives. The list below is divided by age with a range of stories about Hanukkah.



<https://pjllibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/december-2018/the-ultimate-list-of-childrens-books-hanukkah>

## Kwanzaa



<https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/26/us/kwanzaa-explainer-trnd/index.html>

Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday which celebrates pan- African heritage and members of the African diaspora. Kwanzaa is celebrated for seven days each year from December 26<sup>th</sup>- January 1. In 1966, professor Dr. Maulana Karenga founded the holiday to celebrate African American community, unity, justice and nature. The word Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza," which means "first fruits." Dr. Karenga chose Swahili because the language is not limited to one African language group, however, it is important to note that Africans speak thousands of different languages based on region and tribal group. During Kwanzaa families light a candle on the kinara, a candelabra that holds seven different colored candles, one black, three red, and three green, each one standing for one of the seven principals of Kwanzaa: unity (umoja), self-determination (kujichagulia), collective responsibility (ujima), cooperative economics (ujamaa), purpose (nia), creativity (kuumba) and faith (imani). The colors of the candles represent the people, the struggle and the future, respectively.

Resources:

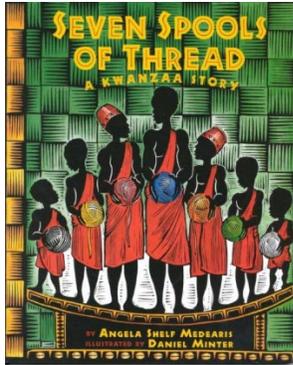
<https://www.thespruce.com/kids-kwanzaa-party-guide-2104300>

<https://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.html>

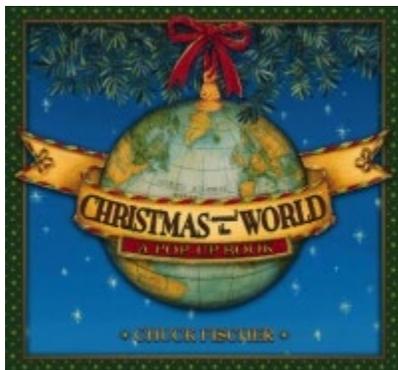
[PBS LEARNING MEDIA | Kwanzaa | PBS KIDS - YouTube](#)

Read about it!

<https://www.nypl.org/blog/2017/12/27/kwanzaa-picture-books>



## Christmas



<https://www.safekid.org/fr/magazine-issue/issue-06/item/29-how-children-celebrate-christmas-around-the-world>

Christmas is celebrated in many ways around the world. The culturally dominant holiday celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Christmas seems to be more than one day with brightly lit homes springing up throughout the month of December and households putting up and decorating their Christmas trees. For example, in Mexico, Christians celebrate starting on the 9<sup>th</sup> day before Christmas by hosting Posadas. During Posadas, people come together to re-enact Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem and their search for a place to stay, sing Christmas songs, share food and have a celebration each night for 9 nights. Each night, someone different hosts the celebration. Many families have different traditions around the food they make to celebrate Christmas. Some families make tamales, and other families have a feast of the seven fishes on Christmas eve.

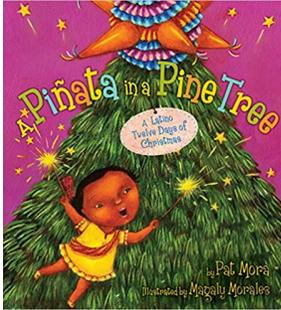
Resources:

<https://www.tripsavvy.com/christmas-posadas-tradition-in-mexico-1588744>

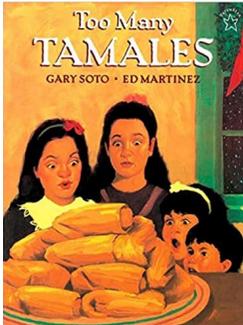
Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry has an exhibit each year called “Christmas around the World and Holidays of Light”. Even though the museum is currently closed to the public, they are offering live tours of the decorated Christmas trees in the Great Hall.

<https://www.msichicago.org/explore/whats-here/exhibits/christmas-around-the-world/live-tour/>

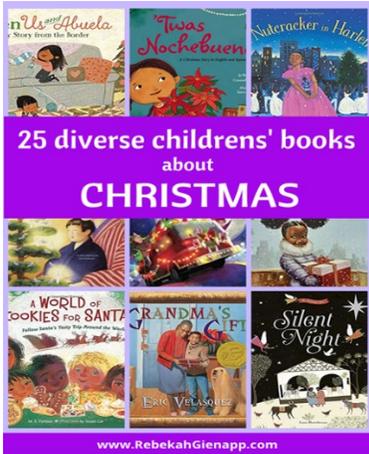
Read about it!



“An award-winning author and a rising star artist have put a festive Latino twist on “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” populating it with piñatas in place of partridges, plus *burritos bailando* (dancing donkeys), *lunitas cantando* (singing moons), and much more, all displayed in the most vivid colors imaginable.”



“This is the story of a treasure thought to be lost in a batch of tamales; of a desperate and funny attempt by Maria and her cousins to eat their way out of trouble; and the warm way a family pulls together to make it a perfect Christmas after all.”



“25 diverse and inclusive children’s books about Christmas.”  
<https://www.rebekahgienapp.com/diverse-christmas-childrens-books/>

Questions? Do you have a topic you would like to see covered in the Diversity Spotlight? Would you like to contribute to the Diversity Spotlight?

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