



Julie M, Amanda

## Make Your Celebrations Accessible

- Time? Childcare? Transportation?
- Accessible entrances & restrooms that are not in the back of the building by the dumpster
- Closed Captions
- Interpreters
- ALT Text
- Braille
- Elevators
- Stakeholders involved in planning



1. Don't schedule important events on holidays of any populations you serve.
2. Consider how many holidays you can celebrate in one year (acknowledgement vs. celebration).
3. Windows and mirrors
4. Build on your own knowledge: You cannot teach what you do not know

Links for Holidays

[https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/34.%20TT\\_Handouts\\_POE\\_%20Religious%20and%20School%20Holidays%2002%20.pdf](https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/34.%20TT_Handouts_POE_%20Religious%20and%20School%20Holidays%2002%20.pdf)

Lesson for group:

[https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/34.%20TT\\_Handouts\\_POE\\_%20Religious%20and%20School%20Holidays%2002%20.pdf](https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/34.%20TT_Handouts_POE_%20Religious%20and%20School%20Holidays%2002%20.pdf)

<https://www.montclair.edu/social-justice-diversity/observance-calendar/>

## + [Some] National Holidays & Celebrations

- **September** | Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month, Labor Day, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur
  - **October** | National Indigenous People's Day, LGBTQ History Month
  - **November** | Native American Heritage Month, Diwali (Hindu, Sikh, Jain)
  - **December** | Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice
  - **January** | MLK Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day
  - **February** | Black History Month, Lunar New Year
  - **March** | Women's History Month & International Women's Day, Transgender Day of Visibility
  - **March-April** | Deaf History Month, Passover (Jewish)
  - **April** | Autism Awareness Month, Hindu New Year, Earth Day, Armenian Martyr's Day
  - **April-May** | Ramadan (Muslim)
  - **May** | Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Jewish American Heritage Month, Mental Health Awareness Month, Eid al-Fitr (Muslim)
  - **June** | LGBTQ Pride Month, Immigrant Heritage Month, Juneteenth
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Privileged Social Identity Groups Agent Groups   Dominant Groups   "Norm"	System of Oppression "-ism"	Oppressed Social Identity Groups Targeted Groups   Marginalized Groups   Minoritized Groups   "Other"
White	Racism   White Supremacy	People of Color (including Multiracial)
U.S. Citizen & U.S. Born	Nationalism   Xenophobia	Non-U.S. Citizen & Born
Male	Sexism   Patriarchy	Female, Intersex
Men	Sexism   Patriarchy	Women, Non-Binary
Cisgender	Cissexism   Transphobia	Transgender
Heterosexual	Heterosexism   Homophobia	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, etc.
Upper Class, Wealthy, Middle Class	Classism	Working Class, Impoverished, Lower Class
Non-Disabled	Ableism	Disabled/People with Disabilities
Christian	Christian Dominance Antisemitism   Islamophobia	Jewish, Muslim, Atheist, etc.
Adults (25-50)	Adultism   Ageism	Children, Elders
Tall, Athletic	Sizeism	Fat, Short, Large



## Align All Holidays & Celebrations With the Purpose of Education

**Purpose 1:** To prepare students to be responsible participants in a diverse, multiracial democracy

- *Does this prepare students to live in a diverse democracy?*
- *Does it provide students with "windows" and "mirrors"—diverse representation?*
- *Are there any problematic stereotypes being promoted?*

**Purpose 2:** To prepare students to be able to care for themselves, their families, and their communities on a dying planet

- *Does this help students think more critically?*

**Purpose 3:** To provide an emotionally, physically, and psychologically safe place free of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism and all other isms for children to spend their time

- *Is this being done in a way that everyone feels a sense of belonging?*
- *Who is being excluded?*



TRADITIONALLY CELEBRATED HOLIDAYS	WHY?	CONCERN(S)	CORRECTIONS
Christmas	"Fun" "Holiday spirit"	Classist Shaming (good kids get gifts, bad kids don't) Christian	Cancel; Focus on Winter solstice; give equal weight to other religious holidays
Halloween	"Fun"	Classist (Who has a costume? Whose families can come during the day?) Excludes some religious groups*	Cancel; Focus on Fall Harvest; Make masks at school in Art Class with school supplies; Get community donated costumes for all students to choose from.
Crazy Hair Day	"Fun"	Racist (white kids doing their hair like Black girls do it every day; Black hair care not considered) Ableist	Cancel; "Express yourself" day
Mothers Day (or Fathers Day)	Showing appreciation	Ignores diverse family structures (Two moms? No mom? Foster mom? Abusive mom?); Fathers Day is in the Summer	Cancel; Family Appreciation Day
St. Patrick's Day	"Fun"	Reinforcing stereotypes about the Irish	Cancel; Teach accurate history
Valentine's Day	"Fun"	Heteronormative; Exclusionary; Classist; Inappropriately fostering romantic relationships	Cancel; Focus on the importance of love of self, friends, planet etc.; do affirmations for everyone in the class at school

Think about what the students want about each holiday. Is it dressing up? Is it the food at school? Is it a gift? Is it no homework?

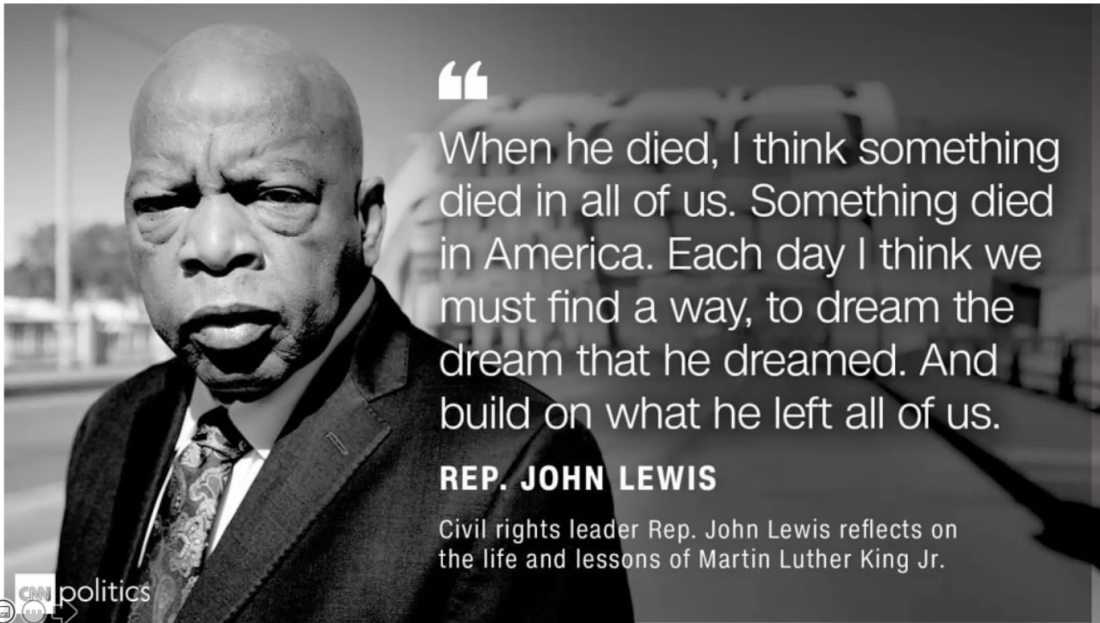
## + How to Make Holidays & Heritage Months Socially Just

*Pick holidays & celebrations that foster justice & provide windows & mirrors*

1. Identify why it is important
2. Plan collaboratively to scaffold learning
3. Start with empowering & positive contributions (that aren't rooted in oppression)
4. Move beyond commonly known figures & events—consider intersecting social identities
5. Provide relevant historical, political, economic, social context
6. Connect to current social justice issues, events, and movements
7. Build knowledge by fostering critical thinking and connecting to content in ways that make sense
8. Build ALL students' identities as activists committed to diversity and justice—those from the marginalized groups being celebrated \*and\* those from from privileged groups
9. Make it interesting & engaging
10. Incorporate in ongoing ways

Do not reinforce inequality

## Why is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day important?



No “I have a dream” bubbles that are just kids dreaming out anything (I dream of being a veterinarian, I dream of a new playground). Students should understand that social justice is at the heart of MLK.

## Why is LGBTQ History Month important?



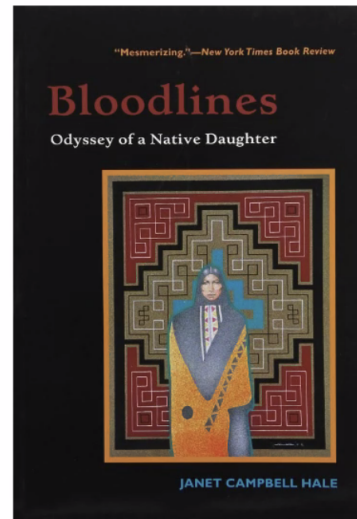
LGBTQIA History Month: To understand that this marginalized population exists in our school and highlight

-We need students to know that this is a safe place for them. It is legitimately a life-saving celebration.

## Why is Thanksgiving important? Why is the National Day of Mourning Important?

If Irish or Italian culture dies in America it really isn't that big a deal. They will still exist in Italy and Ireland. Not so with us. There is no other place. North America is our old country.

Janet Campbell Hale

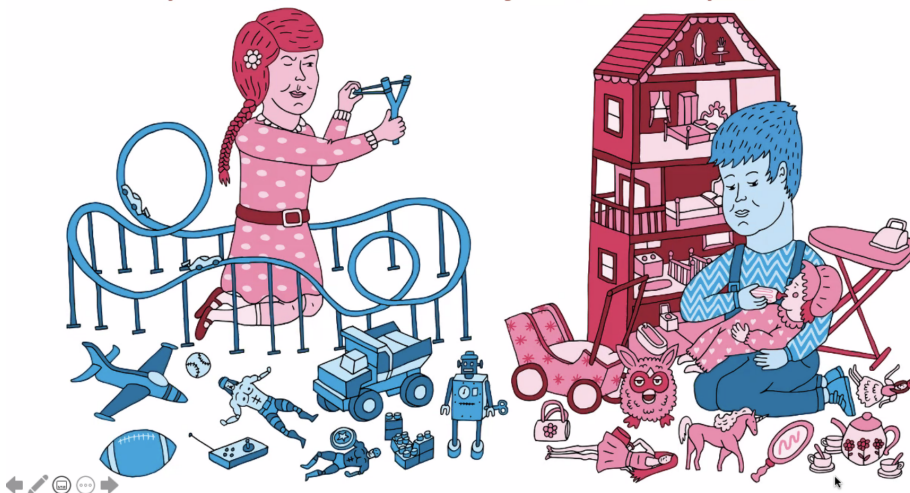


We study the different indigenous tribes in 5th grade social studies. Could we incorporate the Thanksgiving...National Day of Mourning...into this unit?

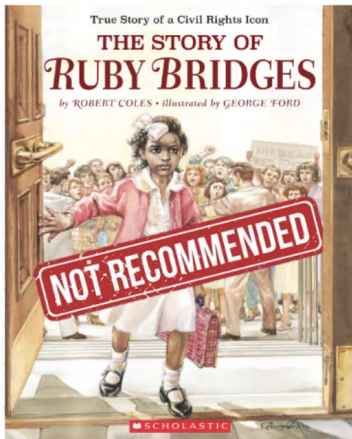
4th grade studies Michigan History—3 fires, tribal land, etc.

[▶ A Class That Turned Around Kids' Assumptions of Gender Roles!](#)

## Why is Women's History Month important?



## Problematic Scaffolding of MLK & Civil Rights



**Book ending:** "When school was over for the day, Ruby hurried through the mob as usual. After she walked a few blocks and the crowd was behind her, Ruby said a prayer.... Please God, try to forgive those people, Because even if they say those bad things, They don't know what they're doing...."

- Teaching Ruby Bridges in Kindergarten without proper scaffolding is not developmentally appropriate.
- Important context need prior to this lesson:
  - What is race? What are the racial groups in our country? How did these different groups come to live here?
  - Why was there segregation?
  - What was/is the role of police?
  - For this book: What is prayer? What is the belief in God?
- Important follow up:
  - Why do schools continue to be segregated today?
  - What can children do to make the world a more equal and just place?

<https://womenshouldknow.net/downloadable-stem-role-models-posters/>



### 3. Start with empowering & positive contributions (that aren't rooted in oppression)

**Reflective Question:** *What should students learn about the contributions of this group/person/event that isn't primarily about their experiences of discrimination?*

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- LGBTQIA+ History Month
- Women's History Month
- Thanksgiving

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Organizers in the Civil Rights Movement and the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs & Freedom

- Fannie Lou Hamer
- Bayard Rustin
- Ella Baker
- Walter Reuther
- A. Philip Randolph



## LGBTQIA+ History Month

Pauli Murray \*Queer Civil Rights Scholar & Activist



[Thanksgiving: Why the story of Thanksgiving is a lie? Video clip](#)



	MLK DAY	LGBTQ HISTORY MONTH	WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH	THANKSGIVING
Math	<p>Calculate the percent of Americans who supported MLK and the Civil Rights Movement in 1963—disaggregate by race, gender, class; Compare to the percent of Americans who support Black Lives Matter today.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> How can math help us better understand the challenges &amp; possibilities in achieving justice for all?</p>	<p>Graph the changes in support for gay marriage over time in three different countries.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> How can math help us better understand the challenges &amp; possibilities in achieving justice for all?</p>	<p>Learn about stereotypes and stereotype threat when it comes to women's achievement in math.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> Why have women been less likely than men to be mathematicians? What could we do to interrupt this trend?</p>	<p>Calculate percentages of Indigenous people living in the Americas at various points in history—rates of change.</p> <p><b>Critical Questions:</b> How does math help us better understand changes in the make-up of our country? How can it be used to better understand inequality?</p>
Science	<p>Learn how science has been used to make false claims about biological differences between racial groups.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> How can science be used in dangerous ways that perpetuate bias and injustice? How do we learn to recognize when this is happening?</p>	<p>Learn the biological connection between sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> How has science been used to justify oppression? What new have we learned scientifically that shapes our understanding of LGBTQ identity and issues? What is science still wrestling with?</p>	<p>Learn about the inventions and contributions of women scientists of color.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> Why did it take a film like "Hidden Figures" for our society to recognize the contributions of Black women computers to NASA?</p>	<p>Learn about disparities in Covid rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Compare to other ways disease has ravaged Indigenous communities unjustly.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> Why have there been such health disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities?</p>
ELA	<p>Read and analyze "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" or MLK's "Mountaintop Speech"</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> How does this compare to the version of MLK you have learned about in previous years? What was missing in those narratives?</p>	<p>Read and analyze James Baldwin's <a href="#">Giovanni's Room</a></p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> How was Baldwin using this text as a coming out about his own sexual orientation? What did he risk in doing so?</p>	<p>Research the history of the publishing industry and write a paper explaining why children's books written by men have historically been more likely to be published than those written by women.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> How does sexism manifest at the institutional level?</p>	<p>Read contemporary Indigenous authors such as <a href="#">Josie Dances</a> and learn about contemporary Native American traditions.</p> <p><b>Critical Question(s):</b> How does this compare to the narrative you were previously taught about the lives of contemporary Native Americans?</p>

## Justice Leaders Collaborative

# Socially Just Holidays & Celebrations for Schools

### Make it Accessible

#### Language Access

[interpreters, captions, ALT text, braille, translation, clear masks]

#### Physical Access

[ramps, elevators, restrooms]

### Pick Holidays that Foster Justice

Consider capacity—*How many holidays can you celebrate well in a school year?*

Consider marginalized social identities—*Who do you serve?*

Build your own knowledge—*What do you need to know?*

## Plan for Justice

1. Identify why it is important
2. Plan collaboratively to scaffold learning
3. Start with empowering & positive contributions (that aren't rooted in oppression)
4. Move beyond commonly known figures & events—consider intersecting social identities
5. Provide relevant historical, political, economic & social context
6. Connect to current social justice issues, events, and movements
7. Build knowledge by connecting to content in ways that make sense and fostering critical thinking
8. Build ALL students' commitment to diversity and justice—those from the marginalized groups \*and\* those from from privileged groups
9. Make it interesting & engaging
10. Incorporate in ongoing ways
11. Do not reinforce inequality



## Final Considerations



- Gain buy-in from staff
- Make sure labor is fairly distributed
- Communicate effectively with families & community

\*Education will be required for all stakeholders.\*

Focus on Thankfulness and Gratitude, and not about the Europeans and Pilgrims.  
Valentine's Day-focus on self-love, positive affirmations, etc.