

## Goals/Objective/Students Outcomes:

### Students will:

Learn about what holidays were celebrated earlier in our history.

Understand that all people celebrate special events and holidays.

Learn about the ways people celebrate the special holidays in their family and their community.

Understand the ethnic and geographical differences in holidays and the ways they are celebrated.

## Materials:

1. Newspapers, new and old
2. Time to look at television and listen to the radio
3. Equipment to show films and videos about holidays
4. Advertisements for clothing, decorations, food, and other things needed to properly celebrate a holiday
5. Samples of holiday food, clothing, and decorations
6. Books containing literary examples of how people at other times and places celebrated holidays
7. Works of fine art and music with holiday themes

## Background:

In each of our lives certain events are particularly significant. Sometimes we differ on which events we think are most important. Which holidays we celebrate and how we celebrate them vary according to religious beliefs, geographic location, and family preference.

Certain celebrations, however, are quite common to all people. Most people recognize births, marriages, and deaths as important milestones. Many consider christenings, confirmations, graduations, and engagements as important. Most families celebrate holidays. In the United States many people celebrate Christmas, although others celebrate Hanukkah. Christian holidays—especially Christmas and Easter—have become very prominent in our country, and many people who are not Christian celebrate them too.

Patriotic holidays such as Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and Veterans Day, are often declared official vacation days from work. Other official holidays such as Labor Day and Thanksgiving are neither patriotic nor religious, although they may be celebrated in those ways by individuals and communities. Some families, school classes, and veterans groups have their own private holidays, called reunions. All of us have ways of setting aside and celebrating special days.

## Procedure:

This thematic lesson plan is intended to introduce this particular topic to students. The activities are intended to introduce students to the process of inquiry that can be applied to the study Iowa history. In many cases the same activities can be used to explore the topic in a variety of Iowa history time periods. This lesson plan can also be used in conjunction with other topical areas in this curriculum.

These thematic lesson plans underscore basic skills such as reading, writing, communicating orally, and collecting reference sources. Many of the activities will give students practice in using higher skills as in reading, writing, communicating orally, collecting reference sources and using a library; distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; using charts and timelines; and developing vocabulary. The teacher can introduce higher level skills through these activities such as collecting information from a variety of sources through observation and questioning; compiling, organizing, and evaluating information; comparing and contrasting; drawing conclusions or inferences from evidence; considering alternative conclusions; making generalizations; recognizing points of view; understanding how things happen and how things change; recognizing how values and traditions influence history and the present; grasping the complexities of cause and effect; developing a chronological sense; and understanding events in context.

## Activities:

1. List the holidays or special days celebrated in your family.
2. Write a description of how the special days or the holidays are celebrated in your family.
3. List the holidays or special days celebrated in your community.

4. Write a description of how the special days or the holidays are celebrated in your community.
5. Draw a picture of special clothing used for specific holidays.
6. Make a scrapbook of illustrations of special items sold for holiday decorations or gifts.
7. Compare today's holidays with those celebrated earlier in our history.
8. Discuss any special foods that are associated with holidays.
9. Find diaries, letters, and stories that explain what people used to do to make certain days special.
10. List holidays associated with religion.
11. List holidays associated with patriotism.
12. List holidays that are celebrated by the national and the state governments by allowing people not to work.
13. Discuss special music associated with holidays.
14. Research great works of art and literature that were inspired by holidays.
15. Discuss movies and radio and television programs that are based on what people do during special days.
16. Prepare and eat special food associated with a holiday that is different from what most people usually eat.
17. Discuss special clothing and colors that are associated with holidays.
18. Discuss special decorations for the home and community that are associated with holidays.

## **Assessments of Outcomes:**

1. Prepare a menu that would usually be eaten during some special day.
2. Perform or play recorded music that would be common for some special day.
3. List holidays associated with major religions of the world.
4. Display clothing that has some relationship to a holiday.
5. Draw or paint a picture of special holiday decorations.

## **Extensions or Adaptations:**

Most of the activities listed under procedures can be easily adapted to meet the learning needs of most students at various ages. Many of the listed activities can be used as art, music, writing, math, or science projects. Be sure to draw on teachers within your school and resource people in your community. The folklife section of this curriculum provides a list of community resource ideas.

## **Resources:**

Contact the Iowa History Resource Center at the State Historical Society of Iowa for a list of books, videos, organizations and ideas for studying Iowa history. Write to: Education Coordinator, State Historical Society of Iowa, 600 East Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.