Celebrations and Good Times!
Thematic Unit
## Contents

### About this Thematic Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 01</th>
<th>Activity One</th>
<th>What Are We Going to Find Out about Celebrations?</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What Have I Got to Celebrate about Me?</td>
<td>Activity Two</td>
<td>A Celebration of the Day I Was Born</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity Three</td>
<td>How Can We Plan a Celebration?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity Four</td>
<td>Good Time Memories</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 02</th>
<th>Activity Five</th>
<th>Where Has Our School Come From?</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What Can I Celebrate about My School and My Community?</td>
<td>Activity Six</td>
<td>Shared Project: My School, Your School</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity Seven</td>
<td>Celebrating a Local Person</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity Eight</td>
<td>A Celebration of Positive Local Images</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 03</th>
<th>Activity Nine</th>
<th>A Weird and Wonderful Celebration Calendar</th>
<th>23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Does the World Celebrate?</td>
<td>Activity Ten</td>
<td>Christmas across the World</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity Eleven</td>
<td>Good Times and Celebrations all over the World!</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity Twelve</td>
<td>Ballinasloe Fair: A Traveller Celebration</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resources

| Suggested Additional Resources |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                 | 31                             |
|                                 | 55                             |
Acknowledgements

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Resources T, U and V used in Activity 12 of this Thematic Unit are adapted from 'Stepping Out', written by Yvonne Naylor as part of the Transforming Sectarianism SEED Project, Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College, Dublin.

CCEA would like to acknowledge that Castle Gardens Primary School, Newtownards, contributed to the Year 5 Thematic Unit Me Inc. but acknowledgement of their contribution was omitted from the publication. We apologise for this oversight.
About this Thematic Unit

This Thematic Unit is linked to the Years 3/4 Ideas for Connected Learning (ICL) Let’s Celebrate. Within this unit, children will have the opportunity to explore their experiences of celebrations at home, with friends, in school and in the local and wider community. They will begin to appreciate and respect the diversity that exists in society and the positive contributions of various cultural and religious groups.

Children will have the opportunity to develop some of the skills that meet the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum at Key Stage 1. The focus within this unit is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Ireland Curriculum Objective</th>
<th>To develop the young person as an individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim</strong></td>
<td>The aim of this Thematic Unit is to enable children to:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Become aware of their own strengths, abilities, qualities and achievements;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Be aware of their own and others’ cultural heritage, traditions and celebrations;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Appreciate the importance of taking time to celebrate together;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Appreciate some similarities and differences between people and places; and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Engage in a variety of active learning strategies.</td>
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<td><strong>Key Element</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mutual Understanding and Cultural Understanding</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC)</strong></td>
<td>This thematic unit focuses on Being Creative. Children have opportunities to:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Have experiences with all the senses;</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Enjoy the unexpected, unusual and surprising;</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Listen to and share ideas and experiences; and</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Generate as many ideas and options as possible, building and combining ideas.</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>There will also be opportunities for children to develop the skills of Managing Information, Working with Others, Thinking, Problem-Solving, Decision Making and Self-Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-Curricular Skills</strong></td>
<td>Where appropriate, learning intentions that relate to cross-curricular skills are signposted. These cross-curricular skills are:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication [Comm];</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Using Mathematics [UMaths]; and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Using ICT [UICT].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecting the Learning</th>
<th>This Thematic Unit provides teachers with opportunities to connect learning across the following areas:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The World Around Us:</strong></td>
<td>• Making comparisons between celebrations in the local area and places around the world;</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Arts:</strong></td>
<td>• Enjoying and appreciating the food and costumes used in celebrations in their own and other cultures;</td>
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<td>• Participating in dramatic activity and sharing ideas with others;</td>
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<td>• Using creative design skills to create pieces of art related to various celebrations;</td>
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<td><strong>Physical Education:</strong></td>
<td>• Creating, practising, remembering and performing dance in response to dances used in celebrations from around the world; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language and Literacy:</strong></td>
<td>• Expressing themselves creatively and communicating confidently using a variety of skills and media;</td>
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<td>• Telling their own stories about celebrations based on personal experiences and imagination; and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, for example writing a speech about their school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Have I Got to Celebrate about Me?
Section 01  What Have I Got to Celebrate about Me?

Activity One  
What Are We Going to Find Out about Celebrations?

**Suggested Learning Intentions**

Children will:
- help to plan and set goals and break a task into sub-tasks;
- begin to make connections between learning in different contexts; and
- seek out questions to explore and problems to solve (TSPC).

**Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities**

In order to develop the children’s skills and capabilities across the whole curriculum, involve them in the planning for this Thematic Unit. Create a planning board which includes both your own and the children’s ideas. You can add to this during the course of the theme if any new ideas arise.

Use open-ended questions to build the big picture of the direction of the unit of work:
- What do we want to learn about? Investigate? Do?
- What celebrations happen in our own lives or in the lives of our family and friends?
- What celebrations happen in our school or in the local community?
- What celebrations happen in the wider community or in the world?

You can use the planning board as a working document that will show the overall vision of the Thematic Unit and incorporate ‘We Are Learning To’ (WALT) learning intentions. These should be drawn up with the class and may include:

**WALT:**
- celebrate the special things about us;
- select the most appropriate method for a task;
- listen actively and share opinions; and
- use the internet and other sources of information to do research.

During the course of the unit, introduce ‘What I’m Looking For’ (WILF) as the success criteria for each activity. These success criteria will be specific to each task and should be negotiated with input from the children. At the beginning of each activity, ask the children what they think you as teacher might be looking for as they complete the task. Allow for plenty of thinking time, and encourage discussion of the skills and knowledge that the children are developing. You may choose to add the success criteria to the planning board, keeping language specific and child-friendly. Ensure that you provide both formative feedback throughout the activities and summative feedback at the end.
Celebrations and Good Times!

Activity Two
A Celebration of the Day I Was Born

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
• find out about their own and others’ personal history;
• record information in a variety of formats (TSPC);
and
• find, select and use information from a given digital source (UICT).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

On a large sheet of paper, draw the axes for a simple bar graph which will show how many children have their birthday in each month. You may need to check the dates of the children’s birthdays beforehand, both to help you plan the graph and in case any children do not know which month they were born in. Give each child a piece of paper (the size depends on the size of your graph) and ask them to write and decorate their names. Have the children sit in a circle with the bar graph in the middle. Invite each child in turn to stick their name at the relevant month. Alternatively, you may prefer to use suitable data handling software to record the information and produce a graph.

Discuss how we celebrate birthdays. Use circle time to give an opportunity for all the children to share memories of their favourite birthday celebrations. Try to establish if the children have similar reasons for choosing a particular birthday as their favourite: they may have received a great present or had a special party, or perhaps a special relative or friend was able to attend.

Explain to the children that they are going to research the date of their birthday. They will then produce a poster or digital presentation based on their research (whichever is more suitable for your class).

As part of their research, where appropriate, encourage the children to ask their parents if they remember anything else that happened on the day they were born, such as what the weather was like or whether there were any important news stories. (Be aware of the family setups of the children in your class, for example in the case of adopted children.)

Use the websites listed in the Suggested Additional Resources section to enable the children to find out more. Ask them to try to find out about the life of another person who was born on the same day or date as them.

If the children are preparing a poster to celebrate the date of their birthday, allow them to copy out or print off facts and photographs of events or people linked to their birth date. Alternatively, allow them to save images or information to use in a simple digital presentation.
Activity Three
How Can We Plan a Celebration?

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
- identify the contribution made by different people at different times;
- recognise the importance of taking time to celebrate together;
- understand that they can take on some responsibility in their family and friendship groups;
- identify different roles and responsibilities and the skills to enable groups to work effectively (TSPC);
- use mathematics to solve problems and make decisions (UMaths); and
- create, edit and combine text and images on screen (UICT).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

To stimulate discussion, display some relevant images of celebrations and parties. Talk together about the responsibilities that family members take on when they prepare and hold a celebration, for example organising and making food, setting the table, hanging decorations, serving food or drinks, entertaining and tidying up.

Divide the children into groups. Have them create a Mind Map* about what would be involved in planning and organising a celebration for a birthday party. Discuss their ideas, and use a Priority Pyramid* to prioritise the list of things that they would need for a party. Encourage them to consider in what order they would need to do things in to help ensure their party was successful.

Discuss with the children why they might invite certain people to a celebration, for example a best friend, a neighbour, a relative, a very kind person or someone who is really musical. Reflect on the people that they celebrate with and why it is important to take time to celebrate together.

Set up a virtual celebration task. Explain to the children that they are going to organise a party for six people. They will have a set price, for example £10, to spend on food and drinks, and they will have to send out invitations and provide entertainment. Remind the children that they will have to find out if any of the people they are inviting have special dietary requirements.
Have each group work together to create a plan for preparing their celebration. Ask the children to consider the personal qualities of each individual in their group and choose who should lead each task, for example ‘Sophie is good on the computer, so she could lead the invitation making’. Use ICT software such as Pawprints (from Black Cat) to design and create personalised party invitations, stating clearly to the invitees why they are invited.

Provide the children with price lists of party items, food and drinks from a local supermarket or shop, and explore simple problem-solving activities around the planning of how to ‘spend’ their virtual budget. You may wish to allow the children to access a website from a major supermarket so that they can find out the prices for themselves.

Encourage the children to take some time to think about the most sensible way to spend their money. For example, would it be cheaper for them to buy the ingredients to make a cake or to buy a ready-made one? Would it be better value to buy single packets of crisps or a multi-pack?

As a feedback activity, you could have the groups present their ‘party plan’ to the rest of the class. Use the Two Stars and a Wish* method to encourage constructive peer assessment.

* See Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stages 1&2.
Section 01 What Have I Got to Celebrate about Me?

Activity Four
Good Time Memories

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
• develop an appreciation of the celebrations they have had in their lives and celebrations in the lives of others;
• select appropriate media to express personal ideas and record personal information (TSPC); and
• listen to and take part in discussions and presentations about their own and others’ memories (Comm).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Have the children sit in a circle and give them time to reflect on the celebrations they have had in their lives. Encourage them to focus on celebrations for talents or achievements, as well as on birthdays, Christmas or special family events. When they have had some thinking time, pass a ‘speaking object’ around the circle. Invite each child in turn, when they are holding the speaking object, to tell the rest of the class about a celebration they have had.

Together discuss similarities and differences between the celebrations in the children’s lives. Highlight the fact that the children are all different, with different families and different talents and interests, so a lot of the things they celebrate will be different too.

Make a collection of different types of books, for example pop-up, 3D construction, a fold-out book, a book with windows and doors, and books made from different materials and textures. Give the children an opportunity to observe, handle and discuss the books. Ask them for suggestions about how to make a unique book.

Explain to the children that they are going to make a personal memory book. In it, they should record their best memories of happy times. Suggest that they could collect some photographs from home of special celebrations to illustrate their book. Alternatively, they could select the most appropriate media to produce ‘memory drawings’.

First have the children plan the contents of each page of their book, including titles, text and any drawings or photographs. Allow them to make their book in any form they choose, so that each book is unique, and to decorate it using their own choice of materials, such as glitter and sequins.

Give the children time to circulate around the classroom and share their memory books with each other. Encourage them to discuss the similarities and differences between their books and the types of celebration they record.
What Can I Celebrate about My School and My Community?
Activity Five
Where Has Our School Come From?

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
- find out about the history of their school;
- use their own and others’ ideas to identify, locate and select various sources of information (TSPC);
- recognise the interdependence of members in the school community; and
- prepare and present a speech, speaking clearly to be heard and understood (Comm).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

As a class, discuss the topic ‘Where has our school come from?’ Talk about what the question means. Lead the children to realise that it is both about the history of the life of the school and about the people who have shaped and added to the school’s identity. Add the question to the planning board, and ask the children to think about ways they could find out the answer.

Help the children to organise how they will gather information from around the school that relates to its history. This may include, where applicable:
- information about the year the school was built, how long it took to build, what size it was when it was first built, etc;
- old photographs of staff or sports teams;
- an interview with a staff member who has been in the school for a number of years (for example a teacher, principal, member of canteen staff, road crossing patrol or caretaker);
- stories or anecdotes about things that have happened in the school over the years, including special events;
- a list of past school principals;
- a picture of the old school uniform; and
- enrolment numbers over the years.

When you have gathered the information about the school, spread it out on various tables in the classroom and allow the children to move around the room to view it. Ask the children to complete The History of My School: Information Record (Resource A) to summarise the information they have found from different sources.

Discuss together what the children have found out. Create a timeline to organise the main events in the school’s history into chronological order. Ask if the children feel that the history they have learned about has had an impact on the school as they know it now. Ask, too, if they think that the people who have worked in the school community over the years have played a role in creating the school as it is now. Remind the children that it is the PEOPLE in the school that are the school, not simply the building.
Discuss any special features of your school today, considering what other people would say about the school. Decide together if the school’s history has had an impact on each feature. For example, if your school has recently won awards for football, consider who started up the team and trained it over the years.

Set the children a group challenge: to prepare a 5–4–3–2–1 speech titled ‘Our Fantastic School’. In their speech they should try to show their audience how the school has changed and grown since it was first opened, as well as giving some information about the people who have shaped the school’s history.

The introduction should tell the listeners:
- where and when the school was built; and
- the names of all the school staff (current or past).

The speech should include:
- five facts about the history of the school;
- four things that the group feel are important about the school;
- three words that they would use to describe the school, giving reasons for their choices;
- two things that they feel they’d like to change about the school; and
- one thing that they really appreciate about their school.

The children could present their speeches during an assembly.
Activity Six

Shared Project: My School, Your School

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
• find out about their own and others’ personal history;
• appreciate ways we are similar and different;
• follow the main points of a discussion and make contributions which show understanding (Comm); and
• develop the skill of working with others and the habit of collaborative learning (TSPC).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Arrange a joint project with a Year 3 or 4 class from a nearby school. The purpose of this project is to celebrate the achievements of each school, as well as the similarities and differences between the two schools. It would be ideal to arrange the project with a school from another community or an alternative educational setting in order to further promote the Mutual Understanding aspect of this Thematic Unit.

In class, before meeting with the other school, make a list of achievements and things about the school that the children feel are worth celebrating. These could include:
• happy children and teachers;
• a nice playground area;
• high attendance;
• a healthy school;
• good environmental awareness; and/or
• sports/music awards, etc.

Arrange a meeting with the partner school. In a large space, arrange the children into a circle. Use the activity When The Wind Blows* as an icebreaker. Once the children have relaxed with each other, organise them into groups of six, with children from both schools in each group. Ask them to introduce themselves and tell the others in their group one positive thing about themselves.

Ask the children from the host school to start the discussion by describing their school to the others, including, for example:
• how they feel about their school;
• its positive qualities and achievements; and
• things that take place during the school week.

Give enough time for the children to tell their new friends all about their school. Then have them swap over so that the visiting children can tell the host children about their school.

Ask children from both schools to give feedback about what they have learned in their groups. They should include:
• something that they found really interesting about the other school; and
• something that they would like to have/do in their school that the other already has/does.
Ask each group to suggest some similarities and differences they have discovered between the two schools. Write their suggestions on a whiteboard under the headings **Similarities** and **Differences**. Discuss the following points with the children:

- Do they feel that the differences between the two schools are important?
- Is it the differences or the similarities that make each school as it is?
- Should every school be exactly the same? Is this possible?

Encourage the children to realise that the differences are what make each school special and that these should be celebrated, as well as recognising and appreciating the similarities between the schools.

Introduce an activity called ‘We will celebrate each other’. Have the children in each group from the host school create a badge and a motto for the visiting school, and vice versa. The badge and motto should be a celebration of positive elements about the school. It may be useful to look at various badge shapes and designs, and other mottos, to give the children ideas.

Focus together on the title ‘Our Shared Space’. On a whiteboard, blackboard or large sheet of paper, create a simple map of the local area which includes both schools. The map does not have to be accurate or to scale, but it should have the main landmarks on it. Using a ruler and a felt tip pen, divide the map into a grid of ten equal-sized squares (or fewer, depending on how many groups of children you have). Allocate one square per group. Each group will recreate their section of the map on a large page, piece of plywood or cardboard. Allow them to use paint, fabric or other media. (You will need to ensure that any roads etc. on the map will join up between the various pieces of the grid once it is completed and assembled.)

Allow time for reflection about the shared project so far. Ask the children to think about the new things they have learned about the other school. Ask them also to reflect quietly on something that they had previously thought about the other school but which they now realise isn’t true. How has meeting the children from the other school changed what they thought, and how has it increased their mutual understanding?

* See Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stages 1&2.
Activity Seven
Celebrating a Local Person

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
• understand how their community has been made better by an individual and what contribution they themselves can make;
• respond to and represent information and their own ideas in a creative way;
• identify members of the local community and the roles and responsibilities they have; and
• use their own and others’ ideas to identify, locate and select various sources of information (TSPC).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Ask the children to think about reasons why particular local people should be celebrated. Consider the following:
• **talent**, for example an artist, a musician, a sports person or a local celebrity;
• **charity**, for example someone who has volunteered or done a lot of work on behalf of a charity; or
• **significant contribution** to the community, for example a youth worker, a religious leader, crossing patrol person or caretaker.

It may be appropriate to include individuals who are deceased but who have made a significant impact in the children’s lifetime or to the community.

Together draw up a list of local people who are worthy of being celebrated, and choose the top three. Set the children the task of finding out a bit about each of the people and the roles and responsibilities they have had. (Alternatively, you could pre-prepare information about each person.) Write each name at the top of a large sheet of paper, and write key points underneath about the roles, responsibilities and contributions that each person has had.

Use **Dot Voting** to allow the children to choose the three points that they feel are the most worthy of celebrating. You may wish to model first by choosing a point, for example ‘This person has raised lots of money for Cancer Research; I feel that this is important’, and sticking a dot beside it. Allow the children some time to discuss the points with each other. When they have all placed their three dots, discuss the points that have received the most dots and choose the person that, as a class, you would like to celebrate.

As a matter of courtesy, you may consider contacting the chosen person or their family to ask for permission to study their life or work. This may also provide you with a good source of information.

Undertake more in-depth research about the chosen person with the children. Depending on who it is, you may be able to use newspaper articles, find information on the internet or interview people who know them. Try to find out as much as you can about the person’s roles and responsibilities and the positive impact that they have had on the local community. Reflect on the things that would not have happened if it were not for that person.
Celebrations and Good Times!

Decide with your class the best way of celebrating the chosen person creatively. The representation you choose should reflect something about the person, symbolise the work they have done and show the impact they have had. You may wish to choose one of the following suggestions:

**Poetry**
Write a class poem together or a selection of poems about the person. You could ‘publish’ and distribute these throughout the community.

**Portrait**
Create a portrait gallery of the person. Show a photograph and study with the children the characteristics of the person’s face. The children could create representations of the person using paint, oil pastels, watercolours, chalk or pencil, on paper, card, wood, metal or fabric. They could incorporate natural and man-made materials.

**ICT**
The children could use a suitable software package to work with a photograph of the person. They could alter the photographs to be in the style of an artist, for example Andy Warhol. You could display a series of altered photographs in a row or as a grid.

**Textiles**
Create a wall hanging as an acknowledgement of the person and their work. Give the children an A4 page each and ask them to sketch a design for a simple wall hanging that shows the chosen person along with symbols of the contribution they have made. Choose the best design, or elements of several, to use on the wall hanging. On a large piece of fabric, sketch with chalk where each piece of the design will go. Divide the children into groups and give each group one piece of the design to create. They could use, for example, felt, fabric scraps, wool, sequins, ribbon and/or raffia. Glue or stitch each completed section onto the wall hanging and display it in the school.

**Drama/Role Play**
Choose an element of the person’s life or work, and allow the children to create a fictional dramatisation of it. Creating costumes to represent the characters would add to the experience.

**Interview**
Arrange for the chosen person or a member of their family to come into school. Prepare relevant interview questions with the children in advance and decide who will ask each question. You could add an element of ICT by using a video camera. The children could use ICT software to edit the video and add effects later.

To conclude, recap with the children all they have learned about their chosen local person. Emphasise why that person was chosen, and ask the children to reflect on the lessons they have learned through the study.

Ask the children:
• What qualities does [the chosen person] have?
• Which quality do you admire most about [the chosen person]?
• What do YOU do to help your community or someone in your community?

Present or display the children’s work in the school. Where possible, invite the chosen person into school to see the work done as a celebration of them, or present them with some of the work, for example in an assembly.

* See *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stages 1&2.*
Activity Eight
A Celebration of Positive Local Images

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
- create, develop, present and publish ideas and information using a range of digital media and manipulate a range of assets to produce multimedia products (UICT);
- recognise and create positive local images;
- understand how their environment could be made better and what contribution they can make; and
- generate as many ideas and options as possible by building and combining ideas (TSPC).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Arrange for your class and another Year 3 or 4 class from a nearby community or alternative educational setting to work on this activity simultaneously. You will then be able to send your class’s work to the other school to view, and vice versa, or organise a visit between the two classes.

Ask the children to think about their local community. What does it look like? What is it like to live here? Make a list of describing words. Are all of the describing words positive? Discuss any words that are negative.

Explain to the children that they are going to create some positive images of the local area to make into a brochure, a poster or a digital presentation advertising their community as a nice place to visit. Discuss what this will involve with the class. Ask:
- What is a positive image?
- Why do we want images of our community to be positive?
- What would be the effects of only having negative images of our community?
Ask the children to come up with a list of their favourite things about their community. Draw their attention to various categories they could consider, for example:

- people
- streets
- buildings
- statues
- bridges
- scenery
- churches
- murals.

Allow the children some thinking time. Create a Post-It Collection* by giving them some Post-it notes and asking them to write one of their favourite things about their community on each one. Divide the whiteboard into sections for each category, and invite the children to stick their Post-it notes into the relevant category.

For an alternative to this activity, see ‘Community Maps’ in Living.Learning.Together Year 4, Unit 6, Activity 1: Multiple Identities.

It may be most effective if parents or carers can take the children around the community and provide the photographs, drawings and/or footage of positive images for their advertisement. They may also have a good understanding of the history of the locality and therefore be a good source of information about positive aspects of the community.

Use any of the following methods to produce images:

- digital camera;
- video camera;
- searching the internet for downloadable photographs; or
- paintings or drawings.

When the children have a collection of positive images, they should present these as an advertisement in the form of a brochure, a poster or a digital presentation (using suitable ICT software).

Arrange with the other class who have completed this activity to swap the advertisements for your communities. If possible, invite the other class to your school. Spend time sharing your advertisements with each other and celebrating your local communities.
How Does the World Celebrate?
Activity Nine
A Weird and Wonderful Celebration Calendar

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
- raise their awareness of events that are celebrated in Ireland, the UK and internationally;
- be aware of the diversity of celebrations around the world; and
- enjoy the unusual, unexpected and surprising (TSPC).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

As a class, make a list of the celebrations that occur throughout the year. Discuss these together and ask the children whether they are common celebrations or not.

Explain that some other days in the year are also special because people use them to celebrate particular awareness days. Discuss with the children how these days are different from other holidays and celebrations. Highlight that some people choose to acknowledge these days and some do not. Discuss why some events are special to some people but not to others, and ask if the children feel that everyone should acknowledge the same special dates.

Play a game of ‘true or false’ with the children in teams. Call out the date and name of an awareness day (see the list in Resource B), and ask the children if they think it is a real event or you have invented it. Award points for guessing correctly. Please note that the exact dates of the events in Resource B may vary from year to year.

Choose one example of an event or awareness day, and model for the children how they could research it. Explain to the children that they are going to create their own ‘Weird and Wonderful Celebration Calendar’ which will show their favourite celebration or event. Give them time to research calendar events on the internet (see the section on Suggested Additional Resources for useful websites).

On A4 card, allow the children to write and illustrate the name of their favourite celebration or awareness day. Encourage them to incorporate some information from their research. Then attach a small paper calendar onto the card. Alternatively, use an appropriate website to download a calendar template, either a one-page ‘whole year’ calendar or a ‘month per page’ calendar. The children could then decorate their calendars with images related to their favourite celebration or awareness days.
Activity Ten
Christmas across the World

Suggested Learning Intentions
Children will:
• be aware of their own cultural heritage, its traditions and its celebrations;
• appreciate ways we are similar and different, for example through our culture and religion;
• begin to see, in the context of festivals, that words in other languages have meaning; and
• identify similarities and differences by making simple comparisons and connections (TSPC).

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Christmas in Poland
Display or read the Fact Sheet in Resource C to the children. Highlight and display the Polish words listed below; these words appear but are not defined in the Fact Sheet. Ask the children to predict what some of them might mean. Then allow them to do research on the internet, or research together, to find out.

Discuss with the children the similarities and differences between Christmas in Poland and Christmas in Northern Ireland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piernik</td>
<td>Honey bread (Pierniki are made in a great variety of shapes, including hearts, animals and Saint Nicholas figures.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choinka</td>
<td>Christmas tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szopke</td>
<td>Puppet show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwiadorze</td>
<td>Star carriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigilia</td>
<td>Christmas Eve dinner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Christmas in Spain
Display or read the Fact Sheet in Resource D to the children. Discuss with them the similarities and differences between Christmas in Spain and Christmas in Northern Ireland.

Read the Letters to the Three Kings (Resource E), and ask the children to decide if the Spanish children who have written the letters deserve to get presents. Use a Walking Debate* to allow the children to present their opinions.

Christmas in Slovakia
Use the information in Resource F as a starting point. Help the children to find Slovakia on a map. Divide the children into groups, and ask them to prepare a digital presentation about Slovakia and how people celebrate Christmas there.

Christmas in India
Use the information in Resource F as a starting point. Find India on a world map together, then divide the children into groups. Ask them to find out about the Indian flag and to prepare a digital presentation showing all they have learned about India.

“Merry Christmas!”
Use the table in Resource G to create a language display. Give the children time to practise learning to say ‘Merry Christmas’ in different languages with their friends.

* See Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stages 1&2.
Activity Eleven

Good Times and Celebrations all over the World!

**Suggested Learning Intentions**

Children will:
- recognise and value the diversity of culture and traditions celebrated around the world;
- know some of the ways in which festivals are observed around the world, through costume, food, dance and custom;
- show curiosity when approaching new tasks and challenges (TSPC); and
- use direct experiences, memory and imagination to observe and respond to celebrations around the world.

**Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities**

Review with the children the names of the celebrations that we have in our culture, for example Christmas, Valentine’s Day and birthdays. Make a list of these, and discuss the meaning of each celebration. If there are children in your class from other cultures, ensure that you add their cultural celebrations to the list.

Ask the children whether or not they think that the events in their list are celebrated all around the world. Discuss reasons for their answers. Lead the children to realise that people around the world have different cultures and different religions that quite often shape the celebrations they have.

Explain to the children that they are going to learn about some of the different traditions and celebrations that happen around the world. Choose from the suggestions below. Use a map of the world to mark the places where the various festivals are celebrated. Add any relevant questions or information to your planning board.

**Eid ul-Fitr (Muslim)**

Introduce the festival of Eid ul-Fitr by reading or adapting the information in Resource H and allowing some time for the children to discuss it. What similarities and differences are there between Eid ul-Fitr and some of the special times that people here celebrate?

Show the children some pictures of mendhi decoration from the internet. Discuss some of the themes in the decorations, for example leaves and flowers, lines and swirls.
Use Resource K to introduce the traditional festival that celebrates Japanese Boys’ Day, Tango-No Sekku, to the children. Carry out an internet image search and show the children pictures of Japanese carp kites (koinobori). Provide copies of the photocopiable sheet in Resource L to enable them to create their own carp kites. Alternatively, allow them to create their own carp kites using white material, craft glue and coloured pens, sequins, etc.

Use these internet images to enable the children to create their own mendhi designs. Using skin-coloured paper, ask the children to draw around their hand and cut it out. Alternatively, you may wish to draw out and photocopy a larger hand for the children to decorate. Allow the children to use red, orange, brown or purple felt-tip pens to create henna-inspired designs on the hands.

Hina Matsuri and Tango-No Sekku (Japan)
Have the children identify Japan on the world map. Introduce the festival of Hina Matsuri (Girls’ Day) by reading or adapting the Fact Sheet in Resource I. Give them an opportunity to make a Japanese doll, following the instructions in Resource J.
Section 03 How Does the World Celebrate?

Holi [Hindu/India]
Read or adapt the Fact Sheet in Resource M to the children. Use the internet to search for images of the Holi festival in India, and mark where India is on the world map. Discuss the legend of Prahalad and Holika together (Resource N).

As a celebration of colour for Holi, use tie-dyeing to create a collage, wall hanging or colourful T-shirts. See Resource O for details on how to tie-dye.

Carnaval and Mardi Gras [Christian/South American]
Read or adapt the Fact Sheet in Resource P. Have the children mark where Brazil, Ecuador and New Orleans are on the world map. Search for images of Mardi Gras masquerade masks on the internet, or see the websites listed in Suggested Additional Resources. Copy the Mardi Gras masquerade mask template in Resource Q onto card, and have the children decorate it. Encourage them to use coloured paper, feathers, beads, craft jewels, pieces of old jewellery etc.
Chinese New Year

Ask the children what they know about New Year, including the date it happens and how we celebrate it. Have them locate China on a world map, and introduce the festival of Chinese New Year. Read or adapt the Fact Sheet (Resource R) and The Legend of Nian (Resource S) to the children and discuss them together.

Using books or the internet, source some information about the street celebrations that take place at Chinese New Year. You could find out about dances, such as the Dragon Dance or the Lion Dance, and what these symbolise. Provide red, gold or green coloured paper for the children to make dragon hats or masks.
Activity Twelve
Ballinasloe Fair: A Traveller Celebration

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children will:
• recognise and value the culture and traditions of their own and another group in the community; and
• be aware of who and what influences their views, feelings and behaviour at home and at school.

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Read the stories ‘Patrick Tells the Class about the Fair’ (Resource T) and ‘Jim Enjoys the Fair’ (Resource U) aloud to the children, showing the relevant pictures from the Photo Pack (Resource V). Establish that Jim is Patrick’s dad and discuss the links between the stories. Use a map of Ireland to point out where Ballinasloe is.

Use the following questions to encourage discussion with the children:
• What have you learned about Ballinasloe Fair?
• Have you ever been to Ballinasloe Fair? Would you like to go? Give reasons for your answer.
• What similarities and differences are there between a celebration you have been to and the celebration at Ballinasloe Fair?
• What did you find interesting about the stories?
• What have you learned about Travellers that you didn’t know before?
• How would you feel if you had to miss a celebration to go to school?
• Give three words that you feel describe the kind of friend that William was to Patrick.
Resources
Table: The History of My School Information Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of information</th>
<th>What this source tells me about my school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Resource B

## A Weird and Wonderful Celebration Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Celebration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>World Braille Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>World Religion Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26th-2nd Feb</td>
<td>National Storytelling Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>National Potato Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>British Yorkshire Pudding Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9th-15th</td>
<td>National Chip Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>World Thinking Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24th approx</td>
<td>Eat a Breakfast Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>All month</td>
<td>National Bed Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-14th</td>
<td>National Ideas Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14th-16th</td>
<td>Sport Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>Earth Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>World Day of Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>April Fools’ Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5th-5th May</td>
<td>National Pet Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19th-26th</td>
<td>Welly Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21st-26th</td>
<td>International TV Turnoff Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29th</td>
<td>International Dance Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>3rd-11th</td>
<td>National Windsurfing Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>International Dawn Chorus Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5th-11th</td>
<td>National Honey Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23rd</td>
<td>World Turtle Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23rd</td>
<td>Friendship Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>World Environment Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>Shades Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23rd–27th</td>
<td>Bring Your Bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23rd–29th</td>
<td>National Insect Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Children’s Art Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>International Left Handers’ Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>15th</td>
<td>Pound a Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19th</td>
<td>International Talk like a Pirate Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>World Car Free Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25th</td>
<td>International Acts of Kindness Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>1st–6th</td>
<td>Learn to Sign Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Jeans for Genes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>World Smile Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th–10th</td>
<td>World Space Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21st</td>
<td>Apple Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>17th–23rd</td>
<td>Enterprise Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>Universal Children’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21st</td>
<td>World Television Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21st</td>
<td>World Hello Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1st weekend</td>
<td>Tree Dressing Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Fact Sheet: A Polish Christmas**

| ‘Christmas’ in Polish | • Boże Narodzenie  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Christmas in Poland is often called <em>Gwiazdka</em>, which means ‘a little star’.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Traditions**        | • People bake the Christmas *piernik* before Christmas Day.  
|                       | • They make traditional decorations called *pajaki*, which are handmade mobiles and stars.  
|                       | • *Gwiadorze* and carol singers begin wandering through the towns and villages. The *gwiadorze* put on *szopke* or nativity scenes.  
|                       | • The *choinka* is decorated with shiny apples, walnuts, beautifully wrapped chocolate shapes and lots of homemade decorations and candles. On the top is a glittery star.  
|                       | • Bits of hay are spread beneath the tablecloth as a reminder that Christ was born in a manger. |
| **Food**              | • On Christmas Eve, *Wigilia* is served. Everyone waits until the first star appears in the sky before the meal begins.  
|                       | • Special food includes:  
|                       |   − *Oplatek* - white wafer bread with a holy picture pressed on the surface;  
|                       |   − *Barszcz czerwony z uszkami* - beetroot soup/borsch with tortellini-like dumplings;  
|                       |   − *Pierogi* - dumplings with cabbage and wild mushroom filling;  
|                       |   − *Karp* - fried carp;  
|                       |   − *Śledzie* - herrings served in various ways;  
|                       |   − *Kompot z suszu* - dried fruit compote;  
|                       |   − *Makowiec* - a poppy seed cake; and  
|                       |   − *Bigos* - a sauerkraut stew with various cuts of meat, cabbage, onion and wild mushrooms. |
# A Spanish Christmas

| 'Christmas' in Spanish | • Christmas Day is called *el Día de Navidad*.  
| | • Christmas Eve is called *Nochebuena*.  
| Traditions | • Many Spanish people have Christmas trees, but the traditional Christmas decoration for a true Spanish Christmas is the *belén*, or nativity scene.  
| | • In Spain, for most people the Christmas season starts on the 22nd of December with *El Gordo*, the biggest lottery in the world.  
| | • Children write to *Los Reyes Magos* (The Three Kings), Melchor, Gaspar and Baltasar, to ask for presents.  
| | • Every town and city in Spain has a procession on the night of the 5th of January, where sweets are thrown from the passing floats.  
| | • The Three Kings deliver their gifts on the night of the 5th of January, before *el Día de Reyes* (Kings' Day) on the 6th. This is the day when the Three Kings arrived in Bethlehem to visit the baby Jesus. They only bring presents to children who have behaved themselves all year. The naughty children get no presents but a piece of coal instead.  
| Food | • The main family meal takes place on Christmas Eve. This meal is usually seafood dishes followed by roast lamb or pork.  
| | • Dessert is usually a selection of sweets and cakes such as *mazapán* (marzipan), *polvorones* (a sweet kind of bread) or Spanish *turrón* (nougat made with sweet toasted almonds).  
| | • The Spanish drink cava with their meal.  
| | • On the 5th of January, people eat a special cake. *Roscón de Reyes* is a ring-shaped pastry covered in sugar and fruit flavoured jellies. The cake has little toys inside it as presents. Anyone lucky enough to find one of the hidden charms will be blessed with good luck for the new year.
Dear Melchor,
This year I have been a very good girl. Believe me. My Mum and Dad say I have been very good. I helped my Mum to do the shopping. I wouldn’t eat my dinner when she asked me to, but then I said sorry.
Please can you bring me a doll and a pram, a box of matches and some art stuff?
Thank you
Juanita

Dear Baitasar,
I am very sorry that I tried to stay awake last year when you came to my house. I have been really good since then. I have remembered to say hello to people, I have stopped using bad language and I help my Dad to wash the car.
Please can you bring me 25 transformers, a DVD player, a football and lots and lots of money, or else?!
Thanks
Carlos

Dear Gaspar,
I know that you are probably very busy over there at the moment, but if you have time, please can you bring me a surprise?
Thank you. I hope you are well.
Pedro
Resource F

Fact sheet: Christmas in India and Slovakia

Christmas in India
To celebrate Christmas, Christians in India decorate banana or mango trees. They also light small oil-burning lamps as Christmas decorations.

The poinsettia (Christmas plant) is in flower, and the churches are decorated with these brilliant red flowers for the Christmas Midnight Mass.

In South India, Christians put small clay lamps on the rooftops and walls of their houses at Christmas, just as the Hindus do during their festival called Diwali.

People give presents to family members and baksheesk (charitable giving) to the poor people.

Christmas in Slovakia
Christmas trees in Slovakia go up on Christmas Eve.

People go to church on Christmas Eve and return to a traditional dinner. The dinner consists of two main dishes. These are sauerkaut soup (finely shredded sour cabbage), and fish with potatoes and salad.

After the main meals, people eat a dish called Lok’e, which is made from pieces of baked risen dough with raisins and poppy seeds. They also eat fruit such as apples, oranges, pineapples, bananas, and nuts and cakes.

After dinner they go to the Christmas tree, where they find Christmas presents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Merry Christmas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Gesêende Kersfees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>Prejeme Vam Vesele Vanoce a stastny Novy Rok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>Glædelig Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Hyvää Joulua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Joyeux Noël</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>Froehliche Weihnachten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Kala Christouyenna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian</td>
<td>Mele Kalikimaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>Bada Din Mubarak Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Nollaig Shona Dhuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Buon Natale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Shinnen omedeto. Kurisumasu Omedeto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Sung Tan Chuk Ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Natale hilare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuanian</td>
<td>Linksmu Kaledu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>God Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Feliz Natal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Srozhdestovm Kristovim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Feliz Navidad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swahili</td>
<td>Kuwa na Krismasi njema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Suksun Wan Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Chuc Mung Giang Sinh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>Nadolig Llawen</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Resource H
Fact Sheet: Eid ul-Fitr and Mendhi

Eid ul-Fitr
During the festival of Ramadan, Muslims are asked not to eat or drink during the hours of daylight for 30 days; after dark they can eat and drink as much as they wish. At the end of these 30 days is an important festival called Eid ul-Fitr.

Eid ul-Fitr is sometimes known as Eid, and it breaks the fasting that took place during Ramadan. Eid is an Arabic word meaning festivity, and Fitr means to break the fast. Muslims are celebrating the end of fasting, as well as thanking Allah for the help and strength that he gave them while they were fasting during Ramadan. This is a festival that Muslims look forward to.

Eid ul-Fitr is a three-day celebration. Muslims go to the mosque, visit friends and relatives, share gifts and give money to the poor, wear festive clothes and eat festive food. Dishes such as samosas, rice and handesh are particularly popular.

During Eid ul-Fitr, men wear perfume and their best new or cleaned clothes, and women love to be beautiful. Women buy or make their Eid dresses more than a month before Eid. They also decorate parts of their body with mendhi.

Mendhi
Women contact mendhi designers to ensure that they have beautiful mendhi designs on their hands and feet during Eid. They may also get mendhi designs on their forehead and shins. Mendhi (Hindil), or henna (English), is part of a tropical plant. Powder from the dried and crushed leaves of the plant is mixed with water, sugar, lemon juice, essential oils and other natural ingredients to produce a paste which is applied to the body. When it dries completely, it falls off and leaves behind an orange/red/brown/purple stain which can last for several weeks.

Mendhi decorations first came from Ancient Egypt, where Egyptians decorated mummies with henna. Over time, the tradition of using mendhi for celebrating important occasions with beautiful body-art spread through Africa, India and Arabic countries. Flowery designs and fine lines are popular for Eid, as well as for other celebrations such as weddings.
On the 3rd of March, the Japanese celebrate a special day called Hina Matsuri. This means 'The Festival of Dolls', and it is a celebration for Japanese girls. It is the day that families pray for the happiness and prosperity of their girls and that they will grow up healthy and beautiful.

The festival dolls, which are called Hinu-ningyo in Japanese, represent the Emperor and Empress and the ladies of the imperial court. People display a set of hina dolls in the house. Parents or grandparents of a newborn girl buy a set of hina dolls, unless they have special dolls which are inherited from generation to generation.

Hina dolls are dressed in ancient Japanese costumes and are displayed on the shelves of a stand covered with a red carpet. It is believed that any hina doll display should be taken down soon after the festival day; otherwise, girls might have to wait a long time to get married. In some parts of Japan, people let paper dolls flow on a river to get rid of bad luck.

Hina Matsuri is sometimes referred to as the Peach Festival. The house is decorated with peach blossoms, a symbol of gentle feminine qualities.

To celebrate Hina Matsuri, girls in Japan put on their best kimonos and visit their friends’ houses. They usually invite their friends to a party, and their parents prepare a special meal. They make these dishes especially for Girls’ Day:

- Hinachirashi - colourful sushi;
- Ushio-jiru - clam soup;
- Sakura-mochi - sweet pink rice cakes; and
- Hina-arare - colourful rice crackers.
Resource J
Fact Sheet: Make a Japanese Doll

1. Use a cardboard tube for the body of the doll. This could be either an A4 piece of card rolled into a tube or an empty kitchen roll or toilet roll tube.

2. Attach a polystyrene ball, wooden ball or cardboard cut-out to the tube as the doll’s head. Use black material, such as felt or crepe paper, for the hair, and draw some curved lined for the eyes.

3. Make a kimono for the doll. Use patterned paper, for example wrapping paper or paper that the children have decorated themselves, and wrap the tube with it.

4. Stick a thin strip of coloured paper around the middle of the tube as a belt.

5. Cut out a wide length of patterned paper and stick it in place as the sleeves of the kimono.

6. Cut out two small hand shapes and stick these in between the sleeves.

7. Fold a small piece of paper in concertina to make a fan. Stick this onto the tube, on top of the two little hands.
On the 5th of May, the Japanese celebrate a special day called Tango-No Sekku. This has traditionally been Japanese Boys’ Day, as girls have their own special day on the 3rd of March. In 1948 it was renamed Children’s Day (Kodomo No Hi) and made a national holiday, but it is still mainly seen as a boys’ day. The symbols of courage and strength are celebrated on this day.

An important feature of Japanese Boys’ Day is the carp kite. These are large, colourful kites or streamers which are made from cloth or paper. A carp is chosen because every year it goes on a difficult journey upstream to lay its eggs. It shows strength and perseverance, qualities that it is believed Japanese boys should be inspired to display.

The carp kites are made with their mouths open, so that when they are hung up on a pole, the wind will puff them up.

Each boy in a family will hang up a carp kite. In some houses a carp is flown for each family member, with the father’s being the largest at the top down to the youngest child’s at the bottom. Inside the house, families display warrior dolls, which are called musha ningyō. These dolls represent Samurai warrior heroes from Japanese legends. Sometimes they display the warrior’s helmet (kabuto) or sword (katana).

Special food is eaten on Children’s Day:
- _Kashiwamochi_: sticky rice cakes filled with red bean paste and wrapped in oak leaves; and
- _Chimaki_: sticky rice cakes wrapped in bamboo leaves.

The oak and bamboo symbolise strength and a successful life.
Resource L
Carp Kite
Holi is a two-day, spring festival celebrated in India. It also celebrates Krishna, and the legend of Holika and Prahalad. Special songs, plays and dances retell the story of Lord Krishna’s adventures. Lord Krishna is the most celebrated hero of Hindu mythology. The date of Holi is decided by the Hindu calendar and usually falls in March.

Holi is also known as the Festival of Colours. Nature is celebrated through all of its bright colours. In parts of India, Holi is known by different names, but the spirit of the celebration is the same. Music, dancing and lots of colour bring the people of India together to celebrate and share in the joy of spring.

Holi usually begins with the lighting of bonfires that everyone has built. People burn the image of Holika as a symbol that good has defeated evil. Dancing and singing to drumbeats is heard everywhere.

Water is poured on the embers at sunrise, and everyone dips their finger in the ashes and marks a sign on their forehead. These ash marks represent the death of winter and are worn as a symbol of good luck.

After the bonfires, young people go into the streets carrying spray guns or bamboo blowpipes filled with brightly coloured water or powders. Showers of colours are thrown around, hitting faces, hair and clothing. Anyone passing through the streets becomes covered in spring’s bright colours.

Holi is the messiest festival!
The Legend of Prahalad and Holika

Holika was a female demon, and the sister of Hiranyakashyap, the demon king. Hiranyakashyap considered himself ruler of the Universe, and higher than all the gods.

Prahalad was the king’s son. His father hated him because Prahalad was a faithful devotee of the god Vishnu.

One day the king asked him ‘Who is the greatest, god or I?’

‘God is,’ said the son, ‘You are only a king.’

The king was furious and decided to murder his son.

But the king’s attempts at murder didn’t work too well. Prahalad survived being thrown over a cliff, being trampled by elephants, bitten by snakes, and attacked by soldiers.

So the king asked his sister, Holika, to kill the boy.

Holika seized Prahalad and sat in the middle of a fire with the boy on her lap.

Holika had been given a magic power by the gods that made her immune to fire, so she thought this was a pretty good plan, and Prahalad would burn to death while she remained cool.

But it’s never wise to take the gods’ gifts for granted! Because Holika was using her gift to do something evil, her power vanished and she was burned to ashes. Prahalad stayed true to his god, Vishnu, and sat praying in the lap of his demon aunt. Vishnu protected him, and Prahalad survived.

Shortly afterwards, Vishnu killed King Hiranyakashyap and Prahalad ruled as a wise king in his father’s place.

Moral

The moral of the story is that good always wins over evil, and those who seek to torment the faithful will be destroyed.

To celebrate the story, large bonfires are burned during Holi. In many parts of India, a dummy of Holika is burned on the fire.

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www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/holydays/holi_1.shtml
Resource 0

Tie-Dyeing

You will need the following equipment:
• white fabric shapes for each child or a white T-shirt each;
• water;
• various colours of dye;
• a basin;
• string or elastic bands;
• gloves;
• aprons; and
• marbles or pebbles (optional).

Method
1. Moisten the fabric with clean water. Wring it out so it is not too wet.
2. Scrunch or twist the fabric where you like and tie tightly with string or elastic bands. You can also achieve dyed circles by using marbles or pebbles: place them in the fabric, gather the fabric underneath and use elastic bands to secure them in place.
3. Wearing the gloves and an apron, put some dye in a basin of water. Place the fabric in the basin for about 5 minutes. Take it out and allow it to dry.
4. In order to make another colour, tie the knots in different places and repeat steps 1 to 3. If you are mixing colours, begin with the lightest.

Remember:
• Always supervise children with dyes.
• Always read the instructions on the dyes.
• Some dyes need to be ‘fixed’ by ironing, so check the packet carefully – or your next load of washing might come out dyed in the same colours!
Carnaval
Carnival (Carnaval in Spanish and Portuguese) is a popular holiday in many Roman Catholic countries in South America. The main festivities begin on the Saturday before Ash Wednesday and end on ‘Fat Tuesday’ (Mardi Gras). This four-day event is often a great, lively celebration, with family get-togethers and people wearing masks, dressing up, eating and drinking.

In different parts of South America people choose to celebrate Carnaval in different ways. Here are two examples:

Brazil: The largest Carnaval celebration is held in Brazil. Groups of people dress up in costumes or special T-shirts according to certain themes. Then they go parading through the streets, playing samba music and dancing. They are known as blocos. Some blocos are big and some are small, but each has its place or street to parade. The big ones usually close the streets to normal traffic.

Ecuador: In Ecuador, Carnaval is celebrated as a time of the year that people throw water at each other! It is common to see small children squirting water guns at passing cars and pedestrians. Hiding on rooftops or behind trees, these children may also throw water balloons and buckets of water.

Mardis Gras
Mardi Gras is the same day that some people in Northern Ireland celebrate Pancake Tuesday. It is the day before Lent, when Christians traditionally use up all of their milk, eggs and fat to get ready for the strict abstinence and fasting that will take place in Lent.

New Orleans: One of the world’s most famous carnival celebrations takes place on Mardi Gras in New Orleans, in the United States of America.

The official colours for Mardi Gras are purple, green and gold. These colours were chosen to stand for the following:

- purple represents justice;
- green stands for faith; and
- gold stands for power.

During the celebration in New Orleans, people dress in brightly coloured costumes with impressive designs to liven up the carnival spirit. Lots of people also wear sparkly, coloured, feathered and jewelled masks and attend fancy masquerade balls. Floats, bands and colourful marchers are all part of the parade. Today there are over sixty organisations that hold their own parades in New Orleans.
Resource Q
Mardi Gras Masks
The Chinese calendar is based on the lunar year, so the date of Chinese New Year varies every year between the 21st of January and the 20th of February. It is now popularly known as the Spring Festival, as it happens just before the beginning of spring.

Chinese New Year is a time when families get together to celebrate. It is also a special time to remember members of the family who have died. In the days coming up to New Year, every family buys presents, decorations, food and new clothes, and people have their hair cut. They clean their houses from top to bottom to sweep out any bad luck from the old year and clear the way for good luck. It is bad luck to clean on New Year’s Day in case any of the good luck from the New Year is swept away.

Families put lights up outside their homes and often give doors and windows a fresh coat of red paint. They hang red and gold banners that have Chinese characters on them, called Hui Chun, at the sides of the front door. The characters are messages of good fortune such as happiness, prosperity and long life.

The colour red is chosen for two reasons. The first is because red symbolises good luck and wealth, and the second is because it is supposed to frighten off the monster Nian, who is thought to come on New Year’s Eve.

People like to celebrate with a family dinner. Dumplings boiled in water, called jiaozi, are popular. A coin is often hidden in one of them, and it is thought to be good luck if you find the coin. Chinese people believe that the spirits of their ancestors are also at the meal, and so food is prepared for them.

Every light in the house is kept on until midnight, when there are fireworks and firecrackers to scare off evil spirits.

On New Year’s Day, children receive lucky red packets, called Hong Bao, usually from their parents or grandparents. These packets contain sweets or money. People greet each other by saying ‘Kung Hei Fat Choy!’,” which means ‘Happy New Year!’
The Legend of Nian

A long, long time ago lived a ferocious beast called Nian. Nian had the body of a bull and the head of a lion, with a very big mouth that could swallow lots of people in one bite. Nian lived deep in the sea the whole year long, but towards the end of winter, when there was nothing to eat, it would visit the villages and eat whatever it could – including humans!

The people were very, very scared of Nian, so every Chinese New Year’s Eve, all the villagers would walk deep into the mountains to hide from it.

One New Year’s Eve a grey-haired man appeared in the village. He asked if he could stay for the night and promised everyone that he would chase away the beast. No one thought that he would be able to do this. They warned him that the beast would eat him and that he should go into the mountains with them to hide. The old man refused, so the villagers left without him.

When Nian arrived at the village to do its damage as usual, it was met with a sudden burst of exploding firecrackers. Startled by the noise, flashes of light and red banners flying about, the beast turned and fled as fast as it could!

When the people returned from the mountains the next day, they found the village intact and safe. The old man had left, but they found the remains of the three precious items he had used to chase the beast Nian away: red banners, fire and firecrackers.

The villagers realised that the ferocious Nian was afraid of these three things: the colour red, fire and noise! The villagers came together and agreed that when it was time for Nian’s annual visit towards the end of winter they would start a fire in front of every door, hang a board painted red in front of every house, and stay up all night to make noise.

Since then, every Chinese New Year’s Eve, families hang red banners on their doors, set off fireworks, and light their lamps the whole night through, to scare off Nian and to await the Chinese New Year. The custom spread far and wide and became a grand traditional celebration of the ‘Passing of Nian’. ‘Nian’ in Chinese means ‘year’.
A new boy called Patrick joined William’s class in school. His accent was different, and he seemed to be avoiding mixing with the other boys during the break. While they were all playing football, William noticed that Patrick chose to sit on the log pile in the nature area, where the school Eco club had done some tree planting and wildlife gardening. Patrick looked sad, as if he didn’t want to be there. William sat beside Patrick during the break and asked him what he thought of school.

‘I’m a traveller and I want to be with the rest of my family who have gone to the Ballinasloe Fair’, said Patrick. ‘But Mam says I’ve missed too much school already, and I have to stay behind with my Oul’ Mammy – that’s my granny. She lives in a housing estate and I feel as if I’m in a box. I miss the trailer and the open road.’ Patrick was happy talking to William and forgot to be sad.

William asked Patrick what his trailer looked like, for in his mind he pictured a beautiful painted wagon pulled by horses. Patrick said he lived in a modern trailer, for the old wagons were mostly gone now. He told William about all the towns his family had visited and all the schools they had been to so far, for short stretches of time. Patrick didn’t like school very much, because he always seemed to be behind the others with reading and writing and found it hard always getting to know new people and make new friends – as soon as you got to know someone you were moving on again. Patrick knew everything about horses and many of the wild animals and plants. He really liked the nature trail. He talked to William about all the plants and trees he’d seen there and about the ones he’d like to plant.

‘Our teacher runs the Eco club after school on Wednesdays – why don’t you talk to her about it?’ William thought that might help him like school a bit better. ‘Do you belong to the Eco club?’ Patrick asked him. William didn’t but said he’d go along too if it helped... ‘And another thing,’ William thought, ‘Why don’t you tell us all about the Ballinasloe Fair? We’re doing topic work tomorrow and the theme this term is Celebrations – sure the Fair would be a great one to learn about. Shall we ask Miss Holmes?’

Patrick was excited and wanted to tell everyone about the Ballinasloe Fair. Miss Holmes thought it would be a great idea. They would do it next week; that would give them both some time to prepare.
Patrick was in his element... ‘Life is so easy-going living in a trailer and travelling the open road, but Ballinasloe Fair is a great time for us. It’s always in October, lasts over a week and is one of the greatest horse fairs in the world, the oldest in Europe and the largest in Ireland. It’s held every year in Ballinasloe, in County Galway. It’s a great place for trading the horses, so for Travellers involved in keeping and breeding horses, the fair is the most important event of the year; there’s great excitement and we park our trailers and horse boxes on the hill above the Fair Green. We have lots of family reunions and get together to exchange all the news and even do a bit of matchmaking – my sister Biddy got engaged to a fella called Joe, another Traveller she met at the Fair when they were children. There are sheep and cattle and all there, too, as well as parades, races, a fashion show, pet shows, tug-of-war competitions... even jousting and falconry and the traditional Irish folk music is playin’ everywhere. Thousands come to it from all over the world – sure the place is packed. There are hundreds of stalls. My Oul’ Mammy used to do the fortune-telling – that’s very popular – and my Mam makes the traditional crafts to sell. Uncle Pat makes and sells the traditional tin buckets – none of your plastic stuff. There’s something to see and do every minute of the day, and in the evening, we make a fire and sit around catching up on all the news and telling great yarns...’

Patrick could have talked all day. Miss Holmes said Patrick could tell a great story! William and the rest of the class agreed – Patrick was a great storyteller.
Jim Enjoys the Fair

Patrick’s dad, Jim, was smiling from ear to ear with his arm around a lovely Bay pony. Patrick’s cousins – Charley, and the twins, Mary and Martin – ran to meet their uncle. ‘Look what I’ve got for you to meet – a lovely new pony! Bess, meet Charley and Mary and Martin.’

The children loved all the horses and were really enjoying the fair. They looked forward to going to Ballinasloe every autumn. It lasted about ten days, and you could buy just about any kind of horse, from a racehorse to a donkey. But that wasn’t all – there were loads of other stalls, too, selling curtains and carpets, stoves and ironmongery, clothes, toys and firecrackers.

The children looked forward to the big carnival, to family reunions and dressing up, to meeting old friends and to making new ones.

Ballinasloe is in County Galway, in the west of Ireland. Patrick’s parents, Jim and Kathleen, are staying in a caravan with Jim’s mother, Margaret Rose, enjoying the holiday. They miss Patrick, but they also want him to do well at the new school he has just started. He is staying in Belfast with his sister Biddy and their Granny Nora, who lives in a housing estate.

‘He’ll be missing all the fun,’ reflected Margaret Rose.

‘Sure, didn’t he have a great long holiday in the summer, and won’t he be back to stay with you in the spring?’ Kathleen reminded her. ‘And my Mam loves him to bits, and he’ll have a chance to meet new friends at school. His sister Biddy is doing very well and he will too.’

What Jim did not know about horses was not worth knowing. He had a few of his own for breeding and selling.

The horses used to pull the wagons that Jim’s family lived in, but there are no wagons to pull now. His mother still had her parents’ old wagon behind the caravan. She slept in it when the weather was warm enough, but its axles were rusted and it had been off the road for many years now. Biddy liked painting it. Jim did a number of odd jobs as well as his work with the horses – gardening and tree services, conservation and recycling. He liked to think he was providing a good service to the community, and he and Kathleen still enjoyed travelling.
Suggested Additional Resources

Books

**Kids Around the World Cook: The Best Foods and Recipes from Many Lands**  
by A. N. Braman  
Publisher: Jossey Bass (2000)  
ISBN: 978-0471352518

**Around the World Create! The Best Crafts and Activities from Many Lands**  
by A. N. Braman  
Publisher: Jossey Bass (1999)  
ISBN: 978-0471290056

**Sam’s Sack From Santa**  
by N. Griffiths  
Publisher: Corner To Learn Ltd (2007)  
ISBN: 978-1905634145

**Around the World Celebrate! The Best Feasts and Festivals from Many Lands**  
by L. Jones  
Publisher: Jossey Bass (1999)  
ISBN 978-0471345275

**Hands Around the World: 365 Creative Ways to Build Cultural Awareness and Global Respect**  
by S. Milford  
Publisher: Williamson Publishing Co (1992)  
ISBN: 978-0913589656

**Stories From The Edge**  
by M. O’Hagan  
Publisher: Volunteer Development Agency

**Around the World Art and Activities: Visiting the 7 Continents through Craft Fun**  
by J. Press  
Publisher: Williamson Publishing Co (2000)  
ISBN: 978-1885593450

**My Trailer**  
by K. Taylor  
Publisher: Traveller Education and Minorities Support  
ISBN: 0 90679042 9

**Fishing for food and mushrooms**  
by various authors  
Publisher: Kids’ Own Publishing Partnership (2005)  
ISBN: 1 90243226 6

**In Our Own Way: Tales From Belfast Travellers**  
by various authors  
Publisher: Belfast Travellers Support Group (2000)
Suggested Additional Resources

Websites

www.festivalshop.co.uk

Researching Birth Dates
www.bornonthisday.info
www.todayinsci.com
www.brainyhistory.com
www.famousbirthdays.com

Calendar Events
www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk
Follow the links to ‘calendar’, and search for curious customs and notable and special days.

www.dltk-cards.com
Follow the link to calendars.

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar

Mendhi
www.kented.org.uk
Choose the link to ‘Early ICT’ to find the mendhi hand activity.

Japan
http://web-japan.org/kidsweb
Follow links to ‘Learn’: ‘Explore Japan’: ‘Calendar’ (then ‘March’ for Girls’ Day and ‘May’ for Boys’ Day).

www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/dance
Follow link to ‘Dance Workshop’ and look for ‘Japan’ (Autumn 2008).

www.activityvillage.co.uk
Search for ‘Japan’ to find craft activities.

Mardi Gras
www.activityvillage.co.uk

www.makingfriends.com
Search for ‘Mardi Gras’ to find craft activities.

Christmas around the World
www.the-north-pole.com
Follow links to ‘Christmas Around The World’. 
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