

Teacher's Guide for the *Holidays of Light* Tour at Treehouse Museum

In honor of the numerous Holidays of Light celebrated by many countries and cultures during the winter months, Treehouse will be sharing stories, crafts and traditions from a variety of celebrations. During your visit students will be introduced to holidays commemorating events and centered on beliefs which may be different from those they are familiar with. By learning about the celebrations of others, students can discover similarities to their own traditions as well as the differences that make each culture unique and special.

Prior to your visit, we suggest you:

1. Make a class list of holiday traditions and their beginnings. Some ideas include:

The Christmas Tree: Germany

Advent Calendars: Germany

Christmas Poinsettia: Mexico

Christmas/Holiday Cards: England

Have students list their family's holiday traditions. They may be surprised to find how many traditions they do have.

2. Make a class bulletin board or display of Gift Givers from Around the World. During the Christmas Season, children in each part of the world are brought presents by a different gift giver. Have the students research and create pictures/models of the various "Santa counterparts." Suggestions include:

Pere Noel from France

Christkind from Germany

Jultomten from Sweden

Svaty Mikalas from The Czech Republic

La Befana from Italy

Dyed Moroz from Russia

Have the class invent or choose the "School Gift Giver." They should decide what he/she will be called, what he would look like, when he would come, what would his costume be, what kinds of gifts he would bring, etc. Students could draw or create a model of their gift giver or they could even put together a costume for your principal to wear.

During your visit:

Treehouse tour guides will be sharing with your students stories, traditions and a craft based on winter celebrations of light—not just Christmas. Possible holidays to be introduced include Hanukkah, Santa Lucia, Las Posadas, Kwanzaa, or Diwali. Guides may also share Christmas traditions unique to locations outside of the United States. Your visit will also include up to 25 minutes of exploration time for students to explore the Museum's exhibits in small groups with their adult chaperones.

After your visit we suggest:

1. Your class could decorate a tree on your school grounds (hopefully one which can be seen from your classroom) as Scandinavian children do, for our feathered friends with popped corn, doughnuts, bread cut outs, etc.
2. Have a winter festival with your class and do activities that are done in the winter all around the world. You can make snow sculptures (the winter festival in Sapporo, Japan), go caroling to other classrooms (an English tradition), leave a shoe out for St. Nicholas to fill (an Eastern Europe tradition) or have a Santa Lucia parade (a Swedish tradition). You could also ask parents and other community members to come to your classroom and talk about other traditions that are fun to celebrate in the winter months.

Happy Holidays from all of us at Treehouse!

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