



Classroom Guide for
CELEBRATE!
Connections Among Cultures
 written and photographed by
Jan Reynolds

Reading Level

*Reading Level: Grades 3-4

Interest Level: Grades 1-5

Guided Reading Level: R

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes

World Cultures, Celebrations and Traditions, Communities, Human Experiences, Music, Dance, Environments

With captivating photographs and text, this book presents a fascinating look at the celebrations of various cultures around the world. The text describes the unique traditions followed by these groups and also highlights the underlying similarities and connections of these forms of human expression. The indigenous peoples covered in the book are: the Tibetans and Sherpas of the Himalaya, the Tuareg of the Sahara, the Aborigines of Australia, the Sami of northern (Arctic) Europe, the Yanomami of the Amazon Basin, the Inuit of northern North America, and the Balinese of Indonesia. *School Library Journal* praised "the excellent-quality photographs and the brief, engaging text com[ing] together to promote the theme: 'We are one human family celebrating life on Earth!'"

Background

Author/photographer Jan Reynolds has traveled the world and has lived with the families featured in the book. She says, "I wanted to learn more about what people around the world honor as sacred and important in their lives. That's why I searched far and wide for indigenous tribes, as a way of walking back into the past. I wanted to learn about the basic ways of human expression. . . ."

Participating in rituals and celebrations gave me a window into human culture in a way nothing else could. . . . I hope readers will come away with a feeling that we as human beings, are so much alike."

Teaching Tip

As students head back to school, their horizons will expand. New friends, new teachers, and new ideas will open up new worlds. *Celebrate! Connections Among Cultures* is the perfect back-to-school book because it is a joyous example of the remarkable new worlds that students will encounter.

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What is a celebration? Why do you think people hold celebrations?
2. What are some of your favorite celebrations? Explain why you like them.
3. How do celebrations make you feel?
4. Why might celebrations differ in different parts of the world?

Exploring the Book

Show the front cover to students. Talk about the photographs. Ask students to tell what they think the people are doing. How are they dressed? Which pictures show something you might do?

Discuss the book title. Encourage students to relate it to the photographs on the front cover of the book.

Review the parts of the book—title page; copyright page with pronunciations; author note; map; and sources—with students.

As you page through the book, draw attention to the variety of clothing, settings, and activities shown in the photographs.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

Have students read to find out:

- how and why people around the world celebrate
- how celebrations of other cultures are like or unlike their own
- ways in which people around the world are connected

VOCABULARY

Write the words “Celebrate” and “Celebrations” on the chalkboard. Beneath them write the words listed below. Explain that these twenty words appear in the book. Pair students with partners and assign two or more words to each team. Have the teams:

- find each assigned word in the book
- look up the word in a dictionary
- use the word in an original sentence about the book

gather
leader
parade
ancestor
decorate

blessing
hero
fireworks
occasion
spirit

festivities
community
picnic
ancient
fortune

honor
village
traditional
commemorate
symbolizes

AFTER READING**Discussion Questions**

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop understanding of the content. Encourage students to refer back to the text and photographs in the book to support their responses.

1. What are some reasons that people gather together?
2. What is the message of this book?
3. What do you think the Sami's life is like during the winter? How does this relate to their spring celebration?
4. Why do Americans celebrate on the fourth of July?
5. Why do you think celebrations usually include food?
6. Why do Aborigines go "walking on a Dream Journey"?
7. What are some ways that people decorate themselves for celebrations?
8. Why are caribou a cause for celebration among the Inuit?
9. What are some ways that people use music in their celebrations?
10. How is dancing used in celebrations?
11. What are some ways that fire is used to help people celebrate?
12. Why do celebrations differ around the world? What do they have in common?
13. Which celebrations are joyous? Which are serious? Why do you think people celebrate serious or sad events as well as happy ones?
14. How do different kinds of celebrations make people feel?

Literature Circles

If you use literature circles during reading time, students might find the following suggestions helpful in focusing on the different roles of the group members.

- The **Questioner** might use questions similar to the ones in the Discussion Question section of this guide.
- The **Passage Locator** might look for passages that tell about the celebrations of a particular group, e.g. the Tuareg.
- The **Illustrator** might paint a picture to express an artist's view of a particular celebration.
- The **Connector** might locate other books about food from different cultures.
- The **Summarizer** might provide a brief summary of each section of the book.
- The **Investigator** might research more about each group included in the book.

*There are many resource books available with more information about organizing and implementing literature circles. Three such books you may wish to refer to are: *Getting Started with Literature Circles* by Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 1999), *Literature Circles: Voice And Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse, 2002), and *Literature Circles Resource Guide* by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 2000).

Reader's Response

The following questions or similar ones will help students personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, in oral discussion, or in written form.

1. Which of the celebrations in the book would you like to join? Why?
2. What do you think is the best part of a celebration? Why do you like that part best?
3. If you walked on a dream journey like the Aborigines do, what do you think you would see and experience?
4. Why are celebrations important to people? Why are they important to you, your family, and/or your community?
5. Why do people celebrate together?

Other Writing Activities

You may wish to have students participate in one or more of the following writing activities. Set aside time for students to share and discuss their work.

1. In *Celebrate!*, Jan Reynolds has created a photo-essay, a story illustrated with photographs instead of art. Use a photo of a family, school, or community celebration to write a short photo-essay of your own.
2. Write a paragraph in which you compare and contrast two celebrations covered in the book.
3. Choose one of the celebrations in the book and write an invitation to it for guests of a different culture.
4. Write a poem or chant that might be used in one of the celebrations.
5. Work in groups to make your own book of celebrations that are observed in your school or community.

ELL Teaching Strategies

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English language learners or who are learning to speak English as a second language.

1. Break down large chunks of information into small chunks for comprehension.
2. Make an audiotape of the book and invite students to listen to it as they follow along with the text in the book.
3. Use the photographs to explain the celebrations in simple language.

4. Draw attention to the Pronunciation Guide at the front of the book. Explain that the words come from other languages and have been adapted into English. Point out that everyone in the class will need help saying these words, then lead the class in pronouncing each word. Have students repeat each word after you. Encourage students to refer to the guide as they read the book.

Teaching Tip

When a celebration next occurs in your classroom, school, or community, use this book to expand students' understanding of the purposes and meanings of such observances.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas.

Social Studies

1. Says Jan Reynolds, "I hope readers will come away with a feeling that we, as human beings, are so much alike. I think we would treat each other much better if we truly saw each other and felt this way. This is what compassion is all about." Work with students to make a list of the ways people around the world are alike. Then discuss ways that individuals and organizations can "show compassion."
2. Use the map at the end of the book to help students locate the different groups portrayed. Ask the following questions:
 - On what continent is the United States?
 - What celebrations from the United States are also included in the book?Point out that one continent is missing from this map. Have students identify the missing continent (Antarctica) and explain why it was most likely omitted.
3. Provide a more comprehensive world map and have students use information from the book to locate the following and identify the group living there:
 - the Himalaya and Mount Everest
 - the Sahara
 - the Arctic Circle
 - the Amazon Basin
 - the island of Bali
4. Remind students that food, shelter, and clothing are the major needs of any people. Have students study the clothing worn by people in the book's photographs and discuss the following:
 - Why do some groups wear very little clothing? Why are some groups heavily dressed?
 - Why do the Tuareg wear mostly white? Why do they cover their heads?
 - How does the clothing of the Inuit and the Sami reflect their environment?

Science

Review with students that some of the celebrations described in the book take place during certain seasons. Point out that the seasons affect how people live in terms of the food they eat, clothes they wear, and activities they engage in. Discuss why spring and fall in particular might be seasons for celebration.

Provide drawing paper and have students trace large circles on the paper. Demonstrate how to divide the circles into quarters, one for each season. Have students label the quarters with the season names. Suggest that they draw or cut out pictures from magazines that represent celebrations in each season.

Art

Review with students the variety of hats, headpieces, and masks people in the photographs are wearing. Suggest that students use these as inspiration to create their own ceremonial headpieces. Provide appropriate materials such as fabric and fabric trimmings, yarn, feathers, colored paper, foil, paper bags, beads, and anything else that might inspire students. To simplify the activity, have students make basic headbands or paper bag masks which they can then decorate. Be sure to have a celebration to display and admire the finished items.

Dance

Point out that many celebrations involve dancing. Invite students to make up their own dances to celebrate occasions such as the change of seasons, winning an award or game, giving thanks for something, or marking the culmination of a project.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/PHOTOGRAPHER

Jan Reynolds is an award-winning author and photographer whose work has appeared in many publications including *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, and *Outside* magazine. In addition to *Celebrate! Connections Among Cultures*, Reynolds is the author of the Vanishing Culture series and *Cycle of Rice*, *Cycle of Life: A Story of Sustainable Farming*, also published by LEE & LOW BOOKS.

When not working, Reynolds is a passionate mountain climber, skier, and worldwide adventurer. She holds the world record for women's high altitude skiing and was part of the first expedition to circumnavigate Mount Everest. Reynolds lives with her husband and their two sons in Stowe, Vermont.

Awards and honors *Celebrate!* has received include:

- Outstanding Merit, Best Children's Books of the Year, Bank Street College
- Best of the Best Books list, Chicago Public Library

Book Information

\$17.95, HARDCOVER

ISBN 978-1-58430-253-7

\$8.95, PAPERBACK

ISBN 978-1-60060-452-2

32 pages, 10 1/4 x 8-1/4

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RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about ***Celebrate! Connections Among Cultures*** at
<http://www.leeandlow.com/books/31/hc/celebrate>

Also by Jan Reynolds***Cycle of Rice, Cycle of Life: A Story of Sustainable Farming***

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/366/hc/cycle_of_rice_cycle_of_life

Vanishing Cultures: Sahara

<http://www.leeandlow.com/books/129/hc/sahara>

Vanishing Cultures: Mongolia

<http://www.leeandlow.com/books/128/hc/mongolia>

Vanishing Cultures: Himalaya

<http://www.leeandlow.com/books/127/hc/himalaya>

Vanishing Cultures: Frozen Land

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/126/hc/frozen_land

Vanishing Cultures: Far North

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/125/hc/far_north

Vanishing Cultures: Down Under

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/124/hc/down_under

Vanishing Cultures: Amazon Basin

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/123/hc/amazon_basin

BookTalk with Jan Reynolds on *Celebrate!*

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/reynolds.mhtml>

BookTalk with Jan Reynolds on *Cycle of Rice, Cycle of Life*

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/cycleofrice.mhtml>

Order Information**On the Web:**

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<http://www.leeandlow.com/books/31/hc/celebrate> (secure on-line ordering)

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