This project is valuable for showing first graders cultural celebrations around the world.

**Curriculum/State Standards**
In examining why certain events and people are celebrated through national holidays, students begin to appreciate the influence history has on their daily lives. The study of history through the lens of families and schools in first grade prepares students for more complex investigations of the past of their community, state, and country in later grades.

**Overview**
This project brings celebrations from around the world into the first grade classroom. Younger students are often unaware of happenings outside their own environment. This project helps educate students on the celebrations of St. Lucia, Los Posadas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Chinese New Year.

**Objectives**
The student will produce visual representations of cultural celebrations around the world.
The student will use components of culture to describe diversity in family life.
The student will participate in projects to help or inform others.

**Materials**
Sweden-St. Lucia-December 13
- Pack of yellow construction paper for stars on boys’ hats $1.39
- 100 pk. of white heavyweight tagboard for girls’ crowns of light $4.49
- 4 boxes of ginger snaps for offering $3.99/box=$15.96

Spain-Los Posadas-December 16-24
- 2 sets of Fiesta Maracas $16.00/dozen=$32.00

Israel-Hanukkah-December 20-28
- 8 magic color scratch dreidels $6.50/dozen=$52.00

Africa-Kwanzzz-December 26-January 1
- 4 sets 12 x18 black construction paper for flag $2.39=$9.56

China-Chinese New Year-January 23
- 8 red envelope lacing kids $4.99/dozen=$39.92
- 8 design your own fan kits $7.25/dozen=$58.00
- 8 sets of color your own Chinese New Year bookmarks $4.25/dozen=$34.00
- 2 Reams of paper for student copies of activities $7.99/each=$15.98

Material prices are quoted from www.orientaltrading.com and www.schoolspecialtyonline.net

**Readiness Activity**
In the months of December and January, students are excited about the traditions of Christmas and New Year. This project opens up other opportunities for learning during the holiday season. Each day of the week before the holiday break, we learned about a celebration around the world. During the week of Chinese New Year, each day of the week was another lesson about the Chinese celebration.

**Strategies/Activities**
A positive aspect of this project is that the cultural celebrations can be done in any order. Importance is not placed on one particular culture over another. This provides flexibility for the team that teaches the lessons and activities. December and the New Year is a wonderful time to learn about other

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THIS WINNING PROJECT IDEA SUBMITTED BY:

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cultures and traditions other than what is known in the United States.

Learning about other cultures and traditions that take place abroad can open the mind of the young student that may not know what people around the world do to celebrate their culture. The countries included in this project are Sweden, Spain, Israel, Africa, and China. These countries have celebrations that vary from each other and the United States in a way that provides a wonderful variety of learning.

Generally associated with Sweden, St. Lucia Day is on December 13 this year. Other countries that celebrate St. Lucia (Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Latvia, Estonia, the Swedish speaking population of Finland, Malta, Italy, Bosnia, Bavaria, Croatia and Slovakia) can be introduced to students as well. Not a well-known celebration in this part of the world, St. Lucia Day provides examples of helping others and offering food and services to others. Girls traditionally wear a "crown of light," traditionally made of candles, more practically made from tagboard. Boys traditionally wear a cone-shaped hat decorated with golden stars, called stjärngossar (star boys). The boys and girls of each class would then make an offering to others in our school community, giving an opportunity for them to teach others about the celebration. The traditional offering is of pepparkakor (ginger snaps).

Spain celebrates Los Posadas between December 16 and 24. Spanish music is wonderfully rhythmic and can be used as part of the celebration for Los Posadas. Maracas for students to use are a wonderful accent to Spanish music and can be used to learn celebration songs and dances. One symbol of the Los Posadas celebration is a fan. Students could personalize their own fan and could also use it during a song or dance performance.

Jewish populations celebrate Hanukkah between December 20 and 28. There are many symbols of Kwanzaa. The creation of a photo frame using these symbols is a great teaching tool for students to explain each of the symbols. They will have a photograph taken of their learning time to also lead into teaching someone else about Hanukkah. A dreidel and the symbols upon it are a major part of Hanukkah. Creating their own dreidel and having the opportunity to play the dreidel game with classmates is a wonderful way to connect and activity to learning.

Africa celebrates Kwanzaa between December 26 and January 1. African music is unique in its beat and rhythm and having a CD of songs used during Kwanzaa provides opportunity to explore songs and dances of their celebration. Colors are a huge part of Kwanzaa. Black construction paper will be a base color to work with creating a cut-and-paste African flag and a placemat for cut-and-paste symbols of Kwanzaa.

The Chinese New Year starts February 10. China is literally a "world away." In the world, China is on the other side of the globe. Learning about the Chinese New Year will help close the distance between our two worlds. Chinese fans and lacing pouches are symbols of the New Year. Creating these crafts reinforces learning about the New Year, but it also provides time for personalization for each student. Chinese music is unlike what we hear on popular radio here in the United States. Song and dance can also be incorporated into learning about the New Year.

Information, stories and books are available to teach each of these celebrations. The specific materials listed above are necessary to put a hands-on approach to learning. Any activity, song, dance, or creation made will tie in learning with the information about each celebration around the world.

This is not to say these celebrations do not take place in our state or country, but the knowledge students can gain from this project will provide an abundance of knowledge about the origin of celebrations in December and the New Year.

The activities included in this project will intrigue the students and provide them with information outside the traditions that are known to them. It will provide them with opportunities to discover the big picture of our world outside their own home, neighborhood, or state. Young
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students’ egocentric perspective can be influenced in a positive way by education about other cultures of the world.

Culminating Activity
Students got to perform dances and songs for Los Posadas and Chinese New Year. Each celebration had multiple visual representations that students got to take home. Information about each celebration was also sent home so that students could explain the celebration at home.

Evaluation Method
Each first grade student will take with them at least one visual representation of their learning about each of the celebrations. Activities included will have students teaching their peers and adults about what they have learned. Lessons and activities will also be supplemented with presentations created for a Smartboard. Smartboards are a piece of technology that will provide a way for students to interact with their learning. Some celebrations have songs, dances, or music that can be performed to represent the celebration. Essays and tests are not developmentally appropriate for this age.