

CULTURAL CALENDAR

*2022-2023 calendar dates included. Dates in red vary annually and require updating.

This Cultural Calendar is compiled by the PTSA DEI team to offer as a reference and guide for families and teachers to support their students' learning about cultural holidays and events. This document also includes recommended books about select holidays. Our PTSA will refer to this Cultural Calendar when planning PTSA events and scheduling meetings and will consist of these holidays/events in our newsletter and social media posts.

This is a living calendar that will be updated to increase representation of all cultures, with an intentional effort to include historically underrepresented and marginalized communities. Do you have a holiday or event that should be added or additional information or books to share with a holiday that is already included? If so, [we'd love to hear from you](#).

SEPTEMBER

MID AUTUMN MOON FESTIVAL (September 10) The Moon Festival is an important holiday in China and the Chinese diaspora. The Moon Festival began as a harvest festival to celebrate and show gratitude for a successful harvest. However, as time went on, many myths and symbols became intertwined with that. Most myths involve the Moon Goddess, Chang-e (also written as Chang-o or Chang'E). On the night of the Moon Festival, people pay homage to her and send her a secret wish in hopes that she will grant it. Typical traditions for celebrating include families gathering for a nighttime picnic, lighting lanterns, and admiring the moon —sometimes singing songs or reciting poetry. The picnic consists of many foods; most are round, like pomelos or eggs, to emulate the moon's shape. However, the food that is always eaten at the Moon Festival is the mooncake.

Picture book recommendations:

Thanking the Moon: Celebrating the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival by Grace Lin

The Shadow in the Moon by Christina Matula

LATINX HERITAGE MONTH (September 15-October 15) Americans celebrate Latinx Heritage month to honor the histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

Picture book recommendations:

Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played the Piano for President Lincoln by Margarita Engle

Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré by Anika Aldamuy Denise

Mario and the Hole in the Sky: How a Chemist Saved our Planet by Elizabeth Rusch

All Equal: A Ballad of Lemon Grove by Christy Hale

Sharuko: Peruvian Archaeologist Julio C. Tello by Monica Brown

ROSH HASHANAH (September 25-27) The Jewish New Year is one of Judaism's holiest days. Meaning "first of the year," it commemorates the creation of the world and marks the beginning of the Days of Awe, a 10-day period of introspection and repentance that culminates in the Yom Kippur holiday, also known as the Day of Atonement.

Picture book recommendation:

New Year at the Pier: A Rosh Hashanah Story by April Halprin Wayland

YOM KIPPUR (October 4 & 5) The Day of Atonement is considered the most important holiday in the Jewish faith. It is a period of introspection and repentance that follows Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. The holiday is observed with a 25-hour fast and special religious service.

Picture book recommendations:

Sam and Charlie (and Sam Too) by Leslie Kimmelman

OCTOBER

LATINX HERITAGE MONTH (Continues through October 15)

Additional picture book recommendations:

Areli Is a Dreamer by Areli Morales

Across the Bay by Carlos Aponte

Turning Pages by Sonia Sotomayor

DISABILITY HISTORY MONTH The purpose of this month is to help increase awareness and understanding of the contributions that people with disabilities in our state, nation, and world have made to our society. Recognizing disability history is vital to increase respect and promote acceptance and inclusion of disabled people while also reducing harassment and bullying.

Picture book recommendations:

All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything by Annette Bay Pimentel

We Move Together by Kelly Fritsch

Awesomely Emma by Amy Webb

What Happened to You? by James Catchpole

Talking Is Not My Thing by Rose Robbins

Can Bears Ski? by Raymond Antrobus

Chapter book recommendations:

Rolling Warrior by Judy Heumann

Roll with It by Jamie Sumner

Tune It Out by Jamie Sumner

This Kid Can Fly by Aaron Philip

El Deafo by Cece Bell (graphic novel)

FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH Celebrated in the United States during the month of October to commemorate the arrival of the first Filipinos who landed in what is now Morro Bay, California, on October 18, 1587.

Picture book recommendations:

Cora Cooks Pancit by Dorina Lazo

Lakas and the Manilatown Fish by Anthony Robles

DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH Celebrating people with Down Syndrome and increasing awareness of their abilities and accomplishments.

Picture book recommendations:

My Friend Isabelle by Eliza Woloson

You Are Enough: A Book About Inclusion by Margaret O'Hair

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY (October 10) Reimagines Columbus Day. It changes a day of colonialism into an opportunity to reveal historical truths about the genocide and oppression of Indigenous people in the Americas, to organize against current injustices, and to celebrate Indigenous resistance.

Picture book recommendations:

Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story by Kevin Noble Maillard

We Are Still Here!: Native American Truths Everyone Should Know by Traci Sorell

When We Were Alone by David Robertson

DIWALI (October 24) Diwali is the biggest and most important holiday of the year for many Indians all over the world. Even though it is a Hindu festival, it is celebrated by people of different faiths all across India and in the Indian diaspora. Diwali is also known as Deepavali from the clay lamps (known as diyas or deepa) that people light to celebrate this Festival of Lights. Diwali signifies the victory of good over evil and light over darkness. Although families may have different rituals and cultural traditions associated with the holiday, many families celebrate by gathering together, lighting candles, watching fireworks, drawing rangolis, sharing sweets, and praying. Diwali is celebrated over five days of festivities. The exact date of Diwali changes each year since it is based on the new moon day in the month of Kartik (October or November) in the Hindu calendar.

Picture book recommendations:

Shubh Diwali! by Chitra Soundar

Binny's Diwali by Thrity Umrigar

Let's Celebrate Diwali by Anjali Joshi

HALLOWEEN (October 31) The tradition originated with the Celtic festival of Samhain, where people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. The holiday has evolved into a day of activities like trick or treating, carving jack-o-lanterns, festive gatherings, donning costumes, and eating treats.

Picture book recommendation:

Holidays Around the World: Halloween with Pumpkins, Costumes, and Candy by Deborah Heiligman

NOVEMBER

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH A time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the significant contributions of Native people. This month invites all to learn about Native tribes and raises awareness about the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and currently. It also emphasizes how tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges.

Picture book recommendations:

Chester Nez and the Unbreakable Code: A Navajo Code Talker's Story by Joseph Bruchac

Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer by Traci Sorell

Jim Thorpe's Bright Path by Jim Bruchac

Mission to Space by John Herrington

Sharice's Big Voice: A Native Kid Becomes a Congresswoman by Sharice Davids

Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina by Maria Tallchief

Wilma's Way Home: The Life of Wilma Mankiller by Doreen Rappaport

Chapter book recommendations:

Jo Jo Makoons: The Used-to-Be Best Friend by Dawn Quigley

Healer of the Water Monster by Brian Young

I Can Make This Promise by Christine Day
Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories for Kids by Cynthia L. Smith
Fatty Legs (10th Anniversary Edition) by Christy Jordan-Fenton

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS (November 2) This is a Mexican holiday where families welcome back the souls of their deceased relatives for a brief reunion that includes food, drink, and celebration. November 1 is All Saints' Day, and November 2 is All Souls' Day.

Picture book recommendations:

Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras by Duncan Tonatiuh
The Dead Family Diaz: A Story of Family, Fiestas, and Friendship by P.J. Bracegirdle
Dia de los Muertos by Hannah Eliot
Dia de Los Muertos by Roseanne Greenfield Thong

VETERANS DAY (November 11) This holiday pays tribute to all American veterans — living or dead — but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime. It is celebrated annually on November 11th in honor of the “eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month” of 1918 that signaled the end of World War I, known as Armistice Day.

Picture book recommendation:

The Poppy Lady by Barbara E. Walsh

THANKSGIVING (November 24) Based on the colonial Pilgrims' harvest meal, the holiday continues to be a day for Americans to gather for a day of feasting, football, and family. For many Native Americans, it is considered a day of mourning — a time to acknowledge the ongoing painful legacy of removal from their homelands, enslavement, and deaths from diseases carried by the Pilgrims.

Picture book recommendations:

Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message by Chief Jake Swamp
We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga by Traci Sorell
If You Lived During the Plimoth Thanksgiving by Chris Newell
Plymouth Rocks!: The Stone-Cold Truth by Jane Yolen

Chapter book recommendation:

History Smashers: The Mayflower by Kate Messmer

DECEMBER

HANUKKAH (December 18 - 26) Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in the 2nd century BCE. After the Greek empire outlawed Judaism, Judah Maccabee and a small army revolted and reclaimed the Second Temple. When they went to light the temple's menorah, they found only one day's oil supply. The one-day supply lasted for eight days, thus the eight-day celebration. Families typically celebrate Hanukkah by lighting candles each night of the festival, eating foods fried in oil such as sufganiyot (jelly donuts) and latkes (potato pancakes), playing with dreidels (four-sided spinning tops), exchanging gifts, and praying. From a religious perspective, Hanukkah is considered a relatively minor holiday. Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) are considered the High Holy Days of Judaism.

Picture book recommendations:

Latke, the Lucky Dog by Ellen Fischer
Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins by Eric A. Kimmel
Queen of the Hanukkah Dosas by Pamela Ehrenberg

WINTER SOLSTICE (December 21) A significant time of year in many cultures with festivals and rituals that mark the symbolic death and rebirth of the Sun. The seasonal significance of the winter solstice is in reversing the gradual lengthening of nights and shortening of days.

Picture book recommendation:

The Shortest Day by Susan Cooper

SHABE-YALDA (December 21) is the Persian winter solstice celebration marking the last night of autumn and the longest night of the year by spending time with loved ones and eating watermelon and pomegranates to celebrate. Yalda means birth and it refers to the birth of Mitra, the mythological goddess of light.

Picture book recommendation:

Night of Yalde by Anahita Tamaddon

CHRISTMAS (December 25) A sacred Christian holiday honoring the birth of Jesus, it has evolved into a cultural and commercial phenomenon celebrated worldwide. (*See also: Orthodox Christmas*)

Picture book recommendation:

Red and Lulu by Matt Tavares

Walk This World at Christmas by Big Picture Press

KWANZAA (December 26-January 1) An African American and Pan-African holiday celebrated by millions throughout the world African community, Kwanzaa celebrates the seven principles of African Heritage: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

Picture book recommendation:

Seven Spools of Thread: A Kwanzaa Story by Angela Shelf Medearis

JANUARY

ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS (January 7) Many Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas on January 7, not December 25, due to the church's adherence to the Julian calendar and not the Gregorian calendar. One tradition for some people in the Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox faiths is serving 12 traditional dishes during Christmas Eve, representing Jesus's 12 apostles. The most classic dish is kutia, traditionally made of wheat with honey and poppy seeds, which symbolizes good fortune and prosperity for the coming year.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY (January 16) MLK Day was designed to honor the activist and minister assassinated in 1968, whose accomplishments have continued to inspire generations of Americans. The fight for this federal holiday was a struggle for over 20 years, opposed by most white moderates and conservatives. It wasn't until 2000 that every state in the Union observed MLK Day. Some cities mark the day with citywide service projects and community-building activities to advance Dr. King's vision to end systemic racism.

Picture book recommendations:

Martin's Dream (Ana & Andrew) by Christine Platt

My Daddy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by Martin Luther King III

Trailblazers: Martin Luther King, Jr.: Fighting for Civil Rights by Christine Platt

Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by Doreen Rappaport

LUNAR NEW YEAR (January 22) On the second new moon after the winter solstice, Lunar New Year begins. Lunar New Year is observed by many in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Mongolian, and Tibetan communities and is often the most important celebration of the year. While some people call this holiday Chinese New Year, we encourage the more inclusive term Lunar New Year, as it more accurately represents that multiple cultures celebrate this holiday.

Fun facts:

- Family reunions and large meals are the hallmarks of this celebration.
- Things traditionally considered good luck in the Chinese tradition: thoroughly cleaning the house beforehand, decorating with red; eating noodles, as well as oranges, tangerines, and pomelos; giving red envelopes with money. Bad luck: using a broom, cutting hair, giving an odd amount of money.
- In the Korean tradition, good luck is eating rice cake soup, hanging a bokjori (bamboo strainer dipper) on the wall. Bad luck: not hiding your slippers/shoes (from the wandering spirits).
- In Vietnam, certain flowers are used to decorate homes for Lunar New Year — peach flowers in the north and yellow apricot blossoms in the central and southern regions.
- There are 12 zodiac animals with many legends about their origin. The most common is that the order of the animals in the 12-year cycle was from the results of a great race.

Recommended picture books:

The Nian Monster by Andrea Wang

Tastes of Lunar New Year by Cheryl Yau Chepusova & Isabel Foo

Bringing in the New Year by Grace Lin

Astrid and Apollo and the Happy New Year by V.T. Bidania

Dragon Dancer by Joyce Chng

New Year by Rich Lo

Recommended chapter books:

Mindy Kim and the Lunar New Year Parade by Lyla Lee

The Year of the Dog by Grace Lin

Cilla Lee Jenkins: This Book is a Classic by Susan Tan

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY (January 27) The United Nations General Assembly designated January 27 — the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau — as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On this annual day of commemoration, the UN urges every member state to honor the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides.

Picture book recommendation:

I Am Anne Frank by Brad Metzler

FEBRUARY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH In 1926, Carter D. Woodson and the ASALH (Association for the Study of African American Life and History) launched “Negro History Week” to promote the study of African American history as a discipline and to celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans. Today, we still see the absence of Black history and experience in our textbooks, required readings, STEM, and overall curriculum of our educational system. Unless Black history is taught throughout the year, it perpetuates an “othering” of Black lives and Black students. Ensuring the ongoing integration of Black history and

experiences throughout all curriculum is imperative as educators continue to uplift every student and reinforce that Black Lives Matter every day.

Picture book recommendations:

Carter Reads the Newspaper by Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by Don Tate

The Power of Her Pen: The Story of Groundbreaking Journalist Ethel L. Payne by Lesa Cline-Ransome

The Highest Tribute: Thurgood Marshall's Life, Leadership, and Legacy by Kekla Magoon

Buzzing with Questions: The Inquisitive Mind of Charles Henry Turner by Janice N. Harrington

She Was the First!: The Trailblazing Life of Shirley Chisholm by Katheryn Russell-Brown

Trombone Shorty by Troy Andrews

Small but Mighty Storytime by the National Civil Rights Museum (various picture books)

Can I Touch Your Hair? by Irene Latham and Charles Waters

Ruth and the Green Book by Calvin Alexander Ramsey with Gwen Strauss

I Am Every Good Thing by Derrick Barnes

Harlem Grown by Tony Hillery

Chapter book recommendations:

She Persisted: Claudette Colvin by Lesa Cline-Ransome

She Persisted: Harriet Tubman by Andrea Davis Pinkney

This Book Is Anti-Racist by Tiffany Jewell

Stamped (for Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You by Ibram X. Kendi and Jayson Reynolds

JAPANESE AMERICAN DAY OF REMEMBRANCE (February 19) Every February 19, the Japanese American community commemorates Executive Order 9066 as a reminder of the impact it has had on families, communities, and our country. Signed by President Roosevelt on February 19th, 1942, it led to the forced removal and incarceration of some 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast during WWII. It is an opportunity to educate others on the fragility of civil liberties in times of crisis and the importance of remaining vigilant in protecting the rights and freedoms of all.

Recommended picture books:

Fish for Jimmy by Katie Yamasaki

Baseball Saved Us by Ken Mochizuki

Recommended chapter book:

Fred Korematsu Speaks Up by Laura Atkins and Stan Yogi

MARCH

ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY (March 1) The United Nations and numerous other international organizations celebrate this day as a reminder to promote inclusivity, compassion, and peace. It's a day to celebrate the rights of everyone to live productive lives, full of dignity. [Here are some ways](#) you can support zero discrimination.

Picture book recommendation:

Niko Draws a Feeling by Bob Raczka

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH The purpose of Women's History Month is to increase awareness of women's contributions to America's history. In learning our country's full history, it's important to note the inequities in advancement and opportunities for women based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation/identity, disability, etc. The feminist movement continues to strive to become ever more inclusive in the fight for equality for ALL women in reproductive, economic, employment, and racial justice.

Book recommendations:

Black Women in Science by Kimberly Brown Pllum

Women Who Dared: 52 Stories of Daredevils, Adventurers, and Rebels by Linda Skeers

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH The campaign seeks to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all areas of community life, as well as awareness to the barriers that disabled people still sometimes face in connecting to the communities in which they live.

Picture book recommendations:

All Kinds of Friends, Even Green by Ellen Sinisi

How I Learn: A Kids Guide to Learning Disability by Brenda S. Miles and Colleen Patterson

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (March 8) A global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.

Book recommendation:

A is for Awesome!: 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World by Eva Chen and Derek Desierto

ST. PATRICK'S DAY (March 17) Observes the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. The holiday has evolved into a celebration of Irish culture with parades, special foods, music, dancing, drinking and a whole lot of green.

Picture book recommendation:

Fiona's Luck by Teresa Bateman

HOLI (March 8), the Hindu Festival of Color, commemorates the start of spring and the triumph of good over evil. Holi and Diwali are considered the biggest festivals on the Hindu calendar. Holi's traditions are rooted in Indian mythology but vary across India. Some typical Holi traditions include saying prayers, lighting bonfires, throwing colorful powder, spraying colored water, eating sweets, dancing to music, and celebrating with family and friends.

Picture book recommendations:

Festival of Colors by Kabir Sehgal

Holi Hai! By Chitra Soundar

NOWRUZ (March 21 & 22) Also known as Persian New Year, is celebrated on the day of the spring equinox — March 20 this year. The holiday period lasts for 13 days. It is celebrated by more than 300 million people all around the world and has been celebrated for over 3,000 years in the Balkans, the Black Sea Basin, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and other regions. Some typical Nowruz traditions include cleaning homes, buying new clothes, sharing meals and sweets with family and friends, and making a "Haft Seen" table, which includes seven symbolic items starting with the Farsi letter "S" that represent various hopes for the new year, including health, wealth and prosperity.

Picture book recommendation:

Seven Special Somethings: A Nowruz Story by Adib Khorram ([read aloud video](#))

APRIL

ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH National Arab Heritage Month is an opportunity to enhance understanding of the nuanced and diverse aspects of Arab American heritage. The United States is home

to over 3.5 million Arab Americans. The Arab World includes 22 countries stretching from North Africa in the west to the Arabian Gulf in the east. Arabs are ethnically, religiously, and politically diverse but descend from a common linguistic and cultural heritage.

Picture book recommendations:

Ten Ways to Hear Snow by Cathy Camper

The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story by Aya Khalil

Halal Hot Dogs by Susannah Aziz

Salma the Syrian Chef by Danny Ramadan

Building Zaha: The Story of Architect Zaha Hadid by Victoria Tentler-Krylov

Chapter book recommendation:

Farah Rocks Fifth Grade by Susan Darraj

The Turtle of Oman by Naomi Shihab Nye

AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH Autism Acceptance Month celebrates differences as it works to build an inclusive society where autistic individuals live fully through connection and acceptance. This is a shift from the commonly used phrase “Autism Awareness Month.” While educating about autism is important, the need for acceptance is greater than ever, so that autistic individuals can live fully in all areas of life. Autism Acceptance Month emphasizes that autistic people belong — that they deserve welcoming communities, inclusive schools, and equal opportunities.

Picture book recommendations:

Don't Hug Doug (He Doesn't Like It) by Carrie Finison

Too Sticky!: Sensory Issues with Autism by Jen Malia

It Was Supposed to Be Sunny by Samantha Cotterill

The Perfect Project: A Book About Autism by Tracy Packiam Alloway

Every Turtle Counts by Sara Hoagland Hunter

Chapter book recommendations:

West Meadow Detectives by Liam O'Donnell

A Boy Called Bat by Elana Arnold

Slug Days by Sara Leach

Get a Grip, Vivvy Cohen! by Sarah Kapit

RAMADAN (March 22 – April 21) Ramadan is a 30-day long celebration during the 9th month of the Islamic calendar. It is observed by over 1 billion Muslims around the world. Ramadan is considered one of the holiest months of the year for Muslims. During Ramadan, Muslims commemorate the revelation of the Qur'an and fast from food and drink during the sunlit hours as a means of drawing closer to God and cultivating self-control, gratitude, and compassion for those less fortunate. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims will wake before the sun rises to eat a pre-dawn meal called suhoor. They will then not eat or drink until sunset, when they will have iftar, the meal which breaks the fast. While children are not required to fast until they reach puberty, it is customary for children beginning around seven years of age to perform limited or symbolic fasting such as fasting half days or on weekends.

Picture book recommendations:

The Gift of Ramadan by Rabiah York Lumbard ([read aloud video](#))

Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story by Reem Faruqi ([read aloud video](#)) (The book is read by the author from minute 6:30 to 17:30)

EASTER (April 9) Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, who Christians believe was raised back to life three days after he was crucified. Easter and Christmas are considered the most important holidays

on the Christian calendar. Some typical Easter traditions include attending church service, sharing a large meal with family, decorating Easter eggs, going on Easter egg hunts, and an Easter Bunny giving children Easter baskets filled with sweets and toys. In the U.S., many of these Easter traditions are practiced by non-Christian families. (*See also: Orthodox Easter*)

EARTH DAY (April 22) Earth Day was founded in 1970 as a day of education about environmental issues. The holiday is now a global celebration that is sometimes extended into Earth Week, a full seven days of events focused on green living.

Picture book recommendations:

We Are All Connected: Caring for Each Other & the Earth by Gabi Garcia

My Friend Earth by Patricia MacLachlan

MAHAVIR JANMA KALYANAK (April 4), also known as Mahavir Jayanti, is one of the most important religious festivals in Jainism. It celebrates the birth of Mahavir, the twenty-fourth and last Tirthankara of present Avasarpiṇī. Traditions for Mahavir Janma Kalyanak include, but are not limited to, decorating Jain temples with flowers and flags. It is also traditional to offer money or food to those in need.

Video recommendation:

[Short kids' video about Mahavir Jayanti](#)

SOLAR NEW YEAR (April 13 - 16) Bengali, Burmese, Cambodian, Dai, Lao, Nepalese, Sri Lankan, Thai and various communities from India celebrate solar new year. It is called by various names such as Mesha Sankranti, Puthandu, Bisu Parba, Buisu, Bwisagu, Sangken, Pahela Baishakh, Baisakhi, and more.

Baisakhi/Vaisakhi is a festival observed by Hindus and Sikhs. It started as a harvest festival in the Punjabi region of northern India. For the Hindu community, it also marks the beginning of the solar new year. People wear colorful, traditional clothes as they partake in the parade through the streets. Traditions include worship, hymns, singing, and dancing. During the festival, many people perform a traditional folk dance known as the "Bhangra." This energetic dance is performed to the rhythm of a drum called the dhol.

PASSOVER (April 5-April 13) is an eight-day Jewish holiday that is celebrated in the early spring. It commemorates the freedom and exodus of the Israelites (Jewish slaves) from Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II. Passover is considered one of the five main festivals of the Jewish year (alongside the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and the festivals of Sukkot and Shavuot). A typical Passover tradition is to replace leavened food (food with yeast or baking powder) with matzah (flat square crackers), for the whole week of Passover. Other traditions include a seder, which is a special meal with family and friends that features elaborate symbolism and the reading of a special prayer book that recounts the Passover story.

Picture book recommendation:

Welcoming Elijah: A Passover Tale with a Tail by Leslea Newman ([read aloud video](#))

RIDVÁN (April 20- May 2) is a twelve-day festival in the Bahá'í Faith. In the Bahá'í calendar, it begins at sunset on the 13th of Jalál, which translates to the 20th or 21st of April, depending on the date of the March equinox (exactly one month on the Gregorian calendar after the equinox). On the first, ninth and twelfth days of Ridván, work and school should be suspended. It is the holiest Bahá'í festival, and is also referred to as the "Most Great Festival" and the "King of Festivals."

Video recommendation:

[Short kids' video about Ridván](#)

ORTHODOX EASTER (April 16) Traditions for Orthodox Easter, or Pascha, include fasting, decorating the church with flowers, and attending church services followed by a big feast with traditional foods, games, music and more.

Picture book recommendation:

Rechenka's Eggs by Patricia Polacco ([Reading Rainbow episode via KCLS](#))

MAY

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH a celebration of the contributions and accomplishments of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States, encompassing people from all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands.

Picture book recommendations:

The Fearless Flights of Hazel Ying Lee by Julie Leung

Queen of Physics: How Wu Chien Shiung Helped Unlock the Secrets of the Atom by Teresa Robeson

Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist by Julie Leung

Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix by Jacqueline Briggs Martin and June Jo Lee

How to Solve a Problem: The Rise (and Falls) of a Rock-Climbing Champion by Ashima Shiraishi

Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice by Nikki Grimes

Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon by Simran Jeet Singh

Twenty-Two Cents: Muhammad Yunus and the Village Bank by Paula Yoo

The Boy Who Dreamed of Infinity: A Tale of the Genius Ramanujan by Amy Alznauer

Chapter book recommendations:

Step up to the Plate, Maria Singh by Uma Krishnaswami

Prairie Lotus by Linda Sue Park

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH an annual recognition and celebration of Jewish American achievements in and contributions to the United States of America started in 2006.

Picture book recommendations:

Emma's Poem: The Voice of the Statue of Liberty by Linda Glaser

Itzhak: A Boy Who Loved the Violin by Tracy Newman

The Polio Pioneer: Dr. Jonas Salk and the Polio Vaccine by Linda Elovitz Marshall

Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Case of R.B.G. vs. Inequality by Jonah Winter

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. The goal of MHAM is to raise awareness about mental health by fighting stigma, providing support, educating the public and advocating for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

A Blue Kind of Day by Rachel Tomlinson

Out of a Jar by Deborah Marcero

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK (first full week of May) Since 1984, National PTA has designated one week in May as a special time to honor the individuals who lend their passion and skills to educating our children.

EID-AL-FITR (April 21-22) Eid-Al-Fitr, “the festival of breaking the fast,” is a holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide. This celebration marks the end of Ramadan, a month-long observance of fasting. Eid Al-Fitr is celebrated for up to three days and many celebrate by partaking in communal prayer, giving charity, visiting family and friends, and exchanging gifts. Muslims from all around the globe celebrate Eid Al-Fitr. It is important to recognize that celebratory traditions vary amongst families, cultures, and countries. Below are some common traditions:

- Communal Prayer: Many families attend their local Mosque for the communal Eid prayer. New or clean clothes are worn; mosques are decorated; and community members gather to pray, converse, and celebrate the holiday.
- Charity (Zakat): Zakat, or obligatory charity, is given before Eid prayer. These charitable donations are used to support members of the community who are in need.
- Family Celebrations/Gift Exchanges: After Eid prayer, families and friends gather to share a feast and exchange gifts.
- “Eid Mubarak” is a term exchanged amongst those who celebrate. Translated, “Eid Mubarak” means “Blessed Festival.” These words are exchanged with the intention to wish one another happiness, health, peace, and prosperity.

Picture book recommendation:

Amira's Picture Day by Reem Faruqi

Chapter book recommendation:

Once Upon an Eid: Stories of Hope and Joy by 15 Muslim Voices edited by S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed

CINCO DE MAYO (May 5) Meaning “Fifth of May,” this holiday celebrates the day when the Mexican army overtook the French in the Battle of Puebla. The Mexicans won on May 5, 1862. Cinco de Mayo is not Mexico’s Independence Day.

Picture book recommendation:

Cinco de Mayo by Emma Carlson Berne

MOTHER’S DAY (second Sunday in May) is an annual celebration honoring the mother (or maternal figure) of the family, as well as motherhood, maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society.

MEMORIAL DAY (May 29) An American holiday honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971.

Picture book recommendations:

Twenty-One Steps by Jeff Gottesfeld

The Wall by Eve Bunting

JUNE

PRIDE MONTH LGBTQ+ Pride Month is celebrated annually in June to honor the 1969 Stonewall riots and works to achieve equal justice and equal opportunity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Americans. The Stonewall Riots were a tipping point in the movement to outlaw discriminatory laws and practices against LGBTQ+ Americans.

Picture book recommendations:

Stonewall: A Building. An Uprising. A Revolution by Rob Sanders

Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag by Rob Sanders

Sewing the Rainbow: A Story About Gilbert Baker by Gayle E. Pitman

CARIBBEAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH Started in 2005, this month honors the significance of Caribbean people and their descendants in the history and culture of the United States. Caribbean immigrants contributed to the well-being of American society since its founding, including Alexander Hamilton, the First Secretary of the Treasury who was from the Caribbean island of Nevis.

Picture book recommendations:

Dancing at Carnival (Ana & Andrew) by Christine Platt

Turning Pages by Sonia Sotomayor

Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music by Margarita Engle

Tito Puente, Mambo King by Monica Brown

My Name Is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz by Monica Brown

JUNETEENTH (June 19) Short for "June Nineteenth" it marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The troops' arrival came a full two- and- a- half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday.

Picture book recommendations:

Juneteenth for Mazie by Floyd Cooper

All Different Now by Angela Johnson

DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL (June 22) This Chinese holiday is celebrated with dragon boat racing and zongzi (sticky rice dumplings). It falls on the 5th day of the 5th month of the Chinese lunar calendar. This celebration originated 2,000 years ago to honor a patriotic poet, Qu Yuan.

Book recommendation:

One Is A Drummer: A Book of Numbers by Roseanne Thong

Celebrating the Dragon Boat Festival by Samnu Tang

Dragon Boat Festival Wishes by Jillian Lin

Awakening the Dragon: The Dragon Boat Festival by Arlene Chan

The Legend of the Dragon Boat by Slong

Moonbeams, Dumplings & Dragon Boats: A Treasury of Chinese Holiday Tales, Activities & Recipes by Nina Simonds

FATHER'S DAY (third Sunday in June) is an annual celebration honoring the father (or paternal figure) of the family, as well fatherhood, paternal bonds, and the influence of fathers in society.

SUMMER SOLSTICE (June 21) Seen as a significant time of year in many cultures, with festivals and rituals to mark the start of summer.

Picture book recommendation:

The Longest Day: Celebrating Summer Solstice by Wendy Pfeffer

JULY

DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH Started in 2004 and gaining in recognition, Disability Pride Month commemorates the passing of the Americans with Disability Act in 1990. Ways to celebrate include walking in a local parade, educating yourself about ableism, standing up for inclusion, being aware of the words you choose, and reading books by disabled authors and journalists.