

MS ADELE'S CLASS



Not in the service of any political or social creed should the teacher work, but in the service of the complete human being, able to exercise in freedom a self-disciplined will and judgement, unperverted by prejudice and undistorted by fear.

Maria Montessori

Date	Star of the Week	Sound of the Week	Word of the Week
December 5-9	Alyse	IL	Language
December 12-16	Scarlet	mM	Menorah
December 19-25	Bethlehem	nN	North

Prejudice and fear are thorns in the side of civilization and the major contributing factors to today's global conflict. Dr. Montessori, in her infinite wisdom, instructed her Directresses to teach tolerance, in the hope that we will one day achieve world peace. The festive season provides us with a perfect platform to share the message of peace and tolerance with our children. Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa are more about establishing core family traditions that encourage gratitude and sharing, than about

the gift exchange. To encourage the art of giving rather than receiving, we are asking the children to contribute to the "Giving Pile" and the "Giving Fund". Please send in canned, non perishable items that can be donated to the women's shelter. The proceeds of the "Giving Fund" will be used to purchase livestock through an organization known as Heifer International (<http://www.heifer.org>). *By giving families a hand-up, not just a hand-out, Heifer empowers them to turn lives of hunger and*

poverty into self-reliance and hope.

Most of the celebrations in December are religious holy days, and are linked in some way to the **winter solstice** in the Northern Hemisphere. On that day, due to the earth's tilt on its axis, the daytime hours are at a minimum in the Northern Hemisphere, and night time is at a maximum. It is important to value the variety of December celebrations, because it is evidence of the diversity of belief within our common humanity.

Topics of discussion for this month.

NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY

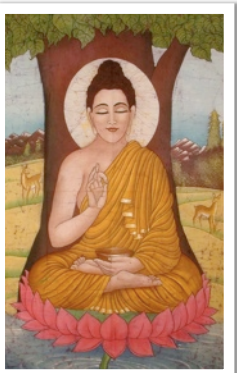
Pueblo tribes observe both the summer and winter solstices. Although the specific details of the rituals differ from pueblo to pueblo, the rites are built around the sun, the coming new year and the rebirth of vegetation in the spring. Winter solstice rites include prayer-stick making, retreats, altars, emesis and prayers for prosperity.



The Hopi tribe is dedicated to giving aid and direction to the sun which is ready to 'return' and give strength to budding life." Their ceremony is called "Soyal." It lasts for 20 days and includes "prayer-stick making, purification, rituals and a concluding rabbit hunt, feast and blessing.

BODHI DAY

On DEC-8 the class celebrated Bodhi Day. This is the anniversary of the day that Buddha achieved enlightenment in 596 BCE. The children have been learning about the path that Buddha followed on the road to enlightenment. Siddhartha began his life as prince



confined to the palace grounds. In his twenties the prince, on his own volition, left the palace and was exposed for the first time to death and illness. On confronting the fragility of life, he abandoned his privileged existence and began to lead a more austere life. Siddhartha studied under many spiritual teachers without success. Finally, he sat under a pipal tree and vowed that he would stay there until he found what he was seeking. On the

morning of the eighth day, he realized that everyone suffers due to ignorance, however ignorance could be overcome through the Eightfold Path that he advocated. Bodhi day is generally regarded as the birth day of Buddhism. Being an Eastern tradition, Bodhi Day has none of the associations with the solstice and seasonal changes found in other religious observances at this time of year. However, it does signify the point in time when the Buddha achieved enlightenment and escaped the endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth through reincarnation -- themes that are observed in other religions in December.



CHANUKAH (DEC 20-28)

The 8 day festival of Hanukkah recalls the war fought by the Maccabees in the cause of religious freedom. Antiochus, the king of Syria, conquered Judea in the 2nd century BC. He terminated worship in the Temple and stole the sacred lamp and Menorah, from the altar. At the time of the solstice, they rededicated the Temple to a Pagan deity. Judah the Maccabee lead a band of rebels, and succeeding in retaking Jerusalem. They restored the temple and lit the Menorah.

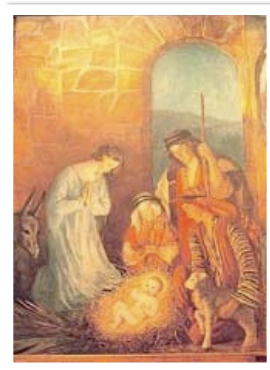
KWANZAA (DEC 26-JAN 1)

An African American celebration that focuses on the traditional African values of family, community responsibility, commerce, and self-improvement. It is a time of reaffirming African-American people, their ancestors and culture. Kwanzaa, means "first fruits of the harvest" in the African language Kiswahili.



CHRISTMAS (DEC 25)

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus is 'the Son of God', the



Messiah sent from Heaven to save the world. The 'Christmas Story' tells of the birth of Jesus in a stable in Bethlehem, the angels announcing the birth to the shepherds in the fields, and the Magi (wise men from the East) visiting the stable and offering gifts to the newborn child. The choice of date is believed to have been influenced by the

northern hemisphere winter solstice.

Together with our cultural curriculum we will be working on holiday crafts and seasonal songs. Please send in books related to holiday topics. It is always fun to read new material, as well as the classics.

Thank you for attending the parent teacher conferences. Your children are thriving in the Montessori environment and I couldn't be happier with their progress.



Ms Pascale, Ms Lorena and I would like to wish you all the best for the Holiday Season.



- Wish list.**
- We would love a tree for the classroom.
 - Used Christmas cards and wrapping paper for decoupage
 - Holiday cookie cutters

