

SEVEN CANDLES FOR KWANZAA

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By Andrea Davis Pinkney

Themes: African American Culture/Holidays

Grade Level: K-3

Running Time: 12 minutes

SUMMARY

Kwanzaa is a seven day festival during which time millions of families of African American descent rejoice in their ancestral values. This book follows the sequence of Kwanzaa week, showing how one family celebrates their faith and unity.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about African American culture and traditions.
- Children will learn about the celebration of Kwanzaa.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the different ways they celebrate winter holidays with their families. Encourage children to share symbols of these holiday celebrations (Menorahs, wreaths, tree ornaments, candles, etc.) with their classmates. Then ask:

- What special things do you do to celebrate the holiday?

Share the book SEVEN CANDLES FOR KWAN-

ZAA with children. Then ask:

- What does the holiday Kwanzaa celebrate?
- What do the candles in the kinara represent?
- How is Kwanzaa similar to, and different from, the holidays you celebrate with your family?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the ways the family members worked together to celebrate Kwanzaa. Ask:

- How do you think the family members felt during this holiday?
- If you were one of the family members, what would you like to do to help?

Have a Kwanzaa feast in the classroom. Gather up recipes for traditional African foods, including collard greens and roasted yams. Let children work together, under adult supervision, to make some of these recipes. Invite other classes to come in and enjoy the Kwanzaa feast. Supply strips of colored construction paper and glue that children can use to weave their own mkeka or placemats that can be used during the feast. If possible, find colorful shawls, beads, and head pieces children can use to dress in traditional garb for the feast.

Invite someone who celebrates Kwanzaa to come to your classroom and describe the Kwanzaa celebrations with children. Ask the person to bring the

kinara and candles used in the celebration as well as any other symbols of the holiday that will help give children an "inside look." Encourage children to ask questions.

Talk with children about the kinds of gifts they might make for one another as Kwanzaa presents. Emphasize the fact that during Kwanzaa, the gifts that are exchanged are homemade. Later, supply art materials children can use to make simple gifts for one another. As children exchange gifts, have them discuss the reasons why their gifts are appropriate for their friends.

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