

A New Year's Reunion Mini-Unit Plan

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Designer:

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Mini-Unit Introduction:

This unit will incorporate a picture book illustrating how a family from China celebrates the Lunar New Year. That book will then be compared to others and lead into several writing and art projects. For a cross curricular unit, these activities could be coordinated with classroom teachers.

This lesson will be presented over a number of weeks in art class to second grade general education classes.

Student goals: Students will:

- be able to create a family portrait using markers and/or colored pencils that shows their own family unit in a traditional or celebratory setting.
- explore the meaning of a family unit.
- compare the traditions of a Lunar New Year celebration to holiday traditions that they celebrate with their own families.
- compare this story with a companion book about celebrating the Chinese New Year in the United States.
- write a story about a family celebration inspired by their portrait.

Teacher goals: I hope to encourage students of all ethnicities to feel comfortable and proud sharing their family background, and to introduce different cultures to my other students. I hope to learn more about the lives of my students.

Inquiry questions:

- Who makes up a family unit?
- What are some of the traditions shared by family members?
- What are the importance of holidays and how do they bring families together?

Contextual Information:

A New Year's Reunion: Yu Li-Qiong is the author and Zhu Cheng-Liang is the illustrator.

Publisher: First published by Hsin Yi Publications, Taipei, Taiwan in 2008, it was published in the United States by Candlewick Press in Somerville, MA, 2011

Summary: A Chinese migrant worker returns home to his wife and daughter to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Told in the voice of his toddler daughter, she is at first uncomfortable seeing him after so long but then warms up to him. She describes the close family celebration during their few days together before he leaves again for another year. A custom using a lucky coin leads to a heartwarming ending between father and daughter.

Genre: Fiction

Media: Gauche, an opaque water-based paint

Cultural themes: Families celebrating the New Year together, migrant workers in China, traditions of the Lunar New Year

Geographical region: Modern day China

Author/illustrator background information: Yu Li Qiong was born in Anqing in the People's Republic of China in 1980. She holds a BA in literature from Nanjing University and an MA in dramatic art. Yu Li Qiong lives in China.

Zhu Cheng Liang was born in Shanghai in 1948. He studied fine arts at Nanjing Art Institute and is currently deputy chief editor at the Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House. Zhu Cheng Liang lives in China.

Sources of inspirations for the author and illustrator: The notes at the end of the book describe the Chinese New Year as the most important holiday, allowing families to gather together to feast and share other traditions such as cleaning house, buying new clothes, decorating the house, and receiving money/gifts. The notes also recognize the 100 million migrant workers in China who are often working miles away, only returning for a few days annually for the Lunar New Year celebration.

Contextual Information Reference:

- Candlewick Press. (n.d.) *A New Year's reunion*. Retrieved from <http://www.candlewick.com/cat.asp?browse=Title&mode=book&isbn=076366748X&bkview=p&pix=y>
- NTDonChina. (2013). *Discovering China – Chinese New Year!* Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EUsembqnuw8>
- History Channel. (2014). *Bet you didn't know: Chinese New Year*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asluM20g6rk>
- Videovibes. (2013). *Chinese New Year and animal signs for 2013 to 2024*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B3ZxCeBpQY>
- Taichi4u365. (2012). *Chinese New Year family traditions*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noiouIzjJZE>
- Living Montessori Now. (2013). *Free Chinese New Year songs and rhymes for circle time*. Retrieved from <http://livingmontessorinow.com/2015/02/18/free-chinese-new-year-songs-rhymes-circle-time/>

Learning Experiences:

Learning Experience 1: Family Portrait

The main lesson would be the creation of a family portrait in marker after reading the book. Dialoging about the definition of family and separation from family members could be followed by the reading of the companion text (see below) and further discussion of family. The teacher could project a Venn diagram on the board to have students come up and list similarities and differences between the two books. If a projector is not available, students could write on copies of the diagram and the group could then discuss. Video clips could be shown for real life examples of the holiday.

Students would then learn about drawing family members in a grouping as a portrait using shapes to help. After drawing their family unit, students would color in using markers. Students will be encouraged to use bright colors and possibly patterns or designs. A border could be made on separate metallic paper copying designs used on the cover or in the book. The patterns could be drawn with permanent markers and then glued around the outside of the portrait. Vocabulary would include: portrait, lines, shapes, colors, textures and patterns.

After completion of their family portraits, students would write a story about their family and a family holiday. Students will be encouraged to include descriptions using their senses, such as the sights, smells, tastes, etc. encountered during their chosen holidays. Students will also be encouraged to describe emotions during that holiday. Students could also compare and contrast their holiday celebration with that described in the story.

Students would be assessed by completion of the projects.

Additional Activities: Possible New Year activities

Because of the significance of the coin between the father and daughter, students could make a "fortune coin." Students would be given a precut

cardboard circle and gold or silver metallic paper. They will trace the circle twice on the paper and cut and then glue the two circles on the top and bottom of the cardboard to make their metallic coin. Students would then draw their idea of the design on the coin by using a marker, pencil or pen, which will emboss the foil paper.

Red envelopes holding money are an important part of the Chinese New Year. Students can fold and glue red paper and use gold markers or paint to make the Chinese symbols for good luck on the front after practicing on a tracing guide.

Chinese lanterns can be made of paper.

A collaborative dragon for movement could be made by students by decorating different sections of fabric or paper. The pieces can be attached to a head that would have separate parts decorated by the students that would be added onto a framework made by the teacher. This example of a collaborative dragon is for decoration, but can easily be paraded around for dramatic play by attaching several long dowels so students can hold and move the dragon over their heads.

Materials: The space could be either the art room or classroom tables/desks. Materials needed would be white, colored and metallic paper, pencils, markers, scissors, cardboard and glue. Resources would be the books, video and sound clips, and sample projects for student examples.

Related Text:

Lin, G. (2008). *Bringing in the New Year*. New York: Knopf Books for Young Readers.

This book can be used as a companion text so students may compare the Chinese family's New Year experiences in this story with those of the Chinese-American family in Lin's book. There are many other fiction and non-fiction picture books related to this topic.

Learning Experiences References:

Red Ted Art. (2015). *New Year's Eve traditions – red envelopes (China)*. Retrieved from <http://www.redtedart.com/2012/12/26/new-years-eve-traditions-red-envelopes-china/>

Nurture Store. (2015). *How to make Chinese lanterns*. Retrieved from <http://nurturestore.co.uk/make-chinese-lanterns>

Arteascuola. (2013). *Collaborative dragon!* Retrieved from <http://arteascuola.com/2013/03/collaborative-dragon/>

Standards:

NJCCCS Visual Art

- Standard 1.1 The Creative Process
- Standard 1.3 Performance would be pertinent for the arts projects. Students will learn that other cultures celebrate holidays with their own traditions and families are universal across cultures

Common Core ELA Standards

- Standard 6 Social Studies. Students will be listening, reading and sharing