

HOLIDAY OFFERINGS FOR EARLY CULTURAL EDUCATION

By Cindy Hewitt • December 20, 2011

The holiday season offers a variety of activities for early childhood educators in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes. Young children can be introduced to several activities that may be from other cultures. They may want to include some of these cultural celebrations in their own homes by telling their parents about what they learned in kindergarten about how other children may celebrate the holiday season.

Kindergarten teachers in the Goddard School in the Lakewood Ranch area of Sarasota incorporated several holiday cultural activities into their classroom calendar for the month of December. Holiday activities included Las Pasadas from the Hispanic culture, Hanukkah from the Jewish culture, and the celebration of Kwanzaa from the African-American community. Participating in learning activities from all of these cultures gave the children a broad picture of how other children may celebrate the holidays in their homes. Many of the holiday activities involved sensory experiences. Poinsettia prints were a creative art activity for the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes during classtime in December. The children were taught about the origin of the poinsettia plant before making the art prints.

The Christmas celebration was also incorporated into the December calendar. Many public schools are now forbidden to include Christmas in their school activities, although the other cultural holiday activities are always honored. The Goddard School is a private kindergarten, which makes it possible for the children to also celebrate Christmas in addition to Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. A Classroom Holiday Party rounded out the weeks of multicultural holiday activities in the early childhood classrooms at the Goddard School.