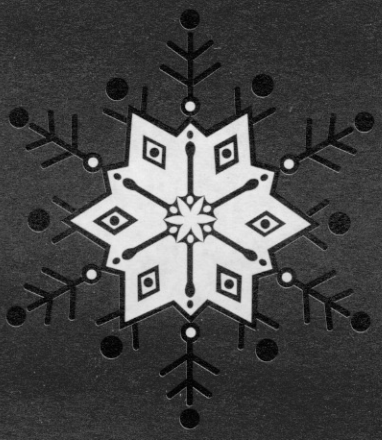
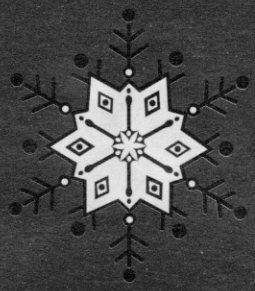
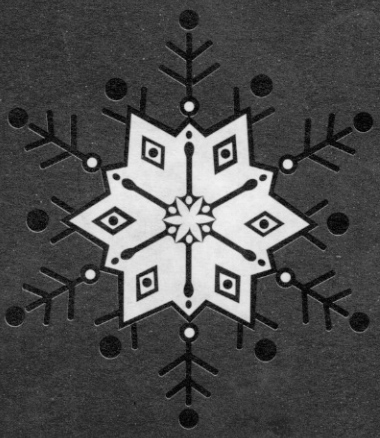
WINTER

Season of Darkness and Light

Teacher's Guide







KET

The Kentucky Network

Introduction

Winter: Season of Darkness and Light provides a multicultural look at how some people celebrate the winter holidays. Professional musicians and storytellers from across the United States share cultural traditions, music, and history associated with the winter solstice, Chanukah, Christmas, Las Posadas, Kwanzaa, and the Old English/Appalachian tradition of the mummer's play.

The 60-minute program is designed to be used in the classroom as a stimulus for discussions and explorations in many areas of the curriculum, including social studies, history, geography, the arts, and language arts. The hosts, Joy D'Elia and Tommy Bledsoe, introduce each winter tradition and sing seasonal songs. An artist familiar with the cultural background then illustrates the tradition through song and/or story.

Each of these segments runs about 10 minutes, giving teachers an opportunity to use the program in parts and to focus discussion and activities around a specific tradition. This guide explains some of the origins and backgrounds of the traditions and similarities among the various cultures they represent. It also contains follow-up

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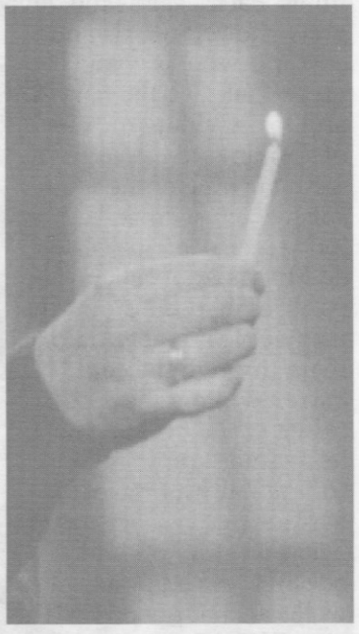

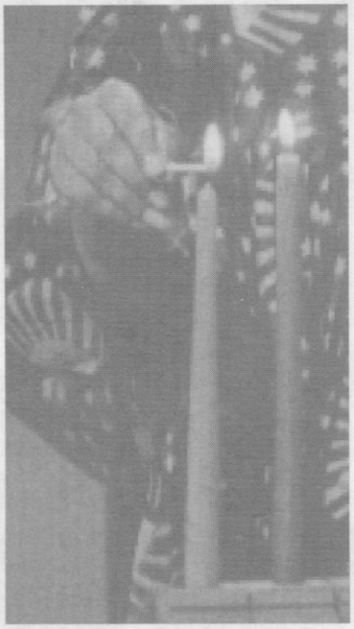

activities and a bibliography for each of the cultural traditions or holidays.

While the differences between various cultures can be fairly obvious, it is only when we show a variety of cultures side by side that we see the common threads that run through them all. This video will help viewers explore their own culture as well as make connections to others.

Many other winter traditions were not included in the program. Each class is unique in the assortment of traditions among its students. *Winter: Season of Darkness and Light* provides an opening for the teacher to explore these other traditions together with the students. The program's true purpose is to celebrate diversity and to encourage respect for others who may celebrate in other ways.

WINTER: Season of Darkness and Light
Teacher's Guide

This guide accompanies the 1997 KET production *Winter: Season of Darkness and Light*, a one-hour overview of winter holiday celebrations from various cultures.

ISBN 881020-30-4

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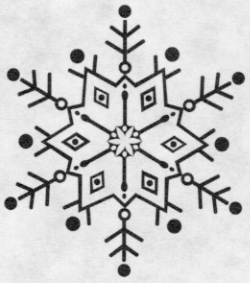
Winter Solstice

by Joy D'Elia and Tommy Bledsoe

Ancient cultures realized the great importance of the natural world. Their daily lives depended on the weather, and the seasons determined planting, growing, and harvest times. Each year as the days grew shorter, rituals and customs were invoked to give thanks for the harvest and to anticipate the return of spring.

By the time of the winter solstice, most crops had long since been harvested and barns, root cellars, and pantries held the stores that the people hoped would see them through the cold, barren winter. The earth rested while the sun was in its "winter house." It was traditionally a time of feasting and celebration.

The lighting of outdoor bonfires served practical as well as ritual purposes. The wood for the fires was gathered by clearing cropland or by pruning fruit-bearing trees. Each of these activities helped improve the land and crops and increase productivity. Besides generating more farm and garden space, the



fire destroyed dormant pests that infested crops and orchards.

In many agrarian cultures, winter was the time people had for artistic and cultural pursuits. Oral traditions of music and storytelling were reinforced around the hearth and home. Through survival crafts like quilting, weaving, basketry, and woodworking, people created works of art that were used around the household and farm.

In some parts of the world, including certain parts of the United States, religion and economy are still closely connected to the cycles of nature. Although many of us are not dependent on growing our own food, we still celebrate in some of the same ways as older cultures. We do not have to look much farther than the gas "log" in the "fireplace" in a modern home or a pine-cone bird feeder or wreath decoration on the door to find connections with cultural traditions that are thousands of years old. Recognizing these connections can help us realize the continuity and commonality of our beliefs and traditions. The same knowledge can help us develop compassion and respect for other people whose cultural practices differ from ours.

Activities for Winter Solstice

Signs of Winter

Begin with a discussion in the classroom about the many ways the seasonal change is felt. Discussion starters might include:

- When do you know it is winter?
- What activities do you do only in winter? Do you stay inside and read or knit, or do you participate in sports and other interests that take you outside?
- In your part of the country, does the clothing you wear change?
- What about your home and its surroundings? Do they get decorated during the winter holidays?

Next ask students to bring in an example of a "personal" sign of winter. Since these signs can take many forms, encourage them to be creative. Examples could include a quilt someone is working on, the singing of a holiday song, the writing of a winter poem or story, cooking special winter foods, or even the baking of a good hearty bread. The possibilities are as endless as the students' imaginations.

Wassail

There are many different recipes for this traditional drink from the British Isles. Most include egg whites and an alcoholic beverage. Here is an easy, eggless, and non-alcoholic recipe that can be made in class if you have use of a stove or hot plate.

2 quarts of apple cider (or juice)
1 cinnamon stick
3 whole cloves
1 cup of raisins
2 tbs. brown sugar

Place all of the above in a large pot and cook on low heat until it begins to simmer. Pour everyone a glass of wassail and toast the trees, friends, and your neighbors.

By the way, *wassail* or *vas hael* means "your health" or "to your good health." Have students research the tradition of "wassailing."

Holiday Songs

Have your students bring in their favorite traditional holiday songs—the songs that best represent their favorite winter celebrations. Make a chart of the songs and cross-reference each with the celebration that includes it. You may go as far as to look for the origins of some of the songs and to investigate any cultural or ethnic cross-overs that appear.

Then collect contemporary popular holiday songs and discuss the likelihood of their entering tradition or disappearing or being replaced by other similar songs.

Candle Making

Candles have been a popular gift throughout the ages. Making candles is a fairly easy (although somewhat long) project that can be done in classroom. String, beeswax or paraffin, and a tall metal can are all that are needed.

Melt the wax in the can on a hot plate over low heat. Cut the string into 12" pieces. Dip the string repeatedly into the wax until you have the desired thickness for a candle.

This project also helps foster a greater appreciation for the electric light!

Chanukah

by William Walton

In the 4th century B.C.E. (Before Common Era, which corresponds to B.C.), Alexander the Great had conquered the Persian Empire and placed the Jews of Judea under Greek rule. Greek culture was popular, and the promotion of Hellenism was the mode of the day. After Antiochus became king of Syria in 175 B.C.E., he wished to destroy the Jews and their religion.

In the small village of Modin, not far from Jerusalem, an old priest named Mattathias refused to bow down to the Greek gods and thus began a rebellion which was to last three years. After Mattathias' death, his son Judas Maccabeus (The Hammer) led his brothers and followers against the Syrians. Through bravery and cunning and the ability to hide in the mountains, they defeated their enemy.

On the 25th day of the Hebrew month Kislev in 165 B.C.E., Judah and the Maccabees entered the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which had been desecrated. They cleansed the Temple and found a small cruet of oil, which miraculously burned for eight days, and thus began *Chanukah*, which means "dedication," as they rededicated the Temple.

The Chanukah menorah has a special name in Hebrew—"Chanukiyah."

Chanukah Blessings, for the Lighting of the Menorah

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu l'had'-lik ner shel Chanukah.

(Holy One of Blessing, Your Presence fills creation. You made us holy with Your Commandments and called us to kindle the Chanukah lights.)

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-asa nisim la-a-voteinu, bayamim hahem baz'man hazeh.

(Holy One of Blessing, Your Presence fills creation. You performed miracles for our ancestors in days of old at this season.)

(First Night Only:)

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiy'anu laz'man hazeh.

(Holy One of Blessing, Your Presence fills creation. You have kept us alive—You have sustained us—You have brought us to this moment.)

A note on the pronunciation of two words in the three Chanukah Blessings. Tradition says that the world *G-d* and the various Hebrew names for G-d are not to be spoken or written unless one is in prayer, either in or out of the synagogue. This includes the recording of blessings that take place outside of the proper moment for a particular prayer. Thus, the word *Adonai* can be pronounced "Adoshem" or "Hashem" (The Name), and "Eloheinu" might be pronounced "Elokeinu" so that, like *G-d*, these names are spoken or written only when in prayer.

The Jewish people are divided geographically by the Ashkenazic and Sephardic traditions. Those in the Ashkenazic tradition are from Eastern Europe (Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russia, etc.), and the Sephardic people are from Spain, North Africa, and the Middle Eastern nations. Each culture has a different pronunciation of the Hebrew language as well as many diverse customs. Yiddish is a unique language developed by the Ashkenazic Jews. The words *dreidel* and *latkes* are Yiddish; in Hebrew, they are called *s'vivon* and *i'vivot*, respectively.

Activities for Chanukah

Menorah

If you would like to make your own menorah, there are very few rules:

1. The flames must be distinct and not merge with one another.
2. The Shammash (servant candle) must be placed in a unique position compared to the other candles. For example, it is usually positioned higher than the others and at the center or at one end.

Dreidel

Learn to play the dreidel game. A dreidel is a four-sided spinning top that can be made of clay, wood, or plastic. On each side is a Hebrew letter: Nun, Gimmel, Hey, and Shin. These letters correspond to the first letter of each word in the Hebrew sentence "New Gadol Hayah Sham," which means "A great miracle happened there."

Dreidel is a game of chance—sort of a gambling game for children. Each player receives an equal number of objects (pennies, raisins, nuts, etc.) to begin the game. Every player puts an ante (one object) into the pot (the middle of the circle of players). The dreidel is spun by one player at a time. Whether he or she wins or loses depends on which letter appears on the top of the dreidel after it has stopped spinning.

To remember the rules, we can assign a corresponding English word to each Hebrew letter on the dreidel:

Nun נ N means none. The player does nothing—neither taking nor getting any.

Gimel ג G means get. The player takes everything from the pot.

He ה H means half. The player takes half the pot.

Shin ש Sh means share. The player must put an object into the pot.

Players take turns spinning the dreidel. Whenever one or no objects are left in the pot, everyone must put in another ante. When all but one player are out of objects, the game is over and the player with all the objects is the winner.

Chanukah Songs

Learn to sing Chanukah songs from recordings, from classmates, or by inviting a Jewish singer into the classroom.

Christmas

by Joy D'Elia and Tommy Bledsoe

A close look at the history of Christmas, or Christ Mass, reveals a resilience of pre-Christian rituals as well as clever innovations that ensured the survival of new rituals and traditions. Considering that Christmas is relatively new when placed in the context of the history of mankind, it is wondrous that it has attained the popularity and dedication accorded it today.

Historians and theologians disagree about the actual date of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is well known, however, that pre-Christian Romans held their winter celebration, Saturnalia, between December 17 and 24. It was a rather rambunctious week of revelry and good humor. Perhaps in order to take advantage of the conviviality, and certainly to avoid having to create a totally disconnected and separate celebration, Pope Julius set the date for celebration of Christ Mass as December 25 around 350 A.D. Because of the tremendous influence of the Roman Crusades in

spreading Christianity throughout Europe and the British Isles, Christmas eventually supplanted pre-Christian celebrations.

Those other rituals did not completely disappear, though. Instead, they took new forms but remained vital by taking on meanings related to Christianity. Giving gifts, for example, was common during Saturnalia. In the context of Christmas, this custom is related to the story of the Three Kings' gifts to the Christ child. Gifts are also part of non-Christian celebrations, like Chanukah and Kwanzaa, and even the Mummers gave and received gifts. Many legends exist concerning who delivers gifts, on what date, and for what reason.

Trees, primarily evergreens, were assimilated into other winter customs from Norse and Druid cultural observances. One legend credits Martin Luther, a leader of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, with bringing lighted trees into Christmas celebrations. They were introduced into America around 1848. But in parts of the Appalachian mountains, Christmas trees did not become common until the middle of the 20th century.

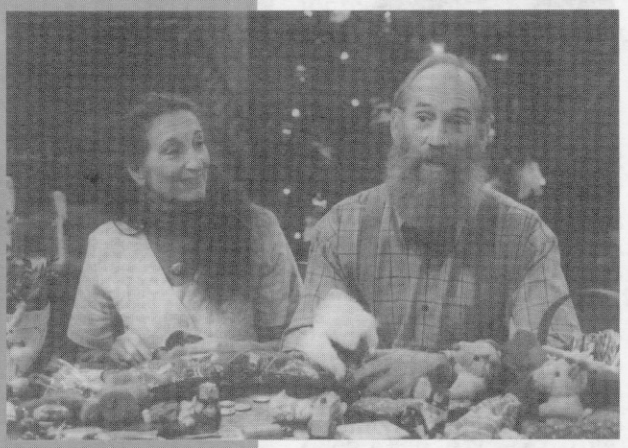
Even the virgin birth of the Christ child has a parallel in ancient cultures of North America. The *mexica-tanochca*, or Aztecs, celebrated the virgin birth of their golden god Huitzilopochtil between December 16 and 24. Remnants of this observance linger throughout Mexico and the Southwest as Las Posadas.

Activities for Christmas

Family Traditions

Christmas is celebrated in many different ways. A good discussion can be started just by asking about when students' families open their presents or what their traditional meal on Christmas Day consists of. If the student celebrates another holiday, talk about it, noting similarities and differences. What decorations are used?

After you've discussed the various decorations, meals, and traditions, have the students research where those things came from. Why do we hang mistletoe? Why are red and green the major colors of Christmas? Where did the tradition of the Christmas tree come from? What is a Yule log?



Food

Food plays an integral part in most family and community celebrations. The winter holidays have always been a time for sharing fellowship and food. If there is a food bank in your community, have the class organize a food drive.

Most classes have parties before winter breaks. Encourage students to bring in a traditional food for their classmates to try. Make sure the various foods are cut into very small portions to encourage sampling.

Decorations

Many holiday decorations use natural materials. Make a simple wreath by cutting a piece of sturdy cardboard into a ring. Glue pine cones, nuts, seeds, and short boughs of evergreen and/or holly onto it. After it is dry, spray the wreath with a fixative. Add ribbons, bows, and bells.

Decorating an outside tree for the birds is also a fun project. String popcorn to hang outdoors. Some birds love pine cones coated with a mixture of vegetable shortening and peanut butter and then rolled in birdseed. It makes an edible present for the wildlife!

Winter Solstice Celebrations
in Native/Chicano Communities

by Dr. Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez

Throughout the U.S. Southwest and Mexico—wherever native peoples reside in the Americas—ceremonies are held during the winter season. It is the time of the year when darkness retreats and the days begin to grow longer. On this continent, the birth of the new light at winter solstice has been celebrated since the ancients first learned to read the stars and count the days. To this day, celebrations are held to honor this event in the natural cycle.

Some of these celebrations, along with counterparts for the summer solstice, have been performed for thousands of years. In what is today Mexico, for example, the Chortl (Mayan) Indian people celebrate the Dance of the Giants to mark the summer solstice. Similarly, in what is today the United States, the Chumash of California celebrate the winter and summer solstices with all-night ceremonies. A huge fire is built the night of each solstice and is kept burning until dawn. During this all-night vigil the people pray, sing sacred songs, and dance.

The union of seemingly opposite energies, such as light and dark, is at the heart of Native American world views, science, art—and celebration. The *mexica-tenochca* (now known as the Aztecs) called this ancient principle *Nahul Oliin*. When Europeans first arrived in

the 16th century, they brought with them ideas they thought were new on this continent. But many were not new; they just had different names. The cross was known to the mexica-tenochca as the *Tonacacuahuitl*, the tree of life.

Native customs and cultures did not disappear, despite the European presence. Rather, they took on new forms that were acceptable to the colonizers. Native peoples, all the way to today's Chicanas and Chicanos, incorporated some elements of the newly imported Christian celebrations while preserving the old rituals. For example, during their month of Panquetzalitzii, which in the Julian calendar corresponds to December, the mexica-tenochca celebrated the virgin birth of the god Huitzilopochtil with processions and singing. This celebration lasted nine days, from December 16 to December 24. That celebration survives today in a winter celebration practiced throughout Mexico and the Southwest. It is called Las Posadas.

Many local variations to Las Posadas are practiced, but most follow a basic pattern: Nine homes are selected, one for each night of the nine posada nights. Each host or home must have a manger scene, however small or large, called a *nacimiento*. Each evening's host must also provide food and drink for the event.

At the agreed-upon time, one group gathers in the house while another group gathers outside some distance away. The group outside lights candles and carries a small platform with Los Santos Peregrinos (pilgrims) in the form of statues representing Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem. They walk solemnly to the door of the house while singing a song asking for *posada*, or lodging. The back-and-forth singing dialogue continues for many stanzas and the peregrinos are turned away. Each singing group contradicts the other. Two opposite forces are in conflict: one in the darkness, the other in the light.

At the very end, the peregrinos are recognized for who they are and are welcomed into the light and warmth. Everyone inside sings a song of welcome. Sometimes a rosary is said, and then it's time for celebration. Ancient native traditional foods such as tamales and atole are served in abundance. Children take turns swinging a big stick at a piñata filled with candles, fruit, and toys. The piñata has special rules and special songs that go with it.

This ritual is repeated for eight nights. On the ninth, at midnight, the newborn baby is placed in the crib, and special lullabies are sung in his honor.

Activities for Native/Chicano Winter Celebrations

Darkness and Light

Have students describe their own winter celebrations around solstice time. Where in their celebrations do they find elements of light or references to "light"? (For example, Christians may cite the lighting of candles, the profusion of lights on Christmas trees, or references to Jesus as "The Light." Jewish people light the menorah.) Have students search out and discuss light/darkness symbolism in their celebrations.

To extend the discussion, have students generate and discuss imagery of light and darkness from their daily speech (e.g., "I've seen the light!") or from their living culture (such as the hymn "This Little Light of Mine").

Astronomy

Study the movement of the Earth in relationship to the sun. Ask students to describe the celestial bodies' patterns of movement between the summer and winter solstices. The solsticial movements in the solar system can be re-created in a model using spheres.

The Seasons

Discuss the effects of the solstice seasons (light and darkness) upon students' immediate environments and daily lives. What is the connection between those lived effects and the various winter celebrations?

Piñata

Make a piñata and break it. The piñata can be created in the shape of a star using glue, newspaper, and cardboard (like mask-making). It is then filled with small candy, peanuts, and toys; strung from a rope; and hung from a tree where it can be moved by an adult using the rope. Each child is blindfolded and given an opportunity to try to hit the piñata with a stick. Children over 6 years old are spun around (one spin for each year of their age) before trying. Once the piñata is cracked open, all the children rush to pick up the prizes.

Las Posadas

Using the description on this page, your class can easily reenact Las Posadas as a celebration. For schoolwide involvement, nine classrooms could substitute for the nine houses.

Kwanzaa

by Michael Keck

Kwanzaa is a unique American holiday that pays tribute to the rich cultural roots of Americans of African ancestry. The word *kwanzaa* means "the first" or "the first fruits of the harvest" in the east African language of Kiswahili, and the holiday is observed from December 26 through January 1.

Kwanzaa was founded by a black studies professor named Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966. It is not like Christmas, which is a religious holiday, or Independence Day, which is a political holiday, or even St. Valentine's day, which is a heroic holiday. Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday.

Kwanzaa is based on seven principles called the *Nguzo Saba*:

Unity—*Umoja* (U-mo-ja)

Self-determination—*Kujichagulia* (Ku-ji-cha-gu-lia)

Collective work and responsibility—*Ujima* (U-ji-ma)

Cooperative economics—*Ujamaa* (U-ja-ma)

Purpose—*Nia* (Ni-a)

Creativity—*Kuumba* (Ku-um-ba)

Faith—*Imani* (I-ma-ni)

Kwanzaa is not a substitute for Christmas, but gifts may be given as long as they do not cause undue hardship. Gifts, or *Zwaidi*, should be affordable and of an educational or artistic nature—something handmade or functional like a book or tickets to a cultural event.

Like other holidays, Kwanzaa has symbols representing desirable principles, concepts, and practices:

- *Mazao*—fruit and vegetables
- *Mkeka*—placemat
- *Kinara*—candle holder for seven candles—one black, three red, and three green
- *Vibunzi*—one ear of corn for each child in the home
- *Zwaidi*—gifts
- *Kikombe Cha Umoja*—communal unity cup
- *Mishumaa Saba*—seven candles

As with many other holidays, Kwanzaa also has established meals and a traditional menu based on the seven principles, especially *Ujima*, *Ujamaa*, and *Kuumba*. During Kwanzaa, celebrants fast from sunrise to sunset to cleanse the body, mind, and spirit. During the evening meal, the appropriate candle is lit to coincide with the principle for that day. The spirit of Kwanzaa teaches us to share our food and drink and our home and music as the ancestors did. The *Kwanzaa Karamu* (feast) is held the evening of December 31. The *Karamu* has special significance because it allows for cultural expression as well as for feasting. Everyone attending brings a dish so there can be a wide variety of foods.

The place where *Karamu* is held (a home, church, community center, etc.) is decorated with an African motif using the colors of black, red, and green—black for the face of the people, red for the blood shed and the continuing struggle, green for the Motherland and hope for future generations.

An informative, entertaining program is offered before and during the feast. Dr. Karenga suggests the following:

***Kukaribisha* (welcoming):** introduction and recognition of guests and elders followed by songs, music, group dancing, poetry, or performance.

***Kukumbuka* (remembering):** reflections of a woman, a man, and a child.

***Kuchunguza Ten Na Kutoa Ahadi Tena* (reassessment and recommitment):** introduction of a distinguished guest who gives a short speech.

***Kushangillia* (rejoicing):** libation, calling names of ancestors and black heroes, drums, feast.

Tamshi la Tutaonana **(farewell statement).**

It is traditional to pour a libation in remembrance of the ancestors on all special occasions. Kwanzaa is such an occasion, as it provides an opportunity to reflect on our African past and American present. Water is generally used because it holds the essence of Life. The libation is placed in a communal cup and poured in the directions of the four winds—North, South, East, and West. The cup is then passed among family members and guests who sip or make a sipping gesture while reciting the following libation statement:

For the Motherland, cradle of civilization.

For the ancestors and their indomitable spirit.

For the elders from whom we learn so much.

For our youth who represent the promise and hope of tomorrow.

For our people, the original people.

For our struggle and remembrance of those who have struggled in our behalf.

For *Umoja*, the principle of unity which should guide us in all that we do.

For the creator who provides all things great and small.

Kwanzaa is an important cultural holiday for many African Americans because it celebrates the importance of family, it honors the ancestors, and it expresses hope for future generations. The seven principles, or *Nguzo Saba*, are an opportunity to renew and practice seven important principles of life.

Activities for Kwanzaa

Make a Kwanzaa Necklace

Materials:

- one bag of macaroni or penne pasta
- black, red, and green craft paint
- black buttons about 1/2" in diameter (4 or 6 for each necklace)
- black ribbon 1/4" wide and 36" long

1. Paint the pasta, some red and the rest green. After the paint dries, add dots, stripes, or designs with the contrasting color and the black paint.
2. Run the black ribbon through the dried pasta, alternating the colors and placing a black button between every second or third piece of pasta. If you have a special personal item (a brooch or beads), you can place it at the center of the ribbon with the pasta on each side.
3. Tie the ribbon and your *Zwaidi* (gift) is ready.

Make a Kwanzaa Card

Materials:

- black, red, green, brown, and white 8-1/2" × 11" construction paper
- glue/glue stick
- black marker or felt-tip pen
- gold glitter

Design Idea:

1. Fold a sheet of green or red construction paper in half. Cut out the shape of the continent of Africa from black construction paper so that it will fit on one panel.
2. Cut a sheet of white construction paper in half. Cut seven candle shapes, 2–3" tall, out of construction paper: one black, three green, and three red. Then cut out a *Kinara* (a candleholder for your seven candles) out of the brown construction paper. It should be about 2" tall.
3. Take one of the half-sheets of the white paper and turn it on its long side. Paste the brown *Kinara* and the seven candles on one side or in the middle, leaving room for your message. Add gold glitter for the flame. Set aside.
4. Paste the black cut-out of Africa on either the green or red folded construction paper, leaving room for your greeting. With your marker, add a greeting such as "Happy Kwanzaa" or "Kwanzaa Greetings" above, below, or around the black cut-out.
5. Take the white paper with the *Kinara* and seven candles and, with a pen, write a message using one of the seven principles (such as unity). Write the names of the remaining principles around the *Kinara*.
6. Glue or paste the white construction paper inside the green or red folded construction paper.

You may also ask students to create their own design and card, inspired by what they've learned about Kwanzaa.

Nguzo Saba

Discuss the seven principles by having students learn how to pronounce the African word for each principle and share ideas about how the school and community would benefit from its practice. Each student, in turn, could pronounce the principle and use another word or phrase to express its meaning and significance.

The Mummer's Play

by Joy D'elia and Tommy Bledsoe

Mumming, or miming, is an ancient tradition involving troupes of minstrels and actors who performed a version of an allegorical play for neighbors and the community for food, drink, and monetary tips. The troupe was formal in that members participated for years, and each person had a role or job for which he or she was responsible. The script for the play was rarely written down, but was transmitted via the oral tradition by one of the cast. Each year, the play was rehearsed a few times prior to the mumming season.

Mumming appears to have all but disappeared in America today; the practice of traveling from house to house to present some version of an allegorical winter play is certainly rare. Many things have contributed to this change, among them the demographic trend away from rural community/village life toward more mobile, yet isolated, urban life and the influence of mass media and public education.

In some cultures, though, remnants of the mumming tradition persist. It has only changed its outer trappings. For example, in the southern Appalachian mountain region of southwestern Virginia, western North Carolina, and eastern Kentucky, "breaking up Christmas" is practiced

between Christmas day and January 6, or "old Christmas." Musicians, storytellers, and revelers hold a dance party at a home in the community. The party may be held the next night in another house in the community, or even some distance away.

The Chicano, or Mexican-American, *Posadas* and *Pastorela* are folk dramas that reenact the journeys of Joseph and Mary and the *Tres Reyes*, or three Kings. Actors and musicians travel to different houses and act out a musical dialogue, until at last the journey ends at a predetermined house. A piñata for the children caps each evening ceremony. (For more about Las Posadas, see page 11.)

Puerto Rican people participate in similar role-playing ceremonies during the days and nights around the turning of the year. The *parranda* includes costumed carolers with faces blackened to symbolize the hard times of the closing year. They accompany a companion dressed as a *mula*, or mule, around the neighborhood. Donations and toasts are offered and accepted. Finally, at midnight, they end their journey and burn the *mula* costume, their raggedy clothes—and their worries. Thus they begin the new year fresh and untroubled.

People who have watched the traditional New Year's Day parades in New York or Philadelphia may have noticed the groups of "mummers" who participate. Unfortunately, few have ever had a chance to witness the ancient allegory. We hope many people will revive some version of this play in their own communities.

Mummer's Play Activities

Building an Allegory

The mummer's play is an **allegory**: Each character represents characteristics or values rather than a real character. They can be human, vegetable, animal, mineral, or even ethereal. Often one character will counterbalance another; e.g., good balances out evil, generosity balances out greed, etc. The plays are transparently moralistic and are more melodramatic than naturalistic in style.

Many of the characters can be interpreted in different ways. Here are the names of the characters in our version:

- Captain Mummer or the Presenter
- Old Father Christmas
- John Barleycorn
- Old Bet
- Mr. Pickleherring
- The Doctor (and his horse)
- Little Devil Doubt

Some underlying values or characteristics:

- community/unity
- generosity
- good cheer
- abundance (harvest)
- overindulgence
- impudence
- youth
- ugliness
- contrariness or rudeness
- fraud
- healing
- pomposity
- doubt

This list is by no means complete.

Assign these values and any others students come up with to characters in the play. Look for a character that represents a counterbalance to that character.

Meaning of Solstice

Discuss the reasons this play is performed in winter. What connections can be drawn between the play and what happens in nature around the winter solstice?

Performance

Find or develop a script for a class play. Improvise! Make homemade costumes. Find props that help the characters exhibit their values and characteristics. Travel from class to class performing the play.

Traditionally, mummers collected tips, food, and/or drink after the performance. This money was sometimes used to throw a party for all the people in the community. Your class could collect money or food for a local charity.

Suggested Reading

General Holiday Books/Winter Season

Barkin, Carol and Elizabeth James. *The Holiday*. New York: Clarion Books, 1994. Handbook of secular holidays, arranged by season; includes activities.

Cosman, Madeleine Pelner. *Medieval Holidays and Festivals, A Calendar of Celebrations*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981. Describes customs, activities, and recipes.

Helfman, Elizabeth S. *Celebrating Nature: Rites and Ceremonies Around the World*. The Seabury Press, 1969.

Ickis, Marguerite. *The Book of Festivals and Holidays the World Over*. New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1970.

Kelly, Armandine. *Seasonal Stories for Family Festivals*. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, Inc., 1987. Tells the original stories behind well known festivals.

Rosen, Mike. *Winter Festivals*. New York: The Bookwright Press, 1990. Surveys festivals in different countries.

Sarnoff, Jane and Reynold Ruffins. *Light the Candles! Beat the Drums! A Book of Holidays*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979.

Webster, Harriet. *Winter Book*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1988. Contains activities and information relating to winter.

Books About Chanukah

Brinn, Ruth Esrig with Judyth Groner and Madeline Wikler. *Jewish Holiday Crafts for Little Hands*. Rockville, MD: Kar-Ben Copies, 1993.

Kalman, Sharon. *Celebrating the Jewish Holidays: Foods, Crafts, and Customs*. Avenel, NJ: Cresent Books, 1992.

Kozodoy, Ruth. *The Book of Jewish Holidays*. New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1981. Includes a student activity book by Morris J. Sugarman and a teacher's guide and duplication masters by Moshe Ben-Aharon for grades 4 and 5.

Purdy, Susan Gold. *Jewish Holidays: Facts, Activities, and Crafts*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1969. Ages 6 to adult.

Stern, Shirley. *Exploring the Jewish Holidays and Customs*. Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc. Grades 5–6.

Catalogues for Judaica

Behrman House, 235 Watchung Avenue, West Orange, NJ 07052.

Burstein, Chaya M. *The Jewish Kids Catalogue*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society of America, 1983.

KTAV Publishing House, Inc. 900 Jefferson Street, Box 6249, Hoboken, NJ 07030-7205.

Christmas

Brand, Oscar. *Singing the Holidays: The Calendar in Folksongs*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957.

Crichton, Robin. *Who Is Santa Claus? The True Story Behind a Living Legend*. Canongate Pub., Limited.

Davis, Hubert. *Christmas in the Mountains*. Johnson Publishing Co., 1972. Customs, games, and stories from the Appalachian mountains.

Enret, Walter, arranger. *International Book of Christmas*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1963. Sourcebook for songs; provides a short evolution of the Christmas carol in the introduction.

The Everything Christmas Book. Holbrook, MS: Bob Adams, Inc., 1994. More origins and traditions explained.

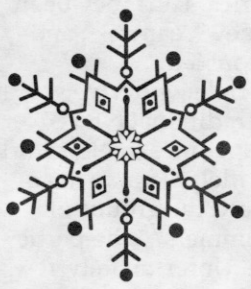
Golby, J.M. and A.W. Purdue. *The Making of the Modern Christmas*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986.

Joseph, Robert. *Christmas Book*. New York: McAfee Books, 1978. Provides origins of many customs surrounding Christmas.

Kane, Harnett T. *The Southern Christmas Book, The Full Story from Earliest Times to the Present: People, Customs, Conviviality, Carols, Cooking*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1958.

Wernecke, Herbert. *Celebrating Christmas Around the World*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962.

World Book series (e.g., *Christmas in Italy from World Book, Christmas Around the World from World Book*). Chicago: World Book, Inc., 1988.



Chicano/ Mexican Winter Celebrations

Bandini, Arthuro. *Navidad: A Christmas Aay with the Early Californians*. San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1958.

Beck, Peggy V. *et al. The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life*. Tsalle, AZ: Navajo Community College Press (and Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing Company), 1990.

Griffith, James S. *Southern Arizona Folk Arts*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1988.

Ramboz, Ina W. *Canciones de Navidad: Christmas Songs in Spanish*. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1974.

Toor, Frances. *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1985.

West, John O. *Mexican-American Folklore: Legends, Songs, Festivals, Proverbs, Crafts, Tales of Saints, of Revolutionaries, and More*. Little Rock: August House, 1988.

Storybooks for Young Children

Mora, Pat and Charles Ramirez Berg. *The Gift of the Poinsettia*. Houston: Piñata Books, 1995.

Bruni, Mary Ann. *Rosita's Christmas Wish*. San Antonio, TX: Tex Art Services, Inc., 1981.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Seven Candles for Kwanzaa*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1993.

Ross, Kathy. *Crafts for Kwanzaa*. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1994.

Thompson, Helen Davis. *Let's Celebrate Kwanzaa!* Gumbs & Thomas Publishers, 1989.

Kwanzaa

Freeman, Dorothy Rhodes and Dianne M. MacMillan. *Kwanzaa*. Enslow Publishers, Inc., 1992.

Harris, Jessica B. *A Kwanzaa Keepsake: Celebrating the Holiday with New Traditions and Feasts*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995. Customs, social life, and recipes.

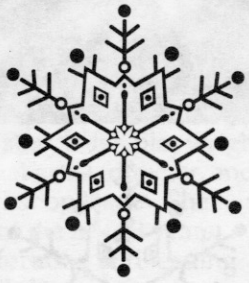
Hintz, Martin and Kate. *Kwanzaa: Why We Celebrate It the Way We Do*. Mandato, MN: Capstone Press, 1996.

Karenga, Maulana. *The African-American Holiday of Kwanzaa: The Celebration of Family, Community, and Culture*. Los Angeles: University of Stanford Press.

Resources for Mummer's Plays

The version of the mummer's play in *Winter: Season of Darkness and Light* is a combination of different versions, compiled from sources including the following:

- "St. George and the Dragon, A Mummer's Play," compiled by J. Langstaff. Atheneum Press, 1973.
- "All Silver and No Brass" by Henry Glassie.
- *Grandfather Tales* by Richard Chase. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1948.
- Pine Mountain Settlement School archives contributed by Paul Hays, director; Pine Mountain, KY.
- Edna Ritchie Baker, contributor; Winchester, Ky.,
- *A Child's Christmas Revels*. Revels Records C01093; 1993. Available from Revels, Inc., One Kendall Square, Building 600, Cambridge, MA 02139 (cassette or CD).



Featured Performers

Joy D'Elia

Joy co-produced and co-wrote *Winter: Season of Darkness and Light*. She can also be seen in two other KET series, *Telling Tales* and *Old Music for New Ears*.

She grew up in Greenwich, CT and received her B.A. in elementary education from St. Joseph's College. Her varied interests have led her to be a sailor, restauranteur, teacher, writer, and mother as well as a performer of traditional music and stories. Joy sings and plays fiddle, bass, and bones. She and her husband, Tommy Bledsoe, perform as Skin & Bonz and with the Home Folks Band. They have two daughters, Delia and Rosa, who also appear in *Winter*.

Tommy Bledsoe

Co-producer, co-writer, and musical director for *Winter: Season of Darkness and Light*, Tommy also perfomed in the KET series *Telling Tales* and *Old Music for New Ears*. He has written articles on music, storytelling, and traditional and popular culture.

A native of the Appalachian mountains of southwestern Virginia, Tommy earned a B.S. degree in business management. Following a tour in the U.S. Navy, he began pursuing his love of music and storytelling. Since 1973 he has worked at Appalshop, a not-for-profit multimedia arts center in Whitesburg, KY, as a record producer, musician, and actor-storyteller. He has performed on more than a dozen audio recordings.

Tommy is currently pursuing a master's degree in storytelling at East Tennessee State University. He is married to Joy D'Elia and is the father of three daughters.

Adella Gautier

Kwanzaa

Associate artistic director of Junebug Production, Inc., Adella has more than 20 years' experience in the arts as an actress, director, playwright, storyteller, educator, and creative dramatist. She has been an important contributor to arts in education as well as to other cultural work on the regional, national, and international scene. Her work with the Boston-based CITYSTAGE Co., Young Audiences, Arts Connection, the North Carolina Arts Council, and numerous other organizations has allowed Adella to share her energetic, informative approach to teaching and performing. As Adella the Storyteller, she spreads the word of the human experience through stories for both young and old.

William Walton
Chanukah

Tenor William has been a musician for most of his life. He first trained as an instrumentalist on clarinet, saxophone, and recorder and continued as a singer with a master's degree from Boston University. His repertoire ranges from opera and oratorio to recitals, including international performances with orchestras in Europe and Israel and on radio and television. In addition, he is committed to Jewish music and is cantor of Temple Beth Elohim, a congregation in New Jersey.

Back-Up Musicians

Barbara Kuhns,
Fiddle

Barbara switched from playing classical violin music to old-time fiddle tunes after attending an Appalachian music night in Dayton, OH in 1973—and she's been hooked ever since. She initially learned tunes from a variety of musicians and joined with several friends to form a band for square dances, the Corndrinkers, which continues to perform throughout southern Ohio and Kentucky. She has played with Bill Lowe, the Dixie Darlings, and most recently Will Keys. She has been on the staff at the Fraley Family Mountain Music Festival in Olive Hill, KY, teaching a fiddle workshop and organizing demonstrations of fiddling. When not making music, she works as a librarian for the Dayton and Montgomery County Public Library in Dayton.

Michael Pease,
Bass

Primarily a self-taught musician who plays guitar, autoharp, and bass, Michael is from Duffield, VA. His first experience with old-time string music came around the age of 11 when he saw Tommy Bledsoe and Rich Kirby perform at school. His first chance to play the music himself came when he met Paul Matney, a popular old-time guitar player in Scott County, VA. This association led to Michael's first public appearance with a group called the Peters Brothers from nearby Lee County. Michael has a bachelor's degree from Lincoln Memorial University and works as an accountant in Gate City, VA. He performs with the Home Folks, an old-time group from the southwest Virginia area.

Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez
Chicano Celebrations

Yolanda is a Yaqui-Chicana native of the Arizona-Sonora borderlands. She studied in Germany for 12 years and received her doctorate in German studies from Stanford University. In 1985, she became the first woman of color to receive tenure at the University of California at Santa Barbara. In 1991 she was advanced to full professor, and she was the first Native woman to chair an academic department in the UC system (1990–1994). In 1996, Yolanda received the lifetime Distinguished Scholar Award from the National Association for Chicano Studies. Her most recent book is *El Teatro Campesino: Theatre in the Chicano Movement*; she is at work on another book.

Francisco Gonzalez
Chicano Celebrations

Francisco is a musician/musicologist raised in East Los Angeles, CA who has been studying music and performing professionally since he was 16. He is also a director, playwright, musical director, and composer. He owns Guadalupe Custom Strings, where he makes handmade musical instrument strings.

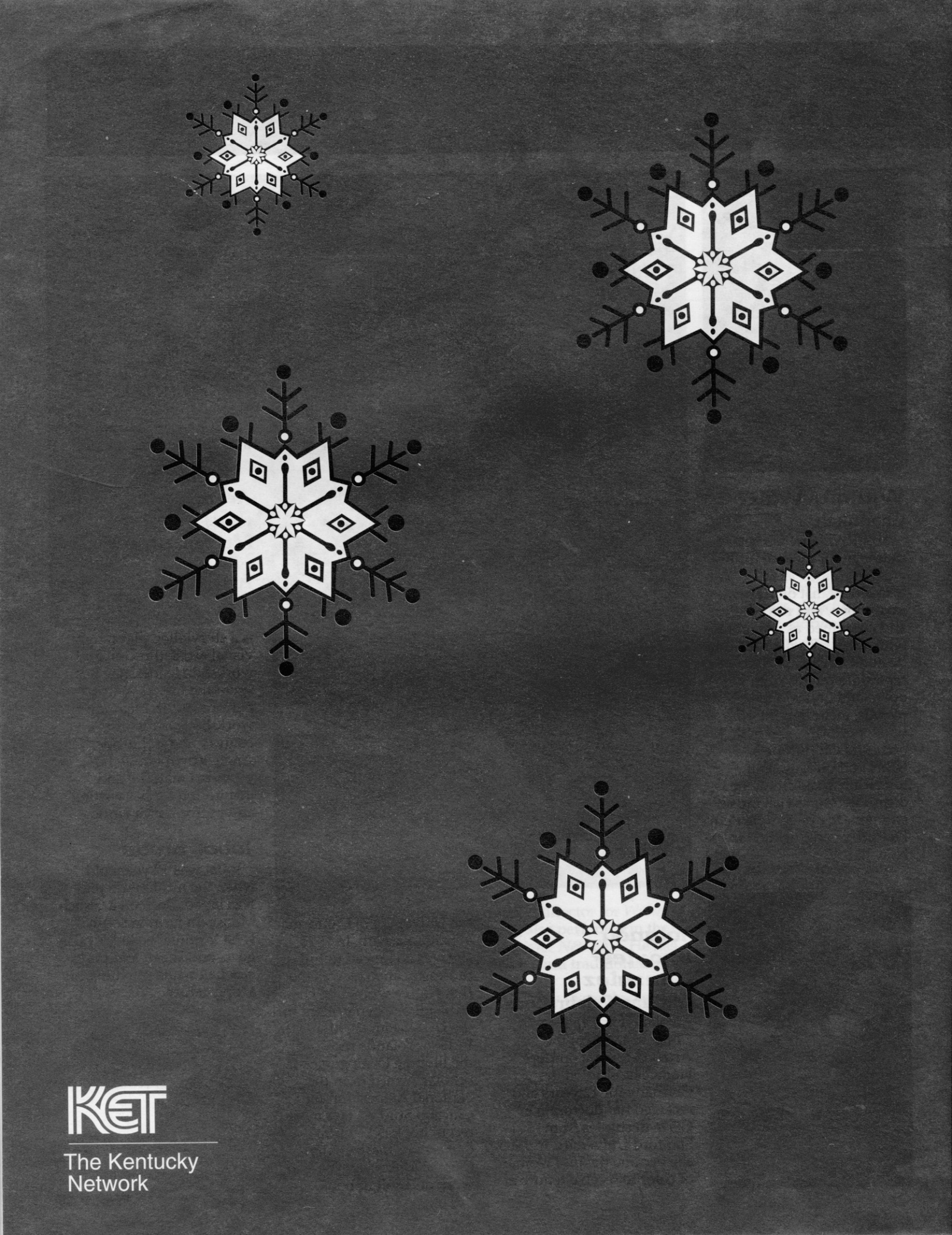
Additional Performers–Mummer's Play

Angelyn DeBord

Born and raised in the Smoky Mountains, Angelyn is a storyteller, playwright, visual artist, director, and workshop leader. She has spent the last 23 years performing and leading workshops across the country and in Europe. Angie's own family has provided material and inspiration for her writing and performance work.

Jubal Sloan

Jubal was 12 years old when the mummer's play was taped. Born on a Clinch Mountain farm in southwest Virginia, he helps raise goats and sheep and plays baseball while pursuing his acting career.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