



LESSON:

Exploring Chinese Celebrations

Episode: "Double Trouble"

Franny travels to Chinatown, where she meets May and Wei, twins who are preparing for the Chinese New Year dragon parade. Franny helps the girls create costumes using items found in the twins' family restaurant. In *Franny's Treasures*, the audience helps Franny and Bobby uncover clues from fortune cookies that introduce viewers to Chinese traditions.

Learning Objectives/Skills

Children will:

- * **locate China on a map/globe. Learn that there are Chinatowns in many cities around the world.**
- * **learn about food eaten during Chinese New Year.**
- * **learn about Chinese New Year customs by making red envelopes, lion masks, and a large paper dragon.**

Grade
PreK - 2nd Grade

Subject
Social Studies, Art & Culture

National Standards
Arts: NA-VA.K-4.1, NA-T.K-4.1;
Geography: NSS-G.K-12.1, NSS-G.K-12.2, NSS-G.K-12.4

Approx. Times
100 minutes
(Plus 15-20 minutes prep)

Overview

Chinese New Year is one of the most important holidays for Chinese families around the world. It is a time for families to celebrate and look forward to a new year of luck and prosperity. The Chinese New Year follows the lunar calendar, which is based on phases of the moon (the Gregorian calendar is based on the cycles of the sun). While the Chinese use the solar calendar in their daily lives, they still use the lunar calendar to mark holidays. The Chinese New Year, which takes place in January or February, lasts for fifteen days, beginning with the new moon and ending with the full moon.

During this time, Chinese families celebrate by cleaning their houses to remove bad luck from the previous year. They decorate with special lanterns and festive Chinese calligraphy, exchange gifts, share food, and fill their homes with symbolic flowers and fruits. People in many Asian countries, as well as countries all over the world, celebrate Chinese New Year. It is often called "Lunar New Year."

In these activities, children will explore a variety of traditions related to the Chinese New Year. Learning about Chinese New Year is a great way to begin a discussion of world cultures and Chinese traditions.



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Materials

Classroom materials:

- Map or globe
- Pictures of China, Chinatown, a Chinese market
- Yarn for "noodles"
- Crayons (orange, brown, green)
- Glue sticks
- Yellow and red tissue paper
- Construction paper (in a variety of colors including red, orange and brown)
- Scissors
- String
- Tape
- Single hole punch
- Gold pens or crayons
- Stapler
- String
- 12" cardboard circle such as a cake round or a paper plate
- Yard stick
- White Paper or writing paper

Each child will need:

- Paper plate
- Cut small circles for "oranges"
- 11" X 17" sheet of paper
- Small circles to make into paper dumplings
- Craft stick
- Red construction paper



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Prep

Activity 1:

- Assemble the following materials: map, globe, and pictures of China, Chinatown, and a Chinese market.
- Research the dates of Chinese New Year.

Activity 2:

- Assemble the following materials: paper plates, yarn, crayons (orange, brown, green), glue sticks, and 11"X 17" paper.
- Cut small paper circles for oranges and dumplings (about the same size as the bottom of a soda can).

Activity 3:

- Assemble the following materials: paper plates, craft sticks, yellow and red tissue paper, crayons, glue sticks, and stapler.

Activity 4:

- Assemble the following materials: paper, scissors, string, tape, crayons (optional), single hole punch, and stapler.



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Prep (continued)

Activity 5:

- Assemble the following materials: red construction paper, gold pens or crayons, white paper (or writing paper), stapler, scissors, and string.
- Search online for Chinese New Year symbols and prepare visual references for the children.

Activity 6:

- Assemble the following materials: construction paper, 12" cardboard round (such as a cake round or paper plate), crayons, tissue paper, scissors, tape or glue, yard stick and stapler, and one piece of red construction paper for each child).
- Search online for images of Chinese dragons.





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Activity 1 - Where is China? What is Chinatown? When is the Chinese New Year?

1. Lead the students in a discussion about where they live. Ask the students the following questions:
 - *What does your house look like?*
 - *What city do you live in?*
 - *What state do you live in?*
2. Ask the students if they have ever used a map or a globe to find where they live.
3. On a globe, show them where Asia is located. Explain that Asia is a large area in the world and home to many different countries.
4. Ask the children if they have ever heard of the country called China. Ask them how they have heard of China.
5. Using a map, ask the children to note the size of China. Show them the United States and invite them to compare size (Note that China is slightly smaller than the United States of America). Explain that although China is big, many people move from China to America and other countries all over the world.
6. Explain that in many large cities, Chinese people often live together and form a community called "Chinatown."
 - *Chinatown is a centralized area for Chinese commerce (shopping and business).*
 - *In Chinatown, people may purchase traditional Chinese items and foods that may not be available in department or grocery stores.*
7. Ask the children if they know about New Year celebrations.
 - Have you ever celebrated New Year's Day?
8. Use a calendar to discuss the months of the year. Discuss how we (in the U.S.) celebrate the new year on January 1st every year.
9. Explain to the children that most Chinese people use a solar calendar, but for special celebrations, like Chinese New Year, they rely on a lunar calendar. Therefore, the first day of their new year falls on a different day every year.
10. Search online for the dates of Chinese New Year. Engage the children in a celebration of Chinese New Year by conducting the following activities (2-7).



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Activity 2 - Chinese Foods

1. Explain to the children that they will be making a pretend plate of food to celebrate Chinese New Year. Give each child an 11" x 17" sheet of paper.
2. Assist them in gluing a paper plate on to their paper "placemat."
3. Help the children glue yarn on the plate to represent noodles.
4. Assist them in gluing the small orange circles on the placemat to represent oranges.
5. Explain to the children that they are going to make dumplings. Invite them to:
 - Use the remaining small cut paper circles. Color the middle of the dumpling brown for meat dumplings or green for vegetable dumplings.
 - Fold the circle in half and glue the dumpling so that it has a half moon shape.
6. Explain to the children that each of the items on the placement is symbolic:
 - Long noodles represent long life.
 - The round shape of an orange represents completion.
 - Dumplings represent prosperity because they look like small golden nuggets.





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Activity 3 - Lion Masks

1. On the third day of the Chinese New Year, a special lion dance is performed. Performers wear lion masks that are often extraordinarily beautiful. In the Chinese tradition, lions both scare away bad luck and bring good luck.
2. Explain that each child is going to make his or her own lion mask.
3. Invite the children to use the paper plate as a base for the mask. Encourage them to draw eyes, nose, and a large mouth with giant lion teeth.
4. Assist the children in fraying the edges of the red and yellow tissue paper. This will serve as the lion's mane.
5. Help the children glue the tissue paper mane to the plate.
6. Assist them in stapling or gluing a craft stick to the plate to complete the mask.





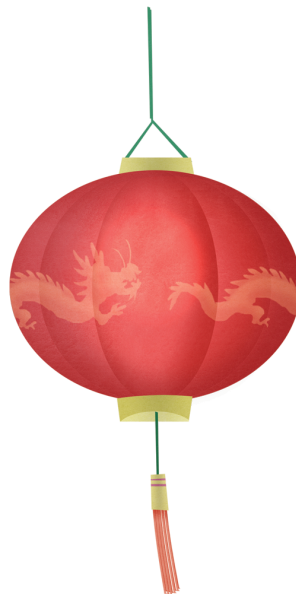
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Activity 4 - Paper Lanterns

1. Create paper lanterns to decorate your classroom or space by taking sheets of paper and folding it four times, accordion-style.
2. Encourage the children to color the paper ahead of time (or use colored paper).

INVITE THE CHILDREN TO HELP YOU:

3. Use scissors to create a fringe on the top inch and the bottom inch of the paper.
4. Cut circles or shapes out of the center of the paper to allow light to go through the lantern.
5. Unfold the paper and reshape into a cylinder.
6. Tape the edges to hold the cylinder closed.
7. Punch two holes at the top of the cylinder, directly opposite from each other.
8. Lace string through the holes and hang from the ceiling.





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Activity 5 - Red Envelopes

1. It is customary to give red envelopes filled with money for Chinese New Year. These envelopes symbolize good wishes and prosperity for the year to come.
2. Instead of using money, invite the children to think about good wishes they would like to send to someone.
3. On a piece of white paper (or writing paper), prompt the children to complete the sentence: "My wish for you is..." Children may complete the sentence with words or by drawing.
4. Fold the paper in half.
5. Use the red construction paper to create an envelope -- fold the red paper in half and staple the sides.
6. Ask the children to draw Chinese characters on the front of the envelope with a gold pen or crayon, or write the name of the person to whom they want to send their good wishes.





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Activity 6: Class Dragon

1. Online, search for various images of Chinese dragons. Ask the class:
 - What type of dragon would you like to make?
 - Will it have horns, large teeth, whiskers, a big nose...?
 - What color do you want to make the dragon's head and eyes?
2. Make the dragon head out of a large cardboard circle (A cake round would be best, but a large paper plate will work as well).
3. Attach a long stick (such as a yard stick) to the cardboard circle.
4. Give each child a piece of red construction paper.
5. Assist the children in cutting the paper into strips.
6. Prompt the children to assemble the strips into paper chains using tape or glue.
7. Invite the whole class to join the links together and attach them to the cardboard dragon head.





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Activity 7 - Dragon Parade

1. To celebrate the Chinese New Year, ask the children to line up for a dragon parade.
2. Using the dragon constructed in Activity 6, invite one child to hold the head on the stick. All of the other children can hold the paper links.
3. Invite the children to parade around the room or school saying: *Gung Hay Fat Choy* (pronounced: *Gung Hey Faht Choy*, Cantonese for "May prosperity be with you"), and *Xin Nian Kuai Le* (pronounced *Shin Nyen Kwhy Luh*, Mandarin for "Happy New Year").





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Literacy Connections

- ***Dragon Dance: A Chinese New Year LTF: A Chinese New Year Lift-the-Flap Book***, by Joan Holub and Benrei Huang
- ***Happy, Happy Chinese New Year!***, by DEMI DEMI
- ***Good Morning China***, by Hu Yong Yi

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