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Catholic Religious Education: Feasts of Joy

Competences/Learning Outcomes

- To recognize the origin of the festivals.
- To understand and interpret festival of joy in its own particular way.
- To identify and analyze different customs related to the feast and explain their meaning.
- To describe rituals of the festivals.
- To be able to share traditions and origins of a particular feast with people from different culture.

Grade Level/Age

8-9 /14-15y

Duration

90 min



Preparation

- Acquire a box filled with materials related to the feast and bring it to class; pictures, magazines, flyers etc.
- Bring materials for designing a poster; papers, scissors, glue etc.

Step-by-step description

- Inform students about the task to introduce a feast from their own religion/worldview at the Encounter Day.
- Arrange students to sit in a circle.
- Read the text (M1) about the selected feast and ask students to share their personal experiences on this feast.
- Explain that with this lesson they will explore the different aspects on the feast and write down the categories *music, food, customs, facts about the feast* on the blackboard.
- Divide the participants into 4 groups of 4-5 students to research and work together about the category that they will choose.
- Ask each group to choose one of the categories as group.
- Distribute the info&task cards (M2) and checklist (M3) to each group.
- Ask students to work on their task in the card by using the materials. Provide sources (such as books, glossaries, online sources etc.) for the students to search for information, pictures, songs etc.
- Ask students to illustrate the poster with suitable pictures. (M4)
- Remind each group to use the checklist to help them with the presentation of their results.
- Ask students to hang up their posters and make a presentation about their results.
- Remind students that they are welcome to use all the text, information and songs for their presentation during the Encounter Day.

Tips for teachers

- This lesson structure can be used for other religious festivals. So feel free to convert this lesson plan to any other content.
- If the „Feast of Joy“ topic will be designed as lesson series it would be useful to create a calendar of religious holidays (M5) for the classroom that show all the important religious festivals at a glance, so that the students will remember them. Feel free to update this calendar by adding other religious festival.
- The texts in the lesson plan aims to work as a starting point for students to think about the subject. They also work as a base for students presentation for Encounter Day.





Learning in Encounter for Common Values in Diversity

- Remember to guide students throughout the process.
- Please note that some customs, songs and explanations represent German way of celebration. If you are from other Catholic traditions feel free to add your own songs, customs etc.



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Materials

[M1] General Info Text

General Info Text about Christmas

Christmas begins on Christmas Eve, December 24, and is celebrated for three days, until December 26. After Easter, Christmas is the most important feast in Christianity. It celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. The period of preparation for Christmas is called "Advent". Many customs are connected with Christmas, e.g. the Christmas tree.

Christmas services are usually especially festive. Especially for children, the most important part of the holiday is the giving of presents. In many families it is a tradition to serve a special Christmas dish every year. Christmas also includes music. So both in the Advent season, as well as on Christmas itself, there is a lot of singing.

[M2] Infotexts about facts, customs, food and music with recipes and songs

Facts about Christmas

- *Read the info text and underline the most important information.*
- *Use this information and any other information from books, glossaries and online sources.*
- *Design your poster.*

Christmas begins on Christmas Eve, December 24, and is then celebrated for two more days, until the 26th of December. The 25th of December is also called the first day, the 26th of December is also called the second day of Christmas. After Easter, Christmas is the most important festival in Christianity. It celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. The people had been waiting a long time for a savior to help them in their time of need.

Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior, and therefore rejoice in his birth as a gift from God. It was not until the third century that Christians began to celebrate Christmas. The Christmas story of the birth of Jesus in the stable is also described in the Bible: Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 1:18-2:12.



How do Christian families celebrate Christmas?

- *Read the info text and underline the most important information.*
- *Use this information and any other information from books, glossaries and online sources.*
- *Design your poster.*

Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (Roman Catholic, Protestant). Advent means preparation - Advent is therefore a time of preparation for the arrival of Jesus Christ. Already in the Advent season, Christians prepare themselves for the Christmas by opening a little door on their Advent calendar every day, Christmas markets and lighting a candle on the Advent wreath every Sunday. Originally every Sunday green branches were taken from the winter forests to be placed in the house, stable or barn. This was to drive away evil spirits. There are many customs associated with Christmas. For example, the Christmas tree lights stand for Christ, the light of the world. In every part of the christian world Christmas traditions differ. In Germany for example, people celebrate mainly on Christmas Eve, the day before Christmas. In the course of the afternoon and evening, a nativity play or church service follows. The story of the birth of Jesus in a stable is the focus of the celebration. The services are usually especially festive. The churches and homes are decorated with candles and Christmas trees. Especially for the children, the most important part of the holiday is the giving of presents.

Food at Christmas

- *Read the info text and underline the most important information.*
- *Use this information and visuals for your poster design. Create a recipe book using the recipes.*

Religion does not prescribe a special Christmas meal for Christians. However, it is a tradition in many families to serve a special Christmas meal each year. One of the favorite recipes is still Christmas goose with red cabbage and dumplings. Christians used to look forward to it after Lent in the weeks before Christmas Eve.

In northern Germany, many families also like to eat potato salad with sausages. Others set up their raclette or fondue machines on this day every year. Some love however variety and choose a different main course every Christmas. There is only one thing that many Christians agree on: cookies, gingerbread, nuts and marzipan must not be missed at Christmas.



Music at Christmas Festival

- *Read the info text and underline the most important information.*
- *Use this information and visuals for your poster design. Create song booklet with the help of the song lyrics.*

Music is part of the Christmas celebration. So there is a lot of singing during Advent as well as at Christmas itself. On Christmas Eve, many children also sing and play Christmas carols. During the service, Christmas carols are played on the organ, and the church choir and congregation sing. These are traditional songs that tell of the Holy Night and the birth of Jesus, as well as Christmas customs. Well-known songs include: "Silent Night" and "O Christmas tree".

Link to the songs:

Stille Nacht

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuyroRHlcBE>

O du Fröhliche

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGKsU0Xg2Oc>

Ihr Kinderlein kommet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrhlzHLlr1Q>

O Tannenbaum





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS4wTuvR7Ik>

Alle Jahre wieder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVZ9gK5jkmc>



[M3] Checklist

Checklist Music		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Why music is important for the feast?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	When to sing these songs?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	What are the songs about?	
Checklist Facts		
<input type="checkbox"/>	When will the feast be celebrated?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	How long will the feast be celebrated?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	What does the name of the feast mean?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Why is the feast celebrated?	
Checklist Food		
<input type="checkbox"/>	What is eaten at the feast?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Why is this food eaten?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	How is the food prepared?	
Checklist Traditions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	What are the traditions?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Why do these traditions exist?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	How does the feast day work?	



[M4] Image Materials

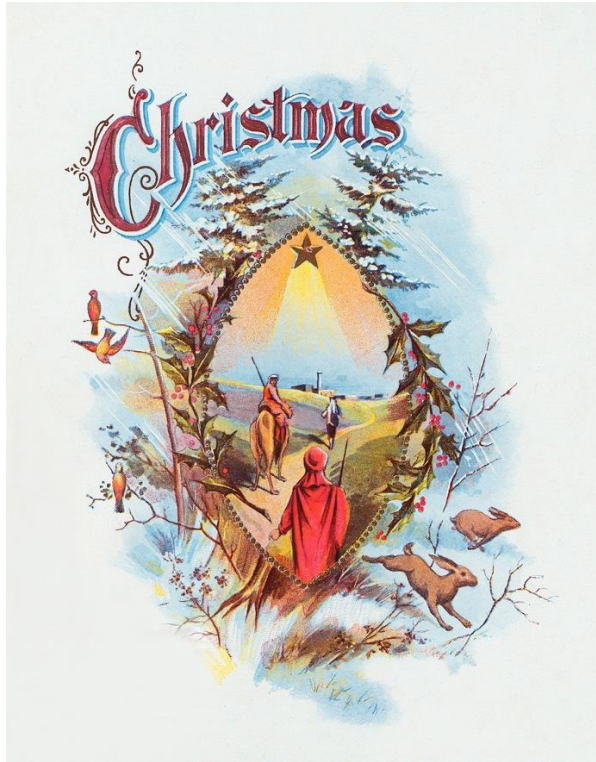
1



2



3



4



5



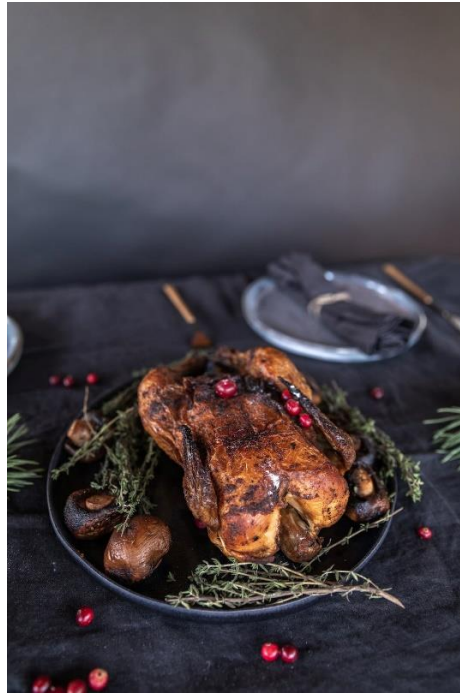
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7



8



9



10



[M5] Festival Calender

Name of the Feast	Description	Date
	Christians give thanks to God for the for creation and for all gifts from nature; always a Sunday.	
Ash Wednesday	Beginning of Lent, 46 days before Easter	14 February
Maundy Thursday	Last supper.	29 March
Good Friday	Good Friday before Easter is the most important holiday for Christians. The day makes them feel very sad, but also hopeful, because it reminds them of the cruel execution of Jesus, but also of his resurrection.	30 March
Easter	On Easter, Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus after his death on the cross.	1 and 2 April
Ascension Day	Christians believe that Jesus returned to earth after his death. There he is said to have spent another 40 days with his disciples and then to have been taken up by God into heaven. This event is commemorated by the Ascension.	10 May



Pentecost	50 days after Easter, birthday of the church	20 and 21 May
Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving is a harvest festival. Christians thank God for food and things they need for life.	7 October
All Saint's Day	Catholic Christians remember all their saints.	1 November
Day of Prayer and Repentance		21 November
Advent	Preparing for Christmas	2-24 December
Christmas	At Christmas, Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. The Bible tells us that Mary gave birth to him in a stable in Bethlehem.	24-26 December



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