

December Nights

Olivia Conner - I just love December! There's so much going on everywhere around town! Plus, we get two weeks off school! I'm really looking forward to Christmas vacation.

Olivia Chevalier - We do get a break just in time for Christmas, but not everyone celebrates Christmas. There are other holidays celebrated in December.

Olivia Conner - Now that you mention it, I saw some unique candle holders in a Holiday store at the Mall. One of them had nine candles, one had seven, and there were some paper bags in the window that had sand and glowing candles inside. Maybe they have special meanings.

Olivia Chevalier - They do! The one with nine candles is called a Menorah. The candles are lit during Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday that takes place in December.

Olivia Conner - Some of my friends celebrate Hanukkah. But doesn't that last for eight nights? Why nine candles?

Olivia Chevalier - The middle candle, called the shamash, is used to light each of the other candles to celebrate the eight nights the oil lamp in the temple burned. Listen and we will sing to you the story of the miracle of Hanukkah.

Light the Candles

Lilly - Back in the 16th century, Spanish people began celebrating Christmas by reenacting Mary and Joseph's search for a room at an inn – or Posada – in Bethlehem. This tradition is still celebrated in many countries as guests go from house to house, asking for a place to stay.

Darya - They are turned away each time, just as Mary and Joseph were. More guests join in the search, and are turned away again. Finally, they come to a home where the pathway is lit by luminarias. In this house the guests are welcomed. That's when the party begins. Singing, dancing, celebrating and a piñata!

La Fiesta de la Posada

Aubrey - Fiesta! What a great tradition. What else have I been missing?

Cassidy - Well, there is another holiday I've been learning about that some African-American families celebrate. Kwanzaa. This is a time to remember traditions and the principles of living. It is celebrated for seven days.

Aubrey - Seven days? So that's what the other candle holder is for.

Cassidy - It's called a Kinara. It holds one candle for each of the seven days. Families gather each night to light a candle and talk about the special principle of that day.

Aubrey - Seven special principles? What are they?

Cassidy - There is unity, self-determination, responsibility, cooperating, purpose, creativity, and faith. All principals that build family and community.

Light the Kinara

Emma - We've been singing about the traditions of Hanukkah, Las Posadas and Kwanzaa. Now, what do you think about when I say the word Christmas?

Kameryn - Well, our family lights candles in an evergreen wreath. They are the candles of Peace, Hope, Joy and Love

Emma - Do you know what I think about? Presents. Presents, presents, presents and snow!

Kameryn - Holly, ivy, mistletoe!

Emma - Elves, reindeer, ho-ho-ho!

Kameryn - Christmas trees with lights that glow!

Holiday Lights

Gracie - No matter how or what you celebrate, always remember the important reasons behind the celebration

Aarya - The reasons for giving

Gracie - The reasons for sharing

Aarya - The reasons for loving

Gracie - The reasons for caring

Aarya - The reasons why on December nights we light December lights