



## Preschool

# Activities for a Multicultural Theme

Young children explore different cultures, traditions and customs as they participate in these early childhood education activities and lesson plans.

[E-mail Gayle](#) to include **your** favorite **Multicultural** activity!

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March 31 2011  
**Navigation**

[Alphabet Theme](#)

[Back to School Theme](#)

[Black History Theme](#)

[Book Themes](#)

[Brain Growth](#)

[Counting and Number Theme](#)

[Dinosaur Theme](#)

[Easter Theme](#)

[Fall Theme](#)

[Spring Theme](#)

[Summer Theme](#)

[Winter Theme](#)

[The Five Senses](#)

[Holiday Craft Activities](#)

[Home Activities](#)

[Large Group and Circle Activities](#)

[Me, My Family and Friends](#)

[Outdoor Play](#)

## Preschool Multicultural Activities

### Passports

Promote multicultural awareness and self esteem with this early childhood education activity by **Matina**.

Materials: Paper and a camera.

Description: We made passports by stapling white paper to construction paper. Then from January until May we studied a different country. We studied Russia, Africa, Ireland, Israel, China, Antarctica, Australia, Mexico, Japan, France, Hawaii, and Saudi Arabia. Then for each country the youngsters wore a hat or a prop from that country (ex: France, beret). We took pictures of each child wearing his or her hat or prop. Then I glued the pictures into each child's individual passport and gave it to them along with a world traveler certificate at the end of the year. They had lots of fun "dressing up!"

### World Passport

Teach pre-k and kindergarten children the concept of "Around the World" with this early childhood project by **Gina**. You may want to take more than one week to accomplish this project.

Materials: Blank booklet and a stamp for each country.

Description: Teachers decide which countries you want your class to visit. We did Russia, China, Mexico, Egypt and United Kingdom. We took a sheet of paper for each country and researched facts through books, the internet and guest speakers. We wrote down important facts and when we were done, I had made "stamps" from each country (Ex: Egypt = Pyramid) and the children glued them at the bottom of their sheet.

Once the week was up we went through our passport and planned a 'Round the world party where each child dressed like the people from one of the countries we

[Resource Room](#)

[Rhyme, Songs  
and  
Fingerplays](#)

[Small Group  
Activities](#)

[Toddler Theme](#)

[Preschool Links](#)

[About Gayle](#)

[Site Map](#)



Activity Central

Search the  
Preschool  
Rainbow



visited and we made native foods and played native games.

## Bulletin Board: Native American Symbols

Create a bulletin board with this multicultural activity for preschool and kindergarten children by **Nikki**.

Materials: Large piece of brown butcher paper, paint, paint rollers, precut symbols (canoe, teepee, turtle, deer etc.).

Description: The teacher will precut a bear or deer shape from the brown butcher paper. The children place precut symbols (cut from tag board) onto the brown butcher paper. The children will roll their rollers into the paint and then they will roll over the symbol. Next, they lift the symbol and look at the designs they have created.

## Multicultural: The "Talking Stone"

A preschool education circle time activity.

Often during circle time many preschoolers want to talk at once. One way to help children learn how to take turns is to use a visual clue. Teachers might try using a "talking stick" or "talking stone". This is a tradition with some **Native Americans**. Hold your 'stick' or 'stone' while you speak and then pass it on when it's time for another person to talk.

You can use a colorful rock or decorate your stick in a special way. This technique helps young children learn to respect the speaker and to wait and listen. Continue with this idea and soon the children will be reminding each other.

## Japanese: Hinamatsuri Day!

**Trina S.** offers this early childhood lesson plan saying, "Teach children that being different is okay. We're not all of the same ethnic background, and people celebrate holidays in different ways."

Materials: Dolls, pretend tea set and newspaper print paper (end of the paper rolls).

Description: We celebrated Hinamatsuri Day "The day of the Dolls" which is celebrated in Japan to commemorate ancestors.

1. Told everyone in advance to bring a doll for Hinamatsuri Day.  
The day of the Dolls. We explained what Hinamatsuri Day was to the children. Then, each child took turns telling about their doll and why it was special to them (some brought stuffed animals).
2. Later on we made paper kimonos out of newspaper print paper

(end of the paper rolls). A lot of newspapers give these away for free or for a very small amount and they have lots of paper left on them. Each child decorated their own paper kimono and then a belt was fastened out of string.

3. After lunch we had a tea party, Japanese style, with everyone seated on the floor. We read a short book about life in Japan so that children could see how Japanese people sit around their table on the floor.

Comments: Kids really enjoyed this day! Kids didn't want to take off their kimonos. Great way to learn about another culture without it being boring.

Take a look at [Preschool Picture Books Listed by Themes](#) for a suggested list of multicultural books.

## **I Am Different**

**Kenyetta C.**, a teacher from Watson Avenue Day Care, shares this multicultural fingerplay and says, "I wrote this for multicultural month to teach diversity and acceptance of different ethnic backgrounds."

Materials:

Just fingers. I also took all of the children's pictures with a digital camera and decorated my bulletin board with the poem and the children's pictures. The parents and children loved it!

Description:

This is a fingerplay to do with children during circle time.

I am different from my head to my toes  
(point to self then to head and toes)

I am different from my eyes to my nose  
(point to self then eyes and nose)

I come from a place that is far and wide  
(point to self then spread arms wide open)

A place where we all smile instead of cry  
(act like you are tracing your lips into a smile  
and bring hands down eyes as if you were crying)

I am very different as you can see  
(point to self then at a friend)

But I still have a lot of love in me!  
(point to self place hand over the heart)

then hug yourself)

### **Multicultural Puppet**

**Theresa** takes advantage of puppets to help preschool children develop language skills, self expression and cultural awareness (Hawaii).

Materials: Brown lunch bags, glue, markers, paper or silk flowers.

Description:

Teachers help children cut on opening of bag upward 4-5 inches (for the grass skirt). Have them decorate a face on the flap part of the bag. Then glue flowers under the flap for the Lei. If available, use store bought eyes.

**Variation:** Paint or sponge paint the puppet, then cut the flap.

### **Multicultural Book**

**Theresa** shares this multicultural activity which helps children appreciate different cultures and traditions.

Materials:

Construction paper or cardboard, old magazines, glue and ribbon.

Description:

Teachers ask children to cut out various pictures from magazines (old **National Geographic** ones are great). Make a book by using construction paper or cardboard. Children glue pictures on to pages. Punch holes, and add ribbon to make the book. They can also dictate their thoughts about the pictures to you. Write their responses down on that particular page.

This activity is great for language recognition too!

### **Chop Stix Pick-up**

During this multicultural activity preschool children will use eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills.

You will need:

Enough pairs of chop sticks for everyone in the small group, lots of large cotton balls, paper plates.

Description:

Explain to a small group of preschoolers that not everyone eats with forks and spoons. Introduce the chop sticks and tell children they are used for eating. Let the children help put the cotton balls (pretend food) on their paper plates and ask them how they could use the chop sticks to pick up the pretend food. Permit the children to experiment with ways to pick up the cotton balls. Then demonstrate how they might pick up the pretend food. Give children

children lots of time to try before reading the book: **How My Parents Learned To Eat** (Japanese - American) by Ina R. Friedman

Comment: A few children might attempt to "taste" the pretend food so **Susan** advises telling them, in advance, NOT to put the cotton balls into their mouths.

For more multicultural books take a look at [Preschool Books Listed by Themes](#)



### **Pollito, Chicken**

*Improvise a tune for this bilingual song  
(Spanish-English)*

Pollito, chicken; Gallina, hen.  
Lapiz, pencil, y Pluma, pen.  
Ventana, window; Puerta, door.  
Maestra, teacher, y Piso, floor.

*Use this version if the teacher is a woman, If a man, change "maestra" to "maestro".*



### **Uno, Dos Y Tres**

*A bilingual counting song in Spanish and English*

Uno, dos, y tres,  
Cuatro, cinco, seis.  
Siete, ocho, y nueve,  
Cuento hasta diez.  
La la la la la; La la la la la,  
La la la la la; La la la la la.  
La la la la la; La la la la la.

One, two, and three,  
Four, five and six.  
Seven, eight, and nine,  
I count to ten.  
La la la la la; La la la la la.  
La la la la la; La la la la la.  
La la la la la; La la la la la.

There are more **Spanish** rhymes, songs and finger plays in the [Resource Room](#).

### **Music: Maracas**

Preschool and kindergarten children use fine motor and sensory skills when they

create these Mexican instruments by **Sue Y.**

**Materials:** Cut up squares of tissue paper (all colors), glue watered down, small water bottles, beans, rice or anything to make noise.

**Description:** Take your small water bottles and paint them with watered down glue. Put colored tissue paper all over and even on the top. After the bottle is covered do it once more. Then, paint all over the two layers with watered glue again and let it dry. It will look very glossy and with the bean or rice inside it will make beautiful music.

The teacher will either need to put the beans in ahead of time or let the children, they love doing that. Once it is dry children can do a dance or musical dance with their new instrument.

**Comments:** Some kids don't like the wet texture, but after seeing the finished project they love it!

### **Rain Rhythm Sticks**

**Leslie** shares this activity saying, "Because in April my class and I made Rain Rhythm Sticks."

**Materials:**

Paper towel tubing, plastic lids from milk jug, tape, beans or rice or cereal, felt tip markers.

**Description:**

Teachers give the children a paper towel tube and let them decorate it with markers and sticker. Close one end off with a milk cap (we taped ours with masking tape just to make sure the filling wouldn't come out).

Let the children partially fill the tube with beans or even dried cereal. Close the other end with a cap. Then let them shake, shake shake. It sounds just like raindrops!

**Gayle's Note:** African, Chilean and Indian cultures make traditional use of rainsticks.

### **Multicultural Activity: "Egypt Crackled Egg Art"**

**Nichole P.** offers this multicultural art activity saying, "Shem al neseem, means "smell the breeze". Egyptians welcome spring with red roses, fancy clothes and family picnics."

**Materials:**

Eggshells, washed out well, food coloring, strainer and cup, poster board, white

glue, child safety scissors, and paper towels.

Description:

1. Cut out an egg shape from the poster board. add water and a few drops of food coloring to a cup.
2. Break eggshells into small pieces; then place them in food coloring. Strain shells when colored. gently dry on paper towels.
3. Cover the poster board egg with glue; then press on eggshells.

Comments:

\* Egyptians celebrate spring with a picnic breakfast. you can have a breakfast picnic, too. Fill a basket with hard cooked eggs, bread, fruit and cheese.

\* Which other springtime holidays use eggs in the celebration?

If you guessed Easter and Passover, then you are right.

Why do you think eggs are used in these celebrations?

Where else do you see eggs in spring?

\* Find Egypt on a map or globe. what continent is Egypt in?

Is Egypt close or far away from where we live on the map?

For **African-American** early childhood education activities go to the [Preschool Black History Theme](#)

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Do you have a multicultural activity or an idea you'd like share...

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