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Autumn is here! At this time of year, many of us are surrounded by trees with leaves of red and gold and orange. Autumn brings with it a sense of new beginnings and is a time of year with its own set of rituals. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, as the temperature goes down, we close up our homes, turn on our heaters and get ready to snuggle on our sofas with books and mugs of coffee, tea and hot chocolate. Autumn is the beginning of the season of introspection and slowing down. Many of us can still describe in detail the atmosphere of a new country in which we were living during this time of year. Our acute awareness of being in a new country forever imprints those autumnal smells, sounds and feelings in our hearts and minds.

This time of year can also bring feelings of stress and anxiety. Multicultural and multilingual families have the extra burden (and fun) of figuring out how to combine traditions, while at the same time including family members from both sides. Lucky for us at Multilingual Living Magazine, we have a team of experts who know just how to help! You won’t want to miss the Stay Informed! articles in this issue to get you ready for your holiday gatherings. Keep your household running smoothly by preparing right now BEFORE family arrives and holiday preparations are in full swing!

We are delighted to be able to bring you some very special Learning At Home lessons in this issue which you can share with your children. The two lessons we have included will teach you and your family about holidays and traditions around the world. They are adaptations of classroom lessons from Judy Haynes, an ESL teacher from New Jersey in the USA. These lessons are packed with information, ideas and much, much more. Hope you have fun with them!

As always, we have brought you a fabulous line-up of articles. Colin Baker shares with us a very special piece about Bilingualism and Dyslexia. If you have ever wondered if bilingualism contributes to dyslexia, here is your chance to find out. Does your bilingual child have Dyslexia? Then you will want to learn about how best to support your child’s reading needs BEFORE she starts the process.

This month’s questions for Harriet and Grace are sure to resonate with questions that arise in your household. Don’t miss the reassuring answers and tips on how to move forward with multilingualism. There must be many of you out there with burning questions, so make sure to send them in to us and we will have Harriet and/or Grace answer them for you! If you have questions on your mind, then there are bound to be others with the same, so benefit everyone and send them in!

Do you like to cook and bake? Then make sure to check out our Global Recipes section. Celebrate with flavors and smells from around the world! Don’t miss our recipe for Colada Morada and Guagas de Pan! And what would a holiday season be without Sugar Cookies? Don’t have any cookie cutters at home? No worries, use a jar lid or cut out shapes freehand with a knife! Either way, these recipes will help fill your home with sweet holiday smells and tastes!

We hope you will enjoy our Holiday Activities! We have included interactive games and crafts to keep your family moving, talking, creating and sharing. Do these activities together with your children and encourage them to use your native language. When they see how much fun you are having, your children can’t help but join in!

We are extremely delighted and honored to have six sponsors for this holiday issue: We Love Spanish, Language Land, Petite Librairie, ABC Kinderladen, Language Lizard and Alphabet Garten! If you are looking for fabulous products for your family and friends this year, our sponsors have provided their favorite tips...
and recommendations for your shopping needs. And don’t miss their colorful ads throughout the magazine - you are sure to find what you are looking for in their online shops. A big thank you to all of our sponsors for helping to keep Multilingual Living Magazine going strong!

You will notice that starting with this issue of Multilingual Living Magazine, we have embedded hyperlinks into our PDF pages! This means, when you see a website address listed in the magazine, you can click on it to go to that webpage (a web browser will be opened). Sometimes we have also embedded hyperlinks into sections of pages where it makes sense. For example, if you click on the website address, www.biculturalfamily.org, in this page you should see that your mouse indicator changes and the Bilingual/Bicultural Family Network homepage opens in a web browser.

Many of you have asked what it would take to get our magazine into print. Please know that this would be a dream come true for us and we are always looking for ways to make this happen. The catch is how to finance such a venture. The printing costs would come to a few thousand dollars (if not tens of thousands) per issue and then there are postal costs to ship it out to everyone. Our sponsors are helping us make the first step in the direction of our goal but we need many more sponsors before we will have enough to pay for printing costs - or one main sponsor to cover our printing costs! And to get more sponsors, we need more subscribers. So, spread the word about Multilingual Living Magazine! Let’s double, triple, quadruple our subscriptions, find some more sponsors, and get this magazine into print! Help us share this magazine with every multilingual family in the world! If you have ideas for us on how we can realize our dreams of a printed Multilingual Living Magazine, write me (corey@biculturalfamily.org) or Alice (editor@biculturalfamily.org) and share them with us! Or perhaps you want to help us get the word out? Then contact us, we’d appreciate any and all ideas and help.

We hope you enjoy this holiday issue of Multilingual Living Magazine and that your holidays go smoothly. May you find your way through your cultural, linguistic and traditional blending. And remember that the greatest gift we can give our family this year is the gift of our language and culture.

Your MLL Editors,

Corey and Alice
I'm a regular subscriber of the Bilingual Family Newsletter (www.bilingualfamilynewsletter.com) and it's through them that I got to know BBFN. I honestly think that your magazine is excellent, a well done professional job, it's amazing what you have been doing so far.

I'm the mother of a three year old whom I'm more or less trying to bring up bilingual Italian/English. My husband and I are Italian, but my love for the English language (it was my graduation subject at University and working language in a multinational company for years) and a fascination for multilingualism, made me attempt at this “artificial” adventure with my daughter.

The scenario is well known: with a mother away from home most of the day and her sole English language model (with the exception of a Canadian/Italian young lady who visits us couple of times a week to play and talk in English with the child) our daughter is a receptive bilingual, who understands English but replies in Italian, watches English DVDs, enjoys being read in English, can produce - but only on request - quite an extensive amount of words and phrases but whose language dominance is clearly Italian. To make a long story short, quoting Alice Lapuerta’s enlightening and supportive article, it’s far from being a multilingual garden of roses (www.biculturalfamily.org/sept06/multilinguallivingtoc.html). Nevertheless, regardless of my ups and downs and daily “inconsistencies”, embarrassment and language mixing, quality material like the BFN or the MLM are an invaluable source of inspiration and motivation.

Please keep up with your great job!!!

Cheers, Stefania

EDITORS: Thank you so much for sharing your family’s situation, Stefania! Many readers will appreciate knowing they are not alone in their struggles to provide their children with a second language that is not their own. We wish you continual support in your venture and are delighted that our magazine is helping (Alice appreciates your feedback on her column!).

When I raised my kids back in the sixties, I had NO idea, and No support, how to do it with 2 languages. I am German, but my American husband did not agree. Now, that I am the Oma (grandmother) of 8, I am soo happy to see you are out there. Do you have any information about resources like yours, on the East-Coast. I live in Maryland, retired, and starting my own business for bicultural childcare, Au-Pair, etc.

Any help at all.

Thank you, Monika

EDITORS: Thank you, Monika, for contacting us. I don’t know of any resources off-hand but I’m sure some of our readers will have ideas.

If anyone on the East Coast of the US has information or suggestions for Monika, please send them to us at info@biculturalfamily.org with subject line “For Monika” and we will forward them.

I was wondering if you are going to be publishing a hard copy anytime soon? I would be willing to pay more in order to avoid the hassle of printing this graphic intensive magazine.

Thx, Lucia

P.S. Loved the first issue...loaded with excellent information and the timing was perfect with the back to school focus.

EDITORS: Dear Lucia, we would LOVE to find a way to afford to publish Multilingual Living Magazine in hard copy! Read our “From the Editors’ Desk” for more information on why
I'm a US expat married to a Guatemalan living in Costa Rica with my son who is a Costa Rican citizen, a US citizen, part Guatemalan and part Russian Jew. He is learning 3 languages and is one extremely confused little man. My blog, backpackermom.typepad.com, is a humorous account of life in Costa Rica and the trials and tribulations of motherhood, living in a foreign country, and traveling with family. Please consider my blog to be part of your great network.

Thanks, Marina Kuperman
BackpackerMom.typepad.com
Family Living and Traveling... Unconventionally!
EDITORS: Marina, what a fabulous mixture of languages, cultures and destinations! We are delighted to add your blog to our listing: www.biculturalfamily.org/blogs.html!

My name is Melissa. I am an Asian expatriate in Frankfurt, Germany. My short-term plan of working in Germany turned into a lifetime commitment when I married a local. At present, I am a working mom (due to give birth to baby #2 in 4 days!). In addition, I am a travel/parenting blog editor for several networks: CW's Parenting (parenting-weblog.com), Flyaway (flyaway-weblog.com) and Wandalust (wandalust.com) Blogs; b5media's Europestring (europestring.com) and EscapeBlog (escapeblog.com); and, KMM's Road Gladiator (roadgladiator.com). I am also the founder and editor of PINOYexpats (pinoyexpats.org), an ezine for Filipino Expatriates. Having said all that... I would like to point your attention to my personal blog wherein I write about my life. For specific blogs about my multicultural/bilingual family, you can check here: pinayexpat.net/?cat=5 and pinayexpat.net/?cat=8. I do hope you consider including my personal blog in your roster.

Kind regards,
Melissa
EDITORS: Your blog is wonderful, Melissa! We are delighted to be able to add it to our roster: www.biculturalfamily.org/blogs.html. Hope you are enjoying your life with baby #2 - we will keep up on your motherhood ventures via your blog!

I just heard of your magazine recently! It’s where I found about “where the hell is matt” and immediately fell in love. I’ve been reading some of the articles there, it’s opened my eyes on some multilingual issues I haven’t even thought of. I’m not much of a writer to be honest but if you have any specific questions, I would be happy to contribute. M.J.
EDITORS: MJ, we are delighted that you found us! Isn’t “Where The Hell Is Matt” great (we have a link on our homepage: www.biculturalfamily.org)? We’d be delighted to have a contribution from you in one of our future magazines! Please contact, Alice, our managing editor: editor@biculturalfamily.org. She will be happy to work with you!

You are doing an AMAZING job here! such a rich magazine. I’ve forwarded the link to plenty of people I know.
Maia
EDITORS: Thank you, Maia, for your kind words and for helping us get the word out! We need more subscribers to keep this venture alive, so thank you for helping.

After I paid I was redirected to your site where I got my login and password - worked very smoothly! If I may make a suggestion though: On that page where you get the login and password it might be helpful to place the link to the magazine right there. I wasn’t sure where to click to get to the current edition. Great magazine! I’ve already read the article about your child’s recipe for learning. It make so much sense - I wish I would have read that years ago!

Marita
EDITORS: We are delighted that you have subscribed, Marita, and that everything went smoothly with the login information! Thank you for the suggestion. We will add a link right away for our future subscribers.

It is with great pleasure that I discovered the most recent issue of your magazine. I was impressed by the color and the very beautiful layout. I am sure that your readers will enjoy reading it. François Grosjean
Professor of Psycholinguistics and Director of the Language and Speech Processing Laboratory, Neuchâtel University, Neuchâtel, Switzerland
EDITORS: It is our honor to have you read our magazine, Professor Grosjean! You are an expert in this field so please let us know if there is anything we can do better! We’d be delighted if you would like to write an article for us in the future. Families around the world are sure to benefit from your personal and professional knowledge!

I haven’t been able to make this a reality yet. And if you or anyone has ideas on how we can get there, send them to us at: info@biculturalfamily.org. Thank you for the support!
Families around the world are mixing their traditions during this holiday season. They mix and match rituals from each of their cultures until they find the perfect balance. However, this can be difficult. Extended family members can become easily offended and your spouse may not be in agreement on the specifics. Rarely can we rely on our local community to support us in our endeavor, as they may not understand our need to continue our traditions. Our efforts often feel artificial and we question our motivations. But with a little bit of encouragement and a whole lot of patience, you too can blend your cultures this holiday season! The following three families share their holiday traditions with us this month. Each is motivated by different factors and has found unique ways of keeping their favorite rituals alive. Happy Holidays!

Celebrating Finnish Holidays in England
By Marjukka Grover

Marjukka, the cofounder of Multilingual Matters, is originally from Finland and raised her (now) grown children in England with her English husband. As she tells us, sometimes you simply just make do with what you can when it comes to celebrating holidays.

May Day
May Day is a big event in Finland. When the children were small I tried to create a Finnish carnival atmosphere on May days with balloons and paper streamers. However, it is hard to celebrate an event in a country that does not share the same holiday. In Finland “Vappu” is a public holiday to celebrate the spring and labour day. There are marches and students singing on the street, people merrymaking until early hours of morning. In England this was pretty much a normal day. I gave up this celebration quite early on.

Midsummer
For almost 20 years we organised a midsummer party in our garden for all the Finns and their families living in the Bristol area (and some of our English friends too). We would warm the sauna, everyone brought some food and drinks and, weather permitting, we would lay the table outside with a white table cloth, flowers, some birch twigs and the Finnish flag (traditional Finnish midsummer decorations). Finnish music was played and, after few drinks, people were dancing “jenkka” and “polka” well in to the night.

Independence Day
6th of December is Finnish Independence Day (from Russia) and again we would have a party for the local Finns, this time for the adults and older children only (so our children took part from age 10-12). This followed the same formula as the midsummer party - the sauna was warmed up, people would bring food and drinks. As in Finland the candles were burning in each window from 18:00 onwards and the Finnish flag was the centre piece on the table decorations. We always played “Finlandia” when guests were arriving - and later on some guest sang traditional Finnish songs.

Christmas
Just as in Germany, Christmas Eve is the main part of the Christmas for Finns. We would start the celebrations by decorating the tree with the Finnish flag, along with flags of other nations. We would all have a sauna in early afternoon followed by a Finnish Christmas meal in early evening. Dishes included: ham, slow-baked swede, a fermented potato bake and we would listen to Finnish Christmas carols. I have always felt that opening presents is almost the end of the Christmas magic, so we have left opening them until Christmas Day when we have followed the English traditions for the whole day - even watching the Queen’s speech!
I always used to get wistful around Christmas time when I lived abroad. There is a quintessential Christmas-smell that is unique, that I can find only at home. It is difficult to pinpoint, difficult to describe. It is, maybe, a mixture of smells consisting of cloves, walnuts, beeswax candles, dried apples and oranges, freshly-baked Kletzenbrot and Lebkuchen. Or maybe it is the smell of snow and fir trees mingling with the smell of smoke, since many houses in our neighborhood still heat their tiled stoves with wood. When I smell the smoke emerging from the chimneys, I know that Christmas is not far away. To me, it is the smell of childhood. And with it, all sorts of warm and nostalgic feelings well up.

Abroad, Christmas has always been a time when homesickness struck the fiercest. What wouldn't I give to be able to visit a Christkindlmarket, an Advent market, of standing next to a wooden stand that sells homemade Christmas decoration, nibbling on a gingerbread cookie and warming my half-frozen hands on a steaming mug of Glühwein in the freezing cold! How I would love to celebrate the ritual of lighting a candle on the Advent wreath every Sunday together with my family, which is now scattered all over the globe. What wouldn't I give to be able to stomp through knee-deep snow to church, in the dark with a lantern, to pick up the light of peace from church, or to attend the midnight mass on Christmas eve, listening, on the way home, to the trumpet sounds of Stille Nacht rising clearly above the chiming church bells. It is a tremendous, awe-inspiring moment, in which I soak in all these sensations, smells, sights, and relish in the silence that settles after the echoes of the bells and trumpets have dimmed. It makes me forget all the crazy consumerism and pre-Christmas stress and reminds me that maybe this is what Christmas is supposed to be all about: moments of holiness and silence.

Abroad, there was nothing that I could do about the snow, fir trees, or church bells, and there’s nothing that my husband, try as he might, could do to change the shape of the Ecuadorian cypress to resemble the central-European Tannenbaum, or fir tree. For some reason I was particularly disturbed at having a cypress as my Christmas tree rather than a fragrantly smelling fir. Yet out of walnut shells, glitter paper and cotton balls, I made my own makeshift Christmas tree decorations and hung them up. I tried to bake Christmas cookies, scolding myself that I should have paid better attention when my grandmother baked fruit bread and gingerbread. I tried to recreate a festive family atmosphere at home without Kletzenbrot, Lebkuchen and Weihnachtsstollen. But my makeshift substitutes weren’t bad, either. The lack of many spices, sweets and traditional decorations made me very creative, indeed.

Christmas abroad was always a patchwork of different cultures, traditions and tastes. On Christmas eve in Korea, we ate kimchi with a very American-style Thanksgiving turkey; in Ecuador, we had Empanadas with coffee. Ultimately, in time, I realized, that the details did not matter. Whether cypress or fir tree, whether Lebkuchen or empanadas, it was all about family, and celebrating with those we love most. Our Christmases abroad turned out to be very different, yes. But they were festive after all.
“German” Christmas Down Under: In Shorts at the Beach
By Irma Lachmund

Irma is originally from Germany and now lives with her Australian husband and children in Australia. It is one thing to combine different cultures in the same hemisphere but imagine what it must be like for a German to spend Christmas in the heat of summer!

Only the first year after our daughter Theresa was born, in 1996, did we celebrate Christmas Eve as the main event. With two children of school age we now spread the celebrations across the two important days. I still cook the traditional Christmas Eve meal of my childhood: fried sausages, fried potatoes and sauerkraut. The celebrations are kicked off with the children participating at the traditional Christmas play at our Lutheran church, for the fourth year, presented in German by local children of German speaking families. Before it gets dark we put out some homemade reindeer food (see recipe below) to make the reindeers stay a bit longer at our house. Then we have a feast with our closest Australian family members, talking about traditions and sharing stories about Christmas. We usually get dressed up and also open some presents. The plastic Christmas tree with electric candles cannot make up for the freshly cut pine tree with real candles of my German childhood, but we are happy with it. The children help with decorating. On Christmas day we unpack the rest of the presents that appear during the night brought by Santa Claus, who comes through our chimney. We have Christmas stockings as well, but they are not so important. The lounge is a mess when we unpack all remaining presents early in the morning on Christmas Day, over a cup of tea. Then we are off to the beach, meeting with friends for morning tea, playing some games, telling stories and sharing special Christmas food, such as our traditional German herring salad. And we jump into the clear ocean for a Christmas swim. Dress is casual on the day before we go home for a Christmas Dinner as a small family unit again, sharing cold ham, some chicken, more salad and maybe sea food, the meal to be finished up with traditional English Christmas pudding if there is room in our tummies. Leftovers are kept for Boxing Day (26 December) that sees us going to the beach and meeting friends and distant family members once more for a picnic at a nice spot.

Magic Reindeer Food

Directions
The reindeer food recipe is very easy! Put some quick or rolled oats in a big wooden or plastic bowl and add some coloured sugar. Many hands stir with a wooden spoon. The more stirring the merrier! As you stir, tell stories about Santa and wonder how Santa could make it through the cold night to all these children in the world! The children then take the magic reindeer food home to put outside their house on Christmas Eve. Sometimes we used homemade white sacks or simple brown paper bags which the children decorate with their names and Christmas drawings or with whatever they like. Both are tied with a red ribbon, and before you tie the final knot, add a printout of the poem below:

Sprinkle on the lawn at night
The moon will make it sparkle bright
As Santa’s reindeer fly and roam
This will guide them to your home.

Alternative Recipe
Instead of coloured sugar you might want to use glitter, especially in metropolitan areas where it is less likely that real animals will eat your mixture, because Santa’s reindeers don’t mind and they like the sparkle.

Additional Information
Make some spare bags and take one to a friend or an older neighbour and you will be making someone very happy. This became a very special new tradition in our life, brought into the family by Mrs Ognenis, the kindergarten teacher of my now 8 year old boy Miles.

No more Christmas without our Magic Reindeer Food!

Irma Lachmund is the founder of Bilingual Families Perth, www.geocities.com/bilingualfamilies, a local network that connects 400 families from 30 language backgrounds. She has two bilingual children, 8 and 10 years old. Irma lives in Perth, Western Australia.
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Fall has settled in and with it, the anticipation of the various year end holidays. In the US the dominant holidays remain Thanksgiving in November, Christmas and Hanukah in December and New Years Day January First. Now add in other holidays and traditions which come from your cultures. Yikes the “season” is upon us now. Are you nervous yet? Will there be visiting relatives from afar? What are their expectations? Or, might you be alone and homesick? Are your children getting greedy on the holiday advertisement blitz? How big is the communication gap between you, your parents and your in laws on which traditions take precedence at which holiday? Are you getting burned out creating the perfect blended cultural family for the holidays? If you answer yes to any of these questions, consider yourself normal.

As blended-culture families, we vary widely. Some of us follow our intuition and flow on how we honor the blended cultures in our families. Others have had many structured conversations with extended family attempting to be inclusive. On our calm, centered days most of us can be proud of how we are fashioning our multicultural life style but the holiday season can undermine the self esteem of even the most confident parent. It’s called holiday stress with a special multicultural spin. One multicultural stress can be a feeling of isolation. You, your spouse or a parent may feel painfully nostalgic about the homeland, places and traditions which cannot be replicated where you now live. Pay attention to the signals; are you withdrawing from friends and family, are you unusually grouchy, do you feel depressed? Tell friends and your spouse and children some stories about how and with whom you celebrated your traditional holiday when you were young. Sharing from your heart about things you are missing will help those around you understand you are “homesick” for your traditions. It can be difficult, yet it is important, to be honest about your feelings without being judgmental of other cultures. If you tell your stories with love and without criticizing the culture in which your children or grandchildren are living, even young children will want to comfort you in the ways they can; making food together, decorating, and reading together about your culture.

Another multicultural holiday stress is being caught between parents and in-laws expectations. Despite the thoughtful efforts you and your spouse have been making to blend your cultures successfully into one family you have created, it may feel like your parents, his parents or both sets of parents are at war for the cultural hearts and minds of your children at holiday time. No matter what you do is wrong, wrong, wrong. Obviously their criticism is not rational so don’t fool yourself into believing you can have a rational conversation with your parents and in-laws about which tradition should be followed at which event. This very deep cultural power struggle is about influence and grandchildren. The holidays are important cultural markers. We see our differences at the holiday times in ways that are hidden in every day life. This is ethnocentrism at its emotional height. You and your spouse will have to be very honest with each other about what you hold most dear in your cultural holiday traditions, only then can you negotiate a successful plan celebrating a blend of both your traditions. There is no formula because each family is unique. You may feel very vulnerable to criticism. Some parents and in-laws can be very judgmental, about your choices as they evolve. Remember, extended family is afraid of losing cultural influence over their children and grandchildren. Have confidence. Perhaps talking to a counselor would help. Whatever you decide is best for you and your children will eventually be accepted long as you and your spouse present a united front with your parents/extended family. In time your extended families will gain confidence in you as they see some of their traditions being carried on over the years. Help your children in this by talking to them about the two worlds of their grandparents. Present it as a gift and your children will embrace their multicultural world and live comfortably in it with good self esteem.

Because there is added stress at holiday time for multicultural families, Fall is a good time to remember what nourishes you as a couple and a family. Sit down now and take some time together to plan some time alone together, remembering what is most important in your relationship and in your holiday time together.
Do you have Multicultural Holiday Stress?

By Harriet Cannon, M.C.

The holidays are coming, the holidays are coming! Are you ready?
Feeling nostalgic? Missing your homeland?
Worried about the arrival of family members?

DON’T WORRY! BE PREPARED!
Thanksgiving has been my favorite holiday ever since college. I came to realize its true significance one year when I was unable to go back to California from Boston because of the expensive airfare. I found myself in a temporary dorm for the long weekend with a dozen international students from around the world, among them an Italian, two Ecuadorians, a Haitian, a Dominican, a Mexican, a Greek, and a Cypriot.

**ADDING A LANGUAGE AND DOUBLING THE HOLIDAYS**

By Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa
As the token American I found myself “in charge” of cooking my first turkey and explaining the meaning of Thanksgiving to everyone else. In between phone calls to my sister on the other coast for tips on roasting, I was grilled by the foreign students about the “true” meaning of the holiday. It was brilliant; I heard myself saying that it was a day of reflection to be thankful for everything one had, but mainly for the simple things like health, family and friends—something I think I had never been conscious of until I was pressed to explain. I told my new friends that it was the one holiday that all Americans celebrated, independent of their religion, making it the most special day of the year. During that particular Thanksgiving, I realized how much we take for granted and how rarely we acknowledge what is really important, something I will always be grateful for.

Ironically, despite the importance of Thanksgiving to me, I have found this holiday tradition to be the most difficult to maintain while raising my multilingual family.

Because holidays, or “holy days,” are founded on shared historical traditions, it is hard, though not impossible, to share them with people outside your culture; that is, unless the deeper concepts behind the holidays come to the forefront. Yes, I went into the Indians and the Pilgrims when talking about Thanksgiving for the first time to my international friends, but I found myself returning to the overall concept of thankfulness as opposed to the historical angle over and over again, a value which people from all backgrounds can understand.

Some years later, I recall being in Geneva and calling my Swiss, German, French, Austrian, Rwandan, Hindi, Canadian, Colombian and Peruvian friends to invite them for Thanksgiving dinner. “It’s sort of like a harvest fest…no, no, it’s not religious…well, it’s kind of like a day of reflection…no, not at all! No, you don’t have to donate anything…It’s just a chance to be with people you would like to thank for being in your life…” While making the invitations was a challenge, the actual celebration was natural. Everyone knows what it means to be thankful, everyone knows how often we forget to tell others how much they mean to us.

When I celebrated Thanksgiving last year with a small group of Ecuadorian, Argentinean, Dutch and German friends, one of the women who had accompanied me the year before actually organized the children and told them they each should share something they were thankful for; something that never would have occurred to me in my own celebrations, but which she had adapted to in light of her new understanding of the meaning of Thanksgiving. It was beautiful and many a motherly tear was shed listening to the kids say what every parent dreams (“I am thankful for my mommy and daddy, and, yeah, well, for my baby sister too”).

As a half-Japanese American married to an Ecuadorian with children in the German School I have found the same joy in adding holidays as I have found in languages: everything is welcome and offers great opportunities for personal growth. Our family view of the holidays? An example is the October-December timeframe: Oktoberfest, full of beer drinking and song, is something that comes just before Halloween, which we now see as a precedent to All Saint’s Day (November 1st), during which we drink colada morada and eat guaguas de pan, confectioned by the indigenous people of Ecuador (see recipe for these in this issue of Multilingual Living Magazine). Just prior to Christmas in Ecuador, IntiRaymi is celebrated at the winter solstice in honor of the Sun God, then we welcome El Niño Jesus on December 24th, and Santa Claus on December 25th, keeping an eye out for Schwarze Peter all along who drops a lump of coal in the children’s stockings if they have misbehaved.

While the mélange of traditions may seem a mishmash of customs, it is actually a simple act of celebrating what is natural to all cultures: the need for rituals to mark our lives and the passing of time. At first, as with my children’s four languages, I thought there would be some natural confusion, but I realize that each holiday has its place and time and the children learn to manage each within their own space. (This is similar to what happens with the Tooth fairy, who often beats out el ratoncito to deliver money for a lost pearly white!)

Granted, it has not been easy explaining Thanksgiving to others, but my non-American friends have told me they remember those celebrations as highlights of our friendship. My political family in Ecuador, (including my brother-in-law’s British wife!), anxiously wait Thanksgiving celebration at our house. Perhaps it is the organized excuse to share how you feel about those around you, or the time one takes in thinking about what is really important in life, or all the love that goes into the pumpkin pie, but Thanksgiving remains my favorite holiday.

Just as we have used language as an entrance into other cultures, we use holidays as a path back to universal values. This year is no exception. We just moved to Lima, Peru and I am out to convert another group of international friends about the special nature of Thanksgiving (wish me luck!).

TRACEY TOKUHAMA-ESPINOZA is a native of California who studied her Master’s of Education in International Development at Harvard University and her undergraduate degrees of International Relations and Mass Communication at Boston University. Since 1997 she has facilitated workshops for families, companies and professional educators on themes of language development, brain-based learning, learning styles, critical thinking and teaching methods and strategies. Her list of clients includes Proctor & Gamble (Switzerland and UK), Early Bird Early Childhood Education (The Netherlands), Shell OUTPOST Schools, Ares Serono, The Diplomatic Women’s Group of Geneva, the University of Melbourne and schools in a dozen countries (Argentina, Australia, Norway, Germany, Italy, Ecuador, Thailand, Switzerland, the UK, The Netherlands, Belgium and France). Tracey speaks and writes in English and Spanish fluently, knows conversational French, some Japanese, and basic German. She and her Ecuadorian husband are raising three multilingual children in English, Spanish, German and French. She is the author of Raising Multilingual Children: Foreign Language Acquisition and Children (2000) and The Multilingual Mind: Questions by, for and about people living with many languages (2003). www.multifaceta.com
A Child’s Place in the World:
Using dual language books to initiate social studies learning at home and at school

By Heather Leaman
Schools and families around the world acknowledge the importance of extending children’s learning beyond an understanding of their own country to include an understanding of the world. While social studies is an ideal school subject to help children understand the world around them, many schools in the United States have significantly reduced their social studies instruction due in part to the influence of No Child Left Behind. However, reducing class time for social studies instruction does not mean that teachers must eliminate instruction about our world for elementary school children. There are outstanding tools available for teaching social studies in tandem with instruction in reading, writing and math. In addition, there are many activities parents and families can engage in at home to supplement their children’s social studies education. Dual language books are an ideal example of a tool that can be used to introduce children to their world and to initiate deeper learning.

When teachers and families share dual language books with their children, they are increasing a child’s connection to the world through language, culture and geography. There are a multitude of activities that can be used in concert with dual language books to help children understand and find their place in the world around them. Activities such as those listed below can be used at home or at school.

- **Locating Countries:** After reading dual language books, use a current world map to help children locate countries where each language is spoken. The online CIA World Factbook (www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html) provides an excellent description of countries including information about the country’s geography, people and cultural characteristics for adult and student reference.

- **Learning About Culture:** After locating countries where the selected languages are spoken, read about that country, its people, customs, government, religion, economic resources and history.

- **Recognizing Diversity in the USA:** Have children draw, color or label a map of the USA and identify the numerous languages spoken in the country. The Modern Language Association’s website (www.mla.org) includes census data and a Language Map that students can use to find out about the linguistic and cultural diversity in the United States.

- **Introduce New Reading Material:** Check your local or school library for stories, poems or folktales originating from various nations or select books with characters or settings connected to the country or language under study. Libraries also offer electronic and audio books, many accessible from home.

- **Celebrate Diverse Cultures:** Investigate and replicate traditions from around the world. Cook national specialties from various world regions, create art in the traditional style of various countries, or play games from different parts of the world.

- **Examine Internet sites:** Use child-friendly, high quality Internet sites to help kids learn about the languages and cultures they are investigating. A few examples include:
  - Nationalgeographic.com/kids
  - Worldalmanacforkids.com/
  - Whitehousekids.com
  - UN.org
  - cyberschoolbus/Bensguide.gpo.gov

Such activities can help children learn about social studies beyond their geography, history, civics, government, and economics classes. Families and schools can enhance a child’s connection to the world by using dual language books to initiate and extend learning about the people and cultures similar to and different than themselves. By encouraging children to learn about people around the world, we help children build knowledge of and a love for social studies.

Heather Leaman is an assistant professor in the Elementary Education Department at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. She also spent eleven years teaching sixth grade social studies. This article was originally published in Language Lizard’s Culture Connection newsletter. To see more articles and archived newsletters, please visit http://www.languagelizard.com/newsresources.htm.

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I remember the first time I went to some of the typical town fiestas here in Spain. They were in honor of Santiago (St. James), patron saint of Matabuena, the village where my husband’s father had grown up. It was also the night before our wedding, which was to be held in another village nearby, and a lot of my husband Santi’s friends had come in to attend.

“They’ll want to go to the fiestas,” Santi told me, and as hosts we had to be there, too. “The music starts at midnight, but it won’t really get going until about 1am or so.”

So much for getting my beauty sleep.

Sure enough, at midnight they were still doing sound checks in the tiny plaza in front of the medieval church. As the huge loudspeakers and flashing lights started up, the storks in their nests among the church towers slumbered on, barely disturbed.

The storks were the only ones sleeping, though: the rest of the village was ready to rock. Three- and four-year-olds danced with their parents, while older kids roamed in bands amidst the carnival games lining the street up to the church. Teenagers clustered together in matching T-shirts and colored overalls with the name of their peña, groups that hang out together during the fiestas. The older generations were out, too—couples in their eighties swirling elegantly to the beat of a pasodoble, groups of women in their seventies gamely swinging to a more modern rock song. I don’t remember what time we finally got to bed that night, though I did manage to get two or three hours of sleep before it was time to get up and ready for the big day.

Since then, I’ve been to many more fiestas, mostly in Arcones, where Santi’s mother grew up. In the lean years following the Spanish Civil War, she and many others of her generation left the village to look for work in the big cities, eventually settling there to raise their families. In the summers, they returned to visit those who stayed behind, and to help with the work in the fields. My husband has many fond memories of those days, running wild from dawn to dusk with all the other kids who, like him, were there for the summer. The parents never worried because they knew the kids would be safe in the network of neighbors. If someone didn’t know who you were, they would just ask, and Santi’s mantra of “nieta de la Florentina,” Florentina’s grandson, was all they needed to know.

Things are different in Arcones now. The last census
It takes a village

Sometimes what really matters in life are the little things. Sometimes it all comes down to a village.

by Kate MacVean
PHOTOS: Kate MacVean
count indicated 280 residents, though only the most hardy souls actually spend the winters there. Not only have cars replaced most of the livestock, the houses have been modernized, and some are even rented out for the newly-fashionable “rustic tourism.” Nowadays people have more money, and more options: instead of spending all summer in the village, they come back on weekends, or a week here and there, saving their real vacation time for the beach or a package tour.

Still, the feeling of family remains, not only because so many of the people we see are related to my mother-in-law in obscure ways that somehow still matter. When we go back, everyone remarks on how much the boys have grown since the last time, and how our youngest looks like his grandmother. And during the fiestas, the streets are alive once again. Everyone comes back to celebrate, see friends and family, and perhaps to reclaim a time when things were simpler, to breathe that fresh mountain air, take off their watches, turn off the cell phones and get away from the stress and noise of the big cities.

The fiestas usually center around a religious holiday. The people of Arcones celebrate theirs in honor of the Virgin of la Lastra, the second weekend in September, and there is a mass both Saturday and Sunday. On those days the 13th century church fills to capacity, and for the most part, the congregants still observe the custom of segregating by sex, the women in the front pews, and the men in the back. After Mass is a procession, and people bid on the privilege of carrying one of the four posts that hold up the carved wooden figure of the Virgin. A group of young people, grandchildren or great-grandchildren of those who had grown up in the village, dress in local costumes and perform the traditional dances, clacking the wooden sticks together and twirling in their skirts—black and red wool for the girls, white linen for the boys.

Then comes one of my favorite activities of village life: the Sunday vermouth. We meet up with friends in the early afternoon and go to the bar with a big grassy courtyard where we can watch the kids play from our tables. We order our drinks—vermouth, beer, coca-cola—which come with tapas, little plates heaped with homemade croquettes or fat morcilla sausages with hunks of bread, or something called the tigre, a mussel on the half shell, which is then filled with béchamel sauce and breaded and fried, served with little spoons to scoop it out. Not for the diet-conscious, these affairs—but it’s summer, it’s the fiestas, and regular rules are suspended for awhile. After a couple of rounds we slowly make our way back up the hill for lunch with the family, a large midday meal served at 3pm, followed by coffee and dessert. After all of this eating, a siesta would be just the thing, but the kids don’t want to nap, so we head out again to one of the many activities planned for them: a puppet show put on by a traveling company; those inflatable bouncy castles to jump around on; traditional games like sack races and bobbing for treasures in a bowl full of flour; and the “foam festival,” where they cordon off an area of the plaza and bring in a machine to fill it with dense soapsuds for wading through, waist deep.

As for the live music late at night, we haven’t been up for that recently. Although there is a costume contest for kids at the first intermission, our boys are steadfast in their sleeping habits and would never last that long. Since Santi’s mother is around to babysit, the two of us could sneak out after hours if we wanted to, but this year we just didn’t manage it. Staying out late doesn’t have quite the same appeal when you have two little alarm clocks set for seven a.m. sleeping in the next room! Someday soon, though, I imagine we will all be there, dancing away.

When I think about some of my favorite childhood activities back in the States that our kids are missing out on (county fairs, apple picking in the fall, sledding in winter), I just remember that they do have something I never did while growing up. They have the fiestas. They have a village.

Kate MacVean lives in Spain with her husband Santi and their two boys. She is a former columnist for Literary Mama. You can find the archives of her column, Mothering Abroad, here: http://www.literarymama.com/columns/motheringabroad/archives.html
As the end-of-year holiday period starts we find ourselves drawn into the past with memories of childhood Christmases, Thanksgivings or New Year parties. This can sometimes cause problems in bilingual and bicultural families when parents try to re-create their previous happy holidays. As a mixed culture family we can either follow one parent’s culture exclusively or blend the two cultures into a unique tradition.

Some parents might feel ambivalent or uninterested in their own heritage because they may have moved far away or converted to another religion. Other parents enthusiastically take up their partner’s culture as their own and give all their energy to supporting it, forgetting their heritage. This often happens to parents living in another country where their culture is not accessible.

One Japanese/English family I knew, who lived in England, had been busy celebrating English holidays, until the mother set up a Japanese-speaking playgroup and with other mothers began celebrating significant dates such as Girls Day in the spring.

In our French/English household we have a similar cultural background and are both Christians, but we celebrate Christmas very differently. In the beginning when the children were tiny we spent alternate Christmases with each family. However Jacques found the fuss over decorating the house excessive, was not impressed by the traditional English Christmas day roast turkey lunch and refused to sing along with the carol-singing! In France I was surprised that we ate a big meal of fresh seafood on Christmas Eve (when I would normally go to church) and confused when, at midnight, we put the gifts on each persons slippers, not in socks as we do in England! No-one thought to leave a snack for Rudolph either!

When we began celebrating Christmas at our house we made a few choices based on what the kids liked best. It ended up with me and the kids decorating the house as we wish for a whole month and loudly singing carols. We usually invite friends for a mid-December lunch of turkey and cranberry sauce starter, lamb as the main course and Christmas pudding and brandy sauce. On Christmas Eve we put out both socks and slippers, just in case, and leave a treat for the reindeer. We usually go away for the two weeks holiday and so are away from either culture and just relax and enjoy the magic of Christmas together.

**Some tips for bicultural blends...**

- Respect your partner’s cultural heritage and don’t try to belittle or criticize it, what you think is unimportant might have much meaning for him or her.
- Don’t try to re-create your or your partner’s cultural heritage exactly – instead form a new tradition in your household.
- Let children be involved in picking the best of both worlds and do what is fun for all of you.
- Don’t assume your kids will know about your culture if you are living away from it - you will need to explain the reasons, what we do and how it affects them.
- Invite friends to see how you celebrate certain festivals that are not feted in your country.
- Teach your kids about your culture through preparing for your festivals – enjoy cooking, decorating and making cards/invitations together and talk about your childhood memories.
- Enjoy the fact you have more things to celebrate and have fun!

Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert is the author of Language Strategies for Bilingual Families The One-parent-One Language Approach. Suzanne is the mother of three more-or-less bilingual children aged 9, 7 and 3 years. The family now lives in Chicago, America. Website: www.opol4us.com.
Both Worlds:

The holidays are coming! Are you ready for a little bicultural blending?

PHOTOS: © iStockphoto.com/cronopios
Petit Pont 1 & 2
(Finalist - Education Resources Award 2005 and 2006)

As seen on BBC TV News-Petit Pont is an exciting package of materials for Primary French including an interactive CD-ROM with stunning virtual reality graphics. Petit Pont builds bridges between languages and cultures and brings the French language and France alive. It is perfect for specialist and non-specialist teachers - and for parents who want to support their children’s language learning. The Petit Pont range includes: an interactive CD-ROM; a high quality full-colour book; Flashcards & Copymasters CD-ROM (which is fully editable so you can print your own games, activity sheets and progress records); a top quality glove puppet and cuddly toy, Domino, who is great for getting even the most reluctant speakers to speak and an audio CD where you can sing along with Petit Pont. The audio CD contains all the songs from Petit Pont. Listen to the dialogues, poems and stories. Clear, authentic voices to help your ear tune into French.

Spanish Magnetic Learning Calendar

This wonderful product helps children to learn to read a calendar, track the weather and follow the seasons - all in Spanish! It also reinforces a child’s ability to recognize numbers and put them in order. Recommended for ages 3+, it includes a magnetic board and 51 magnetic tiles. The board measures 30cm x 41.5cm, and features sturdy metal grommets for hanging on a wall. An activity guide is also included.
**Soccerlingua**

Soccerlingua is a multi-media programme developed to promote and teach foreign languages through the theme of football. With the Soccerlingua book and interactive DVD you can learn four languages, English, Spanish, Italian and German. The Soccerlingua project is co-funded by the LINGUA programme of the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture. This programme funds projects to promote language learning and awareness of linguistic diversity in Europe. The concept of Soccerlingua is to show kids and teenagers that:

- Languages are fun
- Languages are for real life
- Famous footballers often speak several languages
- You can play football in another language
- Football can be an introduction to the culture of another country.
- You can make friends in foreign countries by talking about football.

**Baby Abuelita**

This unique line of plush dolls sing very special nursery rhymes that will warm your heart, recapture the memories of your childhood and teach a new generation the joys of Hispanic musical heritage. “Los Abuelitos” were designed to preserve Hispanic heritage for every generation. Abuelita Rosa and Abuelito Pancho are sweet, loveable, lullaby singing dolls who invite you to join them on a nostalgic journey as they sing “canciones de cuna”, the traditional Hispanic songs of early childhood. Baby Abuelita products are developing learning while preserving Hispanic cultural heritage. With Baby Abuelita, grandparents, parents and even older children will reminisce over the sounds and feelings of their younger days and a new generation of young children will have the opportunity to create memories of their own.

**Language Land** is a small family run business who specialises in stocking high quality educational language products. Their current range includes English, French and Spanish, they will soon be adding German, Italian and Portuguese!

Most of their products are aimed towards children but are equally suitable for adults. Language Land products will help you and your family learn a language in a fun way, whether it be your mother tongue or an additional language. [www.languageland.co.uk](http://www.languageland.co.uk)
As a Chinese-American living in Seoul for the last three years, the question I get asked most is “What are you doing here?” And the answer given, for the most part, is logistical, having to do with how we ended up here (work and financial arrangements, etc.). But the more interesting and telling question is not about how but about why; the underlying emotional and psychological motivations that enabled us to leave friendships, a nice house, and a familiar life for something different. Once you know the answer to this question, you can begin to understand what living here means to us.

The short answer is: my husband and I wanted our kids to spend some part of their lives living in Asia, near their grandparents. We wanted them to grow up speaking the language(s), feeling comfortable going back and forth between the different cultures, seeing that they were not weird (though I have doubts about the success of that last one: when a two-month-old child has already traveled to 5 countries, isn’t that weird?). I remember once leaving a dimsum restaurant in Michigan, seeing a little girl pulling her non-English speaking Grandma by the arm, saying loudly and petulantly, “You’re so stupid.” I didn’t want our kids to be like that, thinking that their grandparents were stupid and embarrassing just because they couldn’t speak English well or navigate the subtleties of American life. I wanted them to know their grandparents in a place where the grandparents were comfortable, surrounded by the friendships and the accumulated knowledge of a lifetime, not rendered dumb (in both senses) by the flat American landscape.

The longer answer is that my husband and I both have somewhat luminal and ambivalent relationships to Asia and our ancestral pasts. My husband is Korean and lived in Korea until he was 18, then moved with his brother to the U.S., attending two years of high school before going to college and grad school. So his childhood is rooted in Korea and his adult and professional life is in the U.S. By the time we moved here he was 36, so he had spent half his life in Korea and half in the U.S. But he hadn’t been an adult in Korea, so it was strange to be back and have to do adult things: open bank accounts, rent an apartment, and find a school for our son, in addition to learning how to speak the language as an adult speaks it (talking about business, etc.). Because of his long history here, people (including himself) expected him to fit right in; however, it wasn’t that easy. His long education and independent life in the U.S. had changed the way he thought about the world and he had to sort of reinvent and learn his Koreanness all over again.

Part of reconnecting with Korea has involved figuring out how to be a son again. Living apart from his parents, living in the U.S. (and marrying that American girl), and achieving a high level of education has created a huge gulf. At 18, most kids are just starting to become independent, and there is a period of time when both kid and parent have to adjust -- the kid has to learn to do things for himself and the parent has to learn to let go. During this period the rituals and language of the parent-child relationship change, adapting to the new status of the child. But my husband never really went through this with his parents, and they never got to see him act as the adult he is, so they keep treating him like a child, much to his anger and frustration. When we arrived, not knowing how to do basic adult things (opening a bank account here is completely different from in the States), they all fell back...
A Story of Origins

by Jennifer Lee

PHOTO: © iStockphoto.com/WizData
into the familiar positions of parent and child and it has been hard to reconfigure these dynamics. They try to give him advice based on their experiences (experiences of war, of back-stabbing, of scraping together a living in the face of extreme situations) situations which don’t apply to our lives. We are dismissive, thinking their knowledge of business doesn’t apply to the software industry. Their knowledge of parenting doesn’t apply to people who have enough to eat. Their knowledge of government doesn’t apply to real democracies. We patronize each other, dis-missing each other’s experience, worlds, and teachings, leading to mutual retrenchment and anger. (Though, after 3 years things have improved a bit.) As the oldest son, my husband worries about how he will take care of his parents as they get older. As a child you never really see your parents as adults. Returning to Korea now, he sees his father as a real, adult person for the first time: a man with a rich social life and a network of friends and habits. He feels suddenly, poignantly, the loss of his father, not only for all those years when they lived apart, but also for now.

I’m the child of Chinese immigrants who both came to the U.S. in their teens. My parents had intended to go back to Hong Kong after college and grad school, but in the wake of the Cultural Revolution and political instability in Asia, they decided to stay in the U.S., become citizens, have careers, and raise their children. They settled in the D.C. area and turned their eyes away from the East, giving themselves over to an American brand of living and success.

Even now, despite her belief that Asians are smarter and better workers than anyone, my mother has a deeply ingrained distaste for suspicion of Asia, and in particular China. For her, it’s unconditionally dirtier, unsanitary, more corrupt, and less efficient than the U.S. Whether that is true or not, her decision to turn away from the place where she grew up and make her way in the land of opportunity was not just a lifestyle decision but also a psychological one; she allies herself with the U.S. and the “American way,” not always believing that America is great but always believing that its better than Asia. She embraced the opportunities she found here and became successful in the emerging computer industry at a time when women and also Asians were still entering white collar jobs. She fought to open as many opportunities for her three children by raising us in English (so we wouldn’t have trouble adopting to school), sending us to summer programs and piano lessons and writing class and making us do workbooks while the other children were playing outside after school. Her gaze was always trained towards our bright futures, many doors open along a long lighted path, ready for us to take a step.

For my parents, as for many other immigrants, there was a formula for success: hard work, good education, and a significant amount of parental pushing and prodding equaled a good college, respectable career, and a better status in society. This, after all, was the American dream and the reason they came to the land of opportunity.

When I was young, I resented being in writing “camp” while others went swimming. My parents were silent about the past, never explaining their own cultural background, leaving me to fill in the blanks. Thus I understood them to be weird and embarrassing because they took off their shoes before entering the house, make rice and fish instead of mac and cheese, chewed loudly, and mispronounced words. I was caught between worlds physically as well. Somehow, through a joke of genetics or perhaps diet, I can pass for a non-Asian, leaving me sometimes in the awkward situation of hearing people disparage my family, not realizing I was one of them.

In my teenage and college years, I was critical and regretful of my parents’ decision to raise me in English, to so carelessly
My parents were well-educated and had good careers, but the divide is even stronger, I think, for the many Asian Americans whose parents worked in labor-intensive or lower status jobs to make a better life for their kids. They teach their kids that education and success in the professional world is the most important thing, not realizing or not fully appreciating how in doing so they elide their own experiences and status.

So for me, and I think for many Asian Americans, trying to get to know your parents’ past is a difficult, ambivalent project. People expect you to know things you don’t know, and you feel guilty and ashamed for not knowing them, and perhaps angry and false too. Not looking Chinese (I can’t tell you how many times people have asked me whether I’m French), I grew up enduring milkman jokes and doubting that I really am who I say I am. Getting to know my hubby’s culture and language was safer; I am not Korean so I felt free to stumble and fail and claim impunity. I needed to take the step of learning about Korea and Korean before feeling confident enough to take on China and Chinese. I am only reaching that point now, and I’m doing it without my parents.

Having grown up in a perpetual state of embarrassment over my parents’ idiosyncrasies, and thinking that their refusal to acknowledge the past or explain their differences was a mistake, I wanted (for myself as well as my kids) to have the opportunity to get to know Asia on my own terms. The world has changed, the Long Duck Dongs of the media are disappearing, and (I hope) being Asian in the U.S. is no longer to be exotic, or strangely sexualized, or associated with Laundromats and calculus. (Aside: one of the traumas of my young life was when the kid who lived across the street told me that the name for the female anatomy was “china.” I guess it does sound similar. I think I was maybe seven.) I wanted my kids to grow up armed with the knowledge and experience of being in China and Korea so that if nothing else, they would know what real places and people lay behind those terms.

In the immigrant success stories, the immigrants never return. They make it big in the land of opportunity, and they live happily ever after in the bright open spaces of America. In returning to Korea, my husband has thrown the dream back in his father’s face, and neither of them quite know what to make of it. Until now, the act of returning has been read as a failure: The West is the endpoint, not just a pit stop. My husband and I, for our own reasons, felt we needed to go back to and wrestle with our messy pasts, to confront them head on. But, watching the growing number of kirogi families and other education immigrants traveling this path from East to West, and also keeping an eye on our many unhappy Korean friends who went to the U.S. for college or grad school and have stayed for careers, I wonder how long this narrative will last, and what hold it will have on the next generation. I live here for now, but only I will determine my history’s teleology.
Dear Harriet and Grace,

Growing up in America, the USSR and France may have prepared me for living abroad later in life, but I never dreamed I'd have to contend with Flemish. The guttural g’s, guttural and rolling r’s, schizophrenic w’s (is it a v or a w?), and amazing breadth of vowels make it, to me, the most sensual of languages. Perhaps I wish to believe that people who can make sounds I can only approximate have the ability to experience that which I can only approximate, but Flemish is a feast for my ears. Unfortunately it’s a largely incomprehensible feast. French is much easier to follow, but it’s like listening to a brook instead of the ocean. Now that my 13 month-old Flemmican is beginning to acquire Flemish words, it’s a challenge for me to hear and model them properly. So far she has:

* Mama (Mama), Mamam (Oma), * klok (clock), * ess (fless- milk bottle), jas (jacket), daaida (bye), * koek (cookie), aai (stroke gently), oor (ear), aardbei (strawberry), * tut (pacifier), * baby, * nan (banaan- banana) * These are the basically the same word in English. She also has: shoes, juice, no-z (noisy), eyes, hat, Dada (all men), and Daddy (just hers).

My Belgian partner and I don’t have a set method. We both speak English to her. Only rarely will he speak Flemish to her although he consistently sings to her in Flemish. I read to her in (bad) Flemish and in English. I name things in both languages. We watch Flemish TV. When we’re out in public, she’s immersed in Flemish culture. Likely the saving grace is that she spends one day a week with her Flemish Oma, soaking it in. It’s disconcerting how she uses some words for many things. For example, hat not only means anything on your head-- from a hair band to a hat to spectacles-- it also means “yes.” (Unless she’s saying something I can’t make out.)

For example,
Kaia: “Koek!”
Mama: “Kaia, so you want a koek?”
Kaia: “Hat” and runs to cupboard.
Or
Mama: “Sleepy, Boo? Do you want to go to sleep?”
Kaia: “Hat” and she rests her head on my shoulder.

I’ve read in a psychology text that overgeneralization is a normal part of language acquisition, so that her stating (over and over and over) that spectacles and bowler hat are both “hats” is understandable. But is using “hat” for “yes” normal? Is this a sign that I should stop trying to speak Flemish to her?
Dear Methodless in Belgium,

From the psychological side of parenting I am hearing a couple of questions:
First: What is normal?! With all this input of languages, will my child learn the language development she needs? Yes, she will and yes, there may be some delays as she learns where to use which language, but it will all come together as she develops the cues of who is speaking which language when. With a first child parents are often concerned about language development as they compare their child with what books tell you and what you see in other children of like ages. There is tremendous variety in development the first 3 years of life, especially language development, even when everyone is speaking the same language. Bi-and trilingual children always have some early language issues.

Second: Cultural differences and culture make more impact on a couple/family after children are born. The literature on multiculturalism talks a lot about language and its importance as a connection to relatives and the culture of each parent. Most mixed cultural families find they have to put a great deal of energy into talking about HOW they as a couple want to raise their child with 2 (or more) languages. It works best if you make a conscious decision and plan (which will evolve as your family grows and evolves). All of us have emotional attachments to certain things (books, songs, etc.) from our own language and culture which we want to pass to our children. You and your partner have to be honest about what is important to each of you. To ignore this will invite big problems later on. There are some books listed on my web site under resources (www.harrietcannon.com).

Third- You have some comments about Flemish language and its difficulty. I don’t know how long you have been living in Belgium. One question you have is about the difficulty of the sounds which will improve as you live there longer, yet you may always have a heavy accent. The other question which I hear between the lines is feeling you may have been a very obvious foreigner without facility for the new language. Regarding the overgeneralization issue, it is likely that she will sort things out, but you can facilitate this by consistently providing the correct label without requiring her to correct her utterance (ex. Are you sleepy? “hat” as she rests her head on your shoulder...Yes (child’s name) is sleepy. I hope this provides some guidance.

Feel free to forward more questions as they arise.

Sincerely,
Grace

Dear Methodless in Belgium,

First I recommend you start by reading an article I wrote about bilingual development for the Bilingual/Bicultural Family Network: www.biculturalfamily.org/may06/achildsjourney.html. I think that it addresses many of issues you are dealing with in your decision to raise a bilingual child.

It seems to me that there are two points that are most relevant to your situation.

1. When you speak to your child, you not only provide a language model for her, but you impart and affect values which come from your heart. So it is most important to speak in the language that comes naturally, the language in which you are most proficient.
2. Since Flemish is the language of the majority (e.g. community, school, etc) and English is not spoken widely, she will need lots of English exposure to acquire it and continue its development (e.g. home use, community activities, bilingual school program, etc). You do not mention your partner’s language dominance, but assuming it is Flemish, he/she should use it when addressing your child and encourage Flemish responses by providing a model if she responds in English.

Regarding the overgeneralization issue, it is likely that she will sort things out, but you can facilitate this by consistently providing the correct label without requiring her to correct her utterance (ex. Are you sleepy? “hat” as she rests her head on your shoulder...Yes (child’s name) is sleepy. I hope this provides some guidance.

Feel free to forward more questions as they arise.

Sincerely,
Grace
Dear Harriet,

My name is Kristina, I’m 25 years old and I live in Germany. My father is German (he is fluent in English). My mother is English. Since I was born until we went to kindergarten my Mum spoke English with me and my sister, and my Dad spoke German with us. Then we probably realized that all the other children only spoke German, so we stopped speaking English completely (except when we visited our relatives in England or they visited us.) My Mum still spoke English with me and my sister at the time, but we both answered in German. And this is how it still is now.

My English isn’t as good as it used to be. I have hardly been to England. And our relatives don’t visit us very often. One Aunt comes about once a year. And even then it’s hard for me to speak English with my Mum. So I don’t get to speak English very often. I read English books and I can handle the writing quite well.

I’m engaged and want to marry next year. We would like to have children and I want them to learn English right from the start. It will probably not be done with only my Mum speaking English with them. So in the last couple of weeks I started to think all this over. If I really want my children to grow up bilingual (and I really do!), then I also have got to start doing something for it! Now!

So here is my “problem”:

I would really love to speak English with my Mum again, but it would cost me quite an effort to do it. It’s embarrassing for me, because I feel so weird about it. I think the way I talk sounds funny. It would be as if my Mum would suddenly speak German with me. (She speaks a very good German; mostly you don’t hear her accent). When I know that English people can also speak German, then I prefer German, just to feel safer. My Mum always says that my English is still very good, but I know it’s not that good anymore. Because of the “school English” I had (which was more American than British English) my pronunciation of some (even simple) words is just not how it should sound. And I’m not as fluent in it anymore. I think too much before speaking. I’m sure my English would get better after a couple of weeks or months if I started speaking with my Mum, but it’s just so embarrassing for me. I would be glad if you could give me some tips how I could handle this.

Sunny greetings from Frankfurt,
Kristina

P.S. If readers of Multilingual Living Magazine would like to contact me with suggestions, tips or just to share their thoughts and own situations, my email address is: tinaboss@web.de.
Dear Kristina,

You have a question which is quite common for bicultural adults in their 20’s who want to gain or regain fluency with their second language and heritage.

You speak fondly about being bilingual as a child and moving between the two language worlds. It sounds like your experience was the usual one; as you got into school and realized your peers all spoke German, you pulled away from the English language and it atrophied. At the age of 6-7 years there is a psychological development stage which Eric Erickson (a Danish/American psychologist) named “industry verses inferiority”. At this time in a child’s life, the child strives to master skills, and be accepted by the peer group. It is the time of clubs, beginning sports teams and being accepted by the larger peer group. Children at this stage of development are very intolerant of anyone who is different. Children at this age want to blend in. This is the developmental stage that is most difficult for parents to keep their children’s non-dominant language fluent. Most parents end up going with the flow and tolerate the children speaking in the dominant language. The good news is, most young adults get very interested in their heritage and language as you are doing.

As you prepare for your marriage and future children, it sounds like you are committed to gaining an adult level fluency in English. It will be a real gift to you and your future children to be able to connect with your “English” heritage. Congratulations on your commitment.

One of the things that may give you courage to talk more directly with your Mum about increasing your English facility is to ask her to tell you (in German if you prefer) about her own experience coming to live in Germany and what it was like to be a foreigner and not perfectly fluent in German when she was young. When did she feel misunderstood, embarrassed, treated with prejudice for having poor grammar? Does she have suggestions about how the two of you can have fun improving your English? Questions like this will help your Mum be more empathetic, and you be more comfortable in trying more English with your Mum.

Another thing which might make you more comfortable with your Mum would be to find some other places to practice speaking English. I don’t know what the resources are in your area but some of the usual resources are International Women’s organizations, International Student Clubs, Trading German conversation lessons for English ones with expatriates, taking a month or two immersion vacation or working vacation in an English speaking country-maybe living with one of your relatives in England.

Last but very important, is the issue of personal power and language fluency. My guess is when speaking German, you and your Mum can talk about anything deeply and you can express yourself as an intelligent adult. Moving to a second language in which you are not fluent, you become more child-like, less powerful, in the relationship. It can be upsetting, even humiliating to be unable to express yourself and feel understood as you are in German. This loss of power is the main reason why people most who immigrate at a later age prefer to speak in their native tongue and usually never gain the fluency that those under 35 achieve. It is just too painful to take the learning curve transition. You may be feeling this pain too when you are speaking with Mum in English. Go back to your Mum’s immigration stories and remember your sense of humor.

I hope that this response is helpful. I wish you the very best in finding just the right path to establish the English fluency and cultural connection for your life.

Best Regards,
Harriet
www.harrietcannon.com

Meet our Experts...

Harriet Cannon, M.C. is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Consultant with over 20 years experience specializing in working with clients in life transitions; career, international relocation, bicultural and multicultural relationships and family issues. Ms Cannon has lived and worked in the United States and internationally for both the American Foreign Service and Puente Bretagna, a Chilean group of psychologists and Psychiatrists. Currently Harriet Cannon has her counseling and consulting office in Seattle, Washington. She consults throughout the Puget Sound to groups, international organizations and businesses. Most recently Ms Cannon was invited to present her research on the life stories of multicultural mothers and daughters at the International Family Therapy Conference in Washington DC in June 2005. For more information visit her web site at www.harrietcannon.com. If you have a question for Harriet, send it to her at: harriet@harrietcannon.com.

Grace M. Libardo Alvarez is a speech-language pathologist who specializes in working with children and families who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Her interest in this area stems from her own upbringing. She and her family emigrated from Argentina when Grace was five years old. The primary language of her home was Spanish, but she was immersed in other languages as well, including Italian, her father’s first language.

For the past eleven years she has been helping children and their families deal with the very difficult task of distinguishing between language disorders and language differences. She works as a bilingual speech-language pathologist in many capacities: as a therapist in schools and private practice, a consultant for a bilingual school, and providing in-services to schools and professional organizations.

Please send your questions to Grace at: grace@bicultralfamily.org!
“Come on, Bailey, let’s go,” I said waving good bye to his day care mates and the teachers.

“Mommy, no English, please. My ears hurt,” came Bailey’s reply like a thousand needles right to my heart.

I can understand how he feels. He wants to fit in. He wants to have friends. He wants to play and have fun. These are all great, wonderful things. I just don’t want him to forget the “English side” of him too.

When he first started going to daycare, one of the teachers pulled me aside and said, “Do you always speak English to Bailey?”

“Yes, I guess so,” was my reply.

“That’s not really a good idea,” she shook her head, “He needs Japanese more than English.”

At that exact moment it occurred to me that cultural sensitivity wasn’t part of her training. It made me mad to hear, but more than that it made me sad. As the saying in Japan goes, “the nail that sticks up gets hammered down.”

It is hard to maintain your own cultural identity when you live in a foreign country. As hard as I try to pass on traditions like trick or treating, Easter egg hunts, the real meaning of Christmas, it all just seems to get swallowed up and mutated to the Japanese way. This is something I have never gotten used to.

I have never gotten used to the idea of Christmas being solely about presents. I have never gotten used to the idea of such a strong group mentality. I have never gotten used to being criticized for doing it the “American way”.

I am sad but I am soldiering on with plans for a Halloween party for Bailey’s day care- the “American way” with bobbing for apples and treat bags and costumes. Hopefully, someday English won’t hurt Bailey’s ears as much and he will be proud of the fact that he is unique. Someday my caterpillar will emerge from his cocoon a beautiful, multicolored butterfly.

Bailey’s mother, Trisha Yonekura, is an American married to a Japanese. She and her family live in Japan. You can learn more about her and her family at: baileyandsophie.blogspot.com
If you’re a bi-cultural family living in a non-English-speaking country, the natural choice is to send your child to what is known as a bi-lingual school, where the main language of instruction is English, and the national language is the second language. This is our situation here in the Dominican Republic, where along with many local, bi-cultural and expatriate families, we decided to send our son to one such bi-lingual school.

The thing is, sometimes I worry about the standard of English that is being taught in these schools.

On the one hand, I can imagine how nerve-wracking it must be for local teachers, for whom English is a second language, to have to “perform” in front of children and parents whose first language is English. (Most of the teachers are local. There are some native English speakers, but the low salaries mean that these are in the minority, or concentrated in the top schools that pay relatively well.)

On the other hand, when teachers send us notes in English, I have to keep my inner grammar cop well in check, because I think it would not go down well if I were to correct the mistakes. Tempting as it might be to take a red pen to a teacher’s work, I have the feeling it might not do our relationship any favours.

Should 100% grammatical accuracy be that much of an issue when you’re dealing with six-year-olds? At secondary school level the student will get penalised for these sorts of mistakes, but is it really a problem at the age of six? Or is it important to avoid getting into bad habits - like my son’s Spanish-influenced sentence structure in English (e.g. “the brother of Fernando”; “How are you called?”) from an early age?

Up till this year, my son’s teachers have spoken reasonably good English, although with fairly pronounced Dominican accents, and their written English has not been that good. The present teacher speaks fluently and writes correctly, judging by what I’ve seen and heard so far, but has a particularly strong accent.

If my son had been in the 2nd grade class that did the 9/11 project that was displayed in the school corridor last month, I might have felt the need to say something. The teacher had got them to draw pictures of the World Trade Center being hit by planes and burning (something I wasn’t entirely sure was appropriate for seven-year olds, but that’s another issue altogether).

They’d clearly also had a brainstorm on the topic of how to prevent violence, and every child had listed the same ideas on their drawing: no guns, be nice to each other, love, peace, etc. Fair enough, I suppose.

One item on their lists, though, read: “no discuss”. Grammar aside, what was that supposed to mean? The teacher had confused the English word “discussion” (meaning debate, dialogue or conversation) with its Spanish false cognate “discusión” meaning argument. Shouldn’t she have known that “discussion” has positive connotations, whereas “discusión” implies conflict and confrontation? Quite a big difference, especially in the context it was being used, because dialogue is one of the things that helps prevent violence.

Ilana Benady is a freelance writer and international development worker living in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic. Originally from Gibraltar, she is married to Dominican photographer Pedro Guzmán. Their son Lucas (6) is, as far as they know, the only Gibraltarian-Dominican in captivity. Ilana can be found blogging on: www.dr1.com/blogs/?u=Chiri
Author's son in front of school and with classmates (photo left)
Dyslexia is definitely not caused by bilingualism. There is no evidence that links dyslexia with being brought up as a bilingual or that ownership (e.g. from birth) of two or more spoken languages exacerbates dyslexia. This is the case irrespective of whether the child has mild, moderate or severe dyslexia. Wherever the child is placed on the continuum from mild to very severe dyslexia, understanding and speaking two or more languages does not trigger dyslexia.

Nevertheless, a dyslexic’s problems will mean decisions about what language should be used to begin to learn to read and write. In one language or two? In the school language or a home language? In a majority language like English or in the minority language? In answering these questions (see below), it should be borne in mind that dyslexics have varied types and degrees of problems that will affect learning to read and write to a different extent.

First, parents of a dyslexic child are sometimes advised to concentrate on the child’s school language particularly in learning to read and write. Sometimes (e.g. in Wales) the advice is to acquire literacy through a phonically consistent language (such as Welsh) rather than English (which is irregular and phonically inconsistent). For a dyslexic child, learning to read via a consistent phonetic language has advantages in ease and speed of learning.

An example is a language where the same letter or combination of letters always makes the same sound (e.g. Italian). The dyslexic child learns the ‘sound rule’ quicker than a language (e.g. English) that is irregular. In English, one letter can be pronounced in different ways (e.g. ‘a’ in cave and have; ‘e’ in her and here; ‘i’ in pint and mint). In English, a group of letters may change seemingly arbitrarily in their sound (e.g. ‘ough’ in tough, through, bough). For dyslexics, English is a particularly complex and more difficult language to learn to read and write. This means that, where a child speaks two languages of which one is phonically inconsistent, if other things are reasonably equal, the better ‘first language for learning to read’ will be the phonically consistent one.

Second, if the only school language is English (or another irregular language), then it is usually sensible to concentrate on English reading and writing. If reading and writing in school is solely through English, then to ensure linguistic and intellectual development, English literacy must be stimulated. Reading is crucial for learning and study at school so the literacy of the school will be a major influence on the ‘first language for learning to read’.
Third, once a child has achieved reasonable literacy skills in one language there are two effects. (a) The child has gained confidence in reading. For a dyslexic, such confidence is important for success to breed an expectation of more success (e.g. learning to read in a second language). When there is repeated failure in learning to read, it becomes disheartening for the child and increases the literacy problem. (b) Having acquired some skills in reading and writing on one language, there will be a transfer of skills into the second language: recognizing that letters mean sounds, decoding words as parts and wholes, making sensible guesses at words, understanding the meaning of a word in a sentence from the whole sentence, and that there are clues about words from previous sentences and pictures.

This means that a dyslexic child should not be banned from becoming biliterate. It implies that, once there is a solid foundation of reading and writing in one language, the other language can be introduced particularly when there is sufficient self-interest, self-confidence and educational support. Often, the dyslexic child itself triggers an interest in acquiring second language literacy.

Fourth, should a dyslexic learn to read in two languages simultaneously in the initial stages? The answer is typically "no". For a dyslexic, learning literacy skills in one language is often slow and very difficult. Being taught two different systems at the same time from the outset will usually compound difficulties in acquiring the skills to read each language, developing at a fast enough rate to support curriculum learning, and developing confidence as a competent reader and writer.

However, if the environment is biliterate (e.g. with street signs and packaging in two languages), many inquisitive children will want to engage with both languages when they see them. Helping them to remember key words visually without necessarily learning the whole phonic system in the more complex language in the early stages may be satisfying for them, can be fun, and may lay the basis for later development of a broader range of reading and writing skills including biliteracy.

© Colin R. Baker.

Colin Baker, one of the most prolific writers on Bilingualism and Bilingual Education, is a professor at the University of Wales, Bangor. Among his most popular publications is the book A Parents’ and Teachers’ Guide to Bilingualism by Multilingual Matters (2nd ed., 2000). His Foundation of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism (2001, 2006) is the most widely read text on theory and research on bilingualism. Colin Baker is also the founder and editor of the International Journal of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education. His Encyclopedia of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education (1998) won the British Association for Applied Linguistics Book Prize Award for 1999.
Bi-Cultural Parenting:
Two Culture Homes
By Geraldine Mac Donald-Morán

Family traditions and conflicts of interest...
How do multicultural families in our “global village” make it all work?
Whether living in your native country or abroad, the unison of partners from dissimilar cultural backgrounds poses a challenge to raising children in a bi-cultural home environment. More frequently we are seeing the combination of traditions, ethnicities and customs in this global village: It is no longer taboo for one to unite with another of different race or background as our societies become less conservative and our communities a unique and plentiful blend of ideologies. But family traditions are difficult to alter, especially when personally important; and since parents are generally inclined to pass on inherited customs to their offspring, there may be conflict of interest with their partner’s beliefs or customs. Christmas for example, and its relationship to all things Christian, is one particular season of celebration when traditions may clash. These festive times, in general, can be the most obvious periods of conflict for some international families. While the daily, intimate show of beliefs and habits can be temporarily dwarfed in comparison to the mighty display of tradition during seasonal episodes in our culture; it is the familiar practice of customs at home, that create a balance between how traditions were cultivated in our lives, what we wish to share with our children, and what our children will pass on to future generations. You don’t necessarily have to be from different cultural backgrounds to experience discord and so fostering an agreeable parenting atmosphere is truly a universal, magnanimous challenge. In our experience, here are a few important aspects to consider when raising children in your ‘bi-cultural’ home. Some are highly specific to the particular cultures and persons involved (in my family’s circumstances, we have matriarchal Canadian and patriarchal Mexican backgrounds to consider). What are your backgrounds to consider? Do you celebrate Religious festivities and what are your personal views about this topic? How do you integrate your spiritual belief systems? What is expected of you as a parent, according to your gender, at home or in society? What language will you speak? What foods will you place on your family table? What conduct is considered polite, impolite or offensive in your cultures? What sort of behavior will be expected of your children individually, in groups, and according to their gender? How do they expect them to dress? What sports would you encourage them to play, if any? Will they share the table with you or is it customary for children to be segregated to another room and be attended to by hired help? What family celebrations can you revise or live without? How do you combine inherent attitudes from one culture that stray far from the norm in the other? If you have singular ideas about the importance of child rearing, how can you merge those ideas with those of your partner? How do you prevent yourself from spontaneous judgment about the ways in which your partner wishes to raise his or her children? Can you co-operate, no matter which society you choose or are circumstantially required to live in? The process of falling in love is often not conducive towards the resolution of issues such as these: Many of us have discovered in the years succeeding the wedding, or unification, that the challenges are demanding but the rewards great. Children, who are raised in bi-cultural home environments, unequivocally, have advantages that provide them with broad-spectrum, life experiences. They are often presented with the advantage of dual language learning: unique family customs, interesting and varied traditions, and the exposure to bi-cultural stimuli that goes beyond common, no matter where they live. Unfortunately, there may also be high parental expectations, when inevitably each parent anticipates their children to act, think or behave in socially acceptable ways: ways that they learned as children in their respective societies. If we, as parents in bi-cultural homes, can be open and accepting by the blending of our two cultures into a nuclear unit, we can offer our children the better of two worlds; the results of which, can be harmonious for the family at home and the greater community beyond. The implications of accepting our partner’s set of individual beliefs, values, customs or traditions are overwhelming at times (perhaps depending on the amount of differences we perceive or encounter between the two backgrounds). Sharing ideas and beliefs may not be enough but compromising on them is a real solution. Plan for the dissolution of individual or historical traditions and make room for the combination of new experiences. Bring Religious festivities together and embrace the belief systems that formulate each. Celebrate multi-cultural holidays and be open to other, foreign ways. Keep a sense of humour yet maintain a sense of cultural self-identity in order to pass on your heritage to your children, in what is to become their compound way of life. It is a wonderful day when the languages, traditions and customs you treasure, flower in the mouths and hearts of the children you cherish but the cumulative effect of a harmonious, bi-cultural home environment is even more spectacular on a day to day basis. Culture, after all, is to be shared and enjoyed in celebration!

© Geraldine Mac Donald-Moran

Gerry Mac Donald- Morán, who divides her time living between Canada and Mexico, is a graduate of Queen’s University at Kingston Ontario with a Bachelor of Nursing Science degree and the mother of four young children. She currently works internationally as a medical research (Spanish-English) translator, style-corrector, and editor and is developing scholarly, two-way-immersion and multi-lingual curriculum design for an independent, alternative educational program. Her two recently published ‘English as a second language’ textbooks for nurses have sold worldwide (www.lynxpublishing.com) and she is presently editing two children’s stories, in Spanish and English versions, for future publication. Make sure to visit her monthly column which is intended to preserve, protect, and promote the Canadian culture abroad: www.canadianculture.com. Send comments to Gerry: gerry@canadianculture.com. www.canadianculture.com/canadianabroad/
“I don’t think I can handle it this year,” sighed Maria, a mother of two in Spain married to a Frenchman. “When his mother arrives, she completely takes over and doesn’t even think about how I feel!” Maria’s mother-in-law is on her way to visit for another holiday, bringing with her traditional French foods, decorations, music and more. Although Maria is delighted that her mother-in-law goes out of her way to share French culture and traditions with her grandchildren, Maria is feeling overwhelmed and is becoming irritated at the lack of balance between her Spanish culture and her husband’s French culture. “I know that I should be happy to have such an involved mother-in-law since this is such a great opportunity for the children to be exposed to French traditions, language and culture. But since she always comes during the major holidays, I feel like I am not getting the opportunity to share certain rituals which are important to me.” What complicates matters is that Maria is not comfortable discussing her feelings directly with her mother-in-law and when she brings up the subject with her husband, he prefers to not discuss the issue so as to avoid confrontation. Maria is left feeling caught in a difficult situation and with no options for how to resolve the situation. This is a very common scenario for families raising multilingual and multicultural children and holidays have a way of bringing out our strongest feelings. If left unaddressed, these feelings can lead to resentments which,
over time, can develop into a deep-rooted bitterness in the family. An added element to the situation is that early on in our multicultural relationship, we may have been willing to simply just “go with the flow” of the holidays and let extended family make most of the important decisions. But once our children arrived, we started to feel a strong need to pass on our own childhood traditions. When we start to insist that things be done certain ways our extended family members may feel offended or concerned with this change. In Maria’s case, she has taken the first step toward recognizing why she is feeling frustrated. Her next step will be to come up with a plan of action to find a constructive way to work through her frustrations with her mother-in-law. It will most likely take a while for Maria and her family to find a balance which works for them but in the end it will be worth it for Maria, her children, her relationship with her husband and all of her extended family members, including her mother-in-law. Ultimately it comes down to finding constructive ways to communicate with one another.

What follows are ten tips on helping you to communicate better during the holidays and throughout the year:

Feeling Left Out.
Understand that some family members may feel a little left out. They may perceive that their traditions are being discarded for those of the “other” culture and are no longer important. Since you and your spouse are probably already feeling overburdened with working out the details of combining your traditions, you probably are not asking your extended family members their opinions. Remind them that they are important and that you just need time to figure things out.

Your Best At Heart.
Remember that no matter what your family members say, they still care very deeply about you and your family. They cherish their relationship with you and their comments sound much harsher than they are. They most likely are feeling hurt and wish they could find a way to communicate with you to tell you exactly how they are feeling but are afraid of your reactions to what they might say.

Speak Up.
Take time to sit together with your family members to discuss tensions rather than simply assuming that they understand what you are feeling through your silence. Set ground rules even though it might feel artificial and silly. For example, agree to try the following when you discuss key issues: When one person says something, the other pauses to respond honestly with, “I acknowledge what you said,” before continuing with the discussion. Often we simply want to know that we were heard, aside from trying to solve anything. Acknowledging the words and feelings of the other person is essential for moving forward.

First person discussion.
When you discuss your feelings with your family members, try to focus as much as possible on “I feel” sentences rather than “You are” sentences. It is easier to accept what someone is saying when they say, “I feel that you are not doing your best to make our holiday pleasant,” rather than “You are not doing your best to make our holiday pleasant.”

Everyone’s views count.
Make sure to give your family members time to respond to your statements and keep an open mind when they share their thoughts with you. Your family members most likely view things differently from you and feel that their views are just as important and valid as yours.

Complete Commitment.
If you want to make your relationship with your family members work, you need to be fully committed for what may be a long haul, even if your family members appear to be against it at first. Think about all of the reasons why it is important to have a good relationship with your family members. Write down these reasons and keep them close to you when the holiday season starts to creep up. Ultimately, you only have control over your own feelings and reactions so focus on those to help establish a healthy holiday season and to hopefully find a good relationship with your family members again. Besides, not letting yourself blow up or overreact sets an excellent example!

Spouse Involvement.
Remember that your spouse has his or her own family relationships and needs to deal with them as well, perhaps on his or her own terms. Share these tips with your spouse to encourage him or her to help create better communication channels with the entire family!

Patience.
Things take time so do not expect your relationship with family to change overnight. Everyone needs time to get used to the idea that change for the better needs to happen and that hard work and commitment are needed from all sides. Talk with your spouse about how to best approach family members so that they will be least likely to overreact.

Pick your battles.
Focus first on the big issues that are frustrating you the most. Try to keep yourself from throwing in all issues all at once. You may need to write out a list ahead of time and think about the issues that are really bothering you. If possible, try to find ways to explain these issues in ways that are concrete and clear. It is more difficult to solve an abstract issue than it is to focus on ones that can clearly be identified and a solution found.

Two-way street.
Communication is a two-way street. Make sure your family members have the chance to share their feelings and insecurities as well. This isn’t about getting your way or making others change. This is about finding compromises and solutions that will really work for you and your extended family.

Have additional tips for communicating with family during the holidays? Have stories about how you worked through a difficult time with family members? Share them with us and we will publish them in the next issue of Multilingual Living Magazine! Send your tips, stories, and suggestions to: editor@bicultralfamily.org!
Need A PERFECT gift for Rapunzel

From the highly reputable publisher, Océano, this time-honored story is rendered here in both book and interactive software formats. The book’s attractively illustrations and thrilling storyline, together with the disk’s music, combine to fascinate the smallest children. Older ones too will enjoy reading this evergreen story for themselves and using the interactive CD-ROM with their PC to see the animated scenes and participate in four entertaining activities. The CD may also be used as an audio disk, enabling parent and child to listen and read at the same time. Many other Océano titles are available, covering stories loved by generations of children. Others have newly-released titles.

Hardcover book. Spanish only. Suitable for children of 3 and up. Only $13.50*

La Navidad/ Christmas

What do Santa’s Claus’s beard, a baby elephant’s skin or the metal parts of a fire-engine feel like? In this series, Toca y Aprende, your child will discover these different textures. Using one of DK’s most popular formats to bring the Spanish language to children, this multifaceted approach to learning is not only an effective way to broaden vocabulary and verbal dexterity, to develop language and motor-skills -- it’s also lots of fun! The photographs, too, are a total delight.

Board Book. Bilingual. Suitable for kids from 6 months to 2 years. Only $6.99*

La Grecia Antigua/ Ancient Greece

Favorite Eyewitness titles are now available as the Guías Visuales Series in Spanish-language editions for American readers from the world-renowned publishers, DK and Penguin. Each book has been expertly translated with U.S. Spanish speakers in mind, offering native speakers and language students alike the opportunity to experience the truly unique resource that is Eyewitness. Subjects range from History (the Aztecs, Incas and Mayas) to Nature (Birds, Sharks, Reptiles, etc.) and miscellaneous subjects such as Pirates. The illustrations are stunning and each volume is an encyclopedia in itself.

Hardcover book. Spanish only. Suitable for older children. Only $15.99*

Come browse our site with its rich selection of educational books, audiobooks, videos, software and toys available in Spanish or bilingual Spanish and English: www.WeLoveSpanish.com.
Animales a tu alrededor / Neighbourhood Animals

Baby Einstein: Animales a tu alrededor introduces children to familiar animals in and around the home through beautiful full-color photography and simple identifying questions (“Is that a ladybug on a leaf?”). Then three simple fun facts about the animal explain how they live or unveil a mystery about them (“A rabbit’s long ears help it hear the smallest sounds.”). Big bold lettering helps older kids begin to pick out letters. From the youngest baby to a curious four-year-old, there’s something new to discover and learn in this bright Spanish-language book that also includes a dog, cat, bird, mouse, duck, and frog.

Board Book. Bilingual. Suitable for children from one month to 4 years. Only $5.95*

Los Dinosauros/The Dinosaurs.

Only Larousse could create mini encyclopedias with such informative texts and loving explanations. The series is called Mi Pequeña Enciclopedia. The book about dinosaurs lists the different species, narrates how they lived, what they ate, their sizes and shapes, and how they became extinct. One visitor to our website gave the book on firefighters a 5-star ranking and wrote “What a great book! The illustrations are beautiful and quite detailed and the book is filled with interesting facts about firefighters, their job responsibilities, their equipment and tools, their vehicles, etc. I think it’s ... a great way for them to learn many new vocabulary words in context.”

Paperback. Spanish only. Suitable for children from 3 to 6. Only $3.95*

Elmo y su juego de adivinar los colores/Elmo’s guessing game about colors.

Of all the books we offer that are designed to teach children basic concepts, this is one of the most outstanding. The young reader is invited to play a guessing game with this loveable character. Each double-page spread deals with a different color and the entire exercise is just so much fun.

Board Book. Bilingual. Suitable for children from 6 months to 3 years. Only $6.95*

Niños Como Yo/Children Like Me

Published in collaboration with UNICEF. A unique photographic celebration of children around the world. Through exceptional, colorful pictures and children’s own words, readers learn about the dreams and beliefs, hopes and fears and day-to-day events in the lives of children across the globe.

Hardcover. Spanish only. Suitable for young readers between the ages of 7 and 15. Only $19.99*

*Add $2.39 for shipping within the USA to the prices listed above. Free shipping for orders of $60 and up within the United States. Shipping conditions outside the USA appear on the website: www.WeLoveSpanish.com.
Fill your holiday season with Spanish!

More favorites from...

**Tesor de libros de calcomanías Disney/Disney’s Treasury of Stickers.**

One of a Disney series of sticker books, this activity book is enormously popular with children. The graphics live up to Disney’s highest standards and many well-known characters, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, and Cinderella, provide an extra attraction for the child. Each book contains 350 stickers and ensures many hours of independent activity to capture the child’s attention. These books encourage interactive learning, and the princess theme is especially appealing to young girls. Paperback. Spanish only (but with sticking tasks that require no explanations). Suitable for children from 3 upwards. Only $14.99*

**Mi increíble cuerpo humano/My Amazing Human Body.**

The subject of the Human Body is available at We Love Spanish in different formats and for different age groups. This item is one of DK’s brilliant interactive CD-ROMS. Amongst the subjects covered by this program are the bodily systems, human reproduction and the body’s defense mechanisms. Spanish only. Suitable for children from 6 to 10. Only $19.99*

**Estación interactiva bilingüe de descubrimiento/Interactive Bilingual Discovery Station.**

This truly amazing bilingual laptop station is an innovative and enjoyable way to get your child excited about learning. Includes 144 learning games in 9 categories such as language, math and music that can be played in both English and Spanish. All contents have been based on scholastic fundamental programs for children between the ages of 4 and 6 years old.

- Flat-screen laptop with wireless keyboard and digital piano keyboard
- 144 different learning games in both English and Spanish
- 9 different learning areas teach language, math, music and more
- Real interactive talking feature speaks the instructions

Educational Electronic Toy. Bilingual. Suitable for children of 5 years and up. Only $59.99*

*Add $2.39 for shipping within the USA to the prices listed above.
Free shipping for orders of $60 and up within the United States.
Shipping conditions outside the USA appear on the website www.WeLoveSpanish.com
El Tractor/Tractor Book

Tractors, trailers, and harvesters fill the pages of this special shaped board book - perfect for little hands to hold. Simple sentences about tractors and diggers help introduce Baby to first words in Spanish and English. Other titles from the Cosas que marchan series include fire engines, diggers and dumpers. Board Book. Bilingual. Suitable for children from 6 months to 3 years. Only $3.99*

Musical Spanish

The Complete Musical Spanish - the original book and music CD/CD-ROM, and the Lessons for the Road audio CD set plus the bonus Spanish Tutorial & Verbs Learning CD-ROM. Over 50 grammar lessons; Interactive puzzles & quizzes; Great pronunciation tools & karaoke; Travel phrases & teacher’s guide; Students love it! Book, CD, & CD-ROM. Explanations in English. Suitable for children of 10 and up. Only $49.99

Disney Princesses - Música en Casa/ Disney Princess - home music.

This enchanting storybook features beloved Disney princesses and includes a music player and 4 mini-discs with music from the films. Ariel, Belle, Aurora, and Cinderella star in brand new stories based on four of Disney’s most popular princess movies - The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella. Each princess has her own CD that includes her special song and a selection of classical favorites. Prompts in the book indicate when to play each song. Illustrations on the disks make it easy for little listeners to select the proper CD. Also in this home entertainment series: Winnie the Pooh. Disc Player, Discs & Hardcover Storybook. Spanish only. Suitable for children 3 years and up. Only $23.99*

From Dora the Explorer to the History Channel - a wide range of DVDs with English and Spanish soundtracks.

In “Dora - Navidad”, Nickelodeon’s bilingual heroine celebrates the holiday season with this spirited collection. Dora and her friend Boots the monkey climb over the snowy mountains and across the icy river to the North Pole. Dora’s got a present for Santa....

We Love Spanish

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Festivals of Light

Around the World

adapted from classroom lesson by Judie Haynes
(www.everythingESL.com)

Looking for ways to teach your children about the winter traditions of cultures around the world? Start with this lesson about festivals of light! Included are stories, activities, history and a whole lot more! To have even more fun with these activities, invite other families with children to participate!
The diversity of our multilingual and multicultural families provides a starting point for children to begin to understand and value the many distinct cultures of the world. What better way to do that than to share with them a lesson on winter light festivals from around the world. Teach your children about the cultural traditions in France, Sweden, Thailand, Philippines, India, Egypt, Holland, and Mexico. When you set aside time to focus on world cultures and languages with your children, you establish a sense of cultural connection. This helps to develop positive self-esteem in your culturally and linguistically diverse children. Introduce this lesson by having your children find out how to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year’s in different languages: www.santas.net/howmerrychristmasissaid.htm and www.merpy.com/newyear.

**Festival of Light: St. Lucia’s Day in Sweden**

According to folk tradition, December 13th follows the longest night of the year in Sweden. During the winter there are only a few hours of sunlight each day. St. Lucia is honored this day with her wreath of candles.

- The oldest girl in the family is declared St. Lucia on December 13th. On this day she dresses up wearing a white robe with a red sash and a wreath with candles on her head.
- The “St. Lucia” of the family serves everyone a special bun called Lussekatter.
- Schools have a celebration with a St. Lucia choir. All the girls dress up as St. Lucia and the boys are “Star Boys.”
- Have your children make a St. Lucia wreath by cutting a hole in the center of a paper plate so that a child’s head will fit in it. Cut out leaves from green construction paper and have your children glue them to the paper plate. Make 7 paper candles stand up around the inside rim of the plate.
- Have boys dress as Star Boys. Cut an 18 inch wand from cardboard. Cover it with construction paper. Make a white star on the end of it. To make the hat roll a piece of construction paper so that it has a point on the end and staple it in place.
- Have your children parade around your home, back yard or even the neighborhood!

**Traditions of light: Christmas in France**

The Christian tradition of light during the Christmas season is demonstrated by the Advent Candles which are lit each of four consecutive Sundays before Christmas Day. Additionally some families burn a yule log. This tradition goes back to pre-Christian celebrations during Winter Solstice.

- Explain to your children that French children put their shoes by the fireplace on Christmas Eve in hopes that “Pere Noel” (Santa Claus) will bring them some toys. They leave a snack and a glass of wine for Pere Noel and beet greens for the donkey that travels with him. Pere Noel is tall and thin. He has a long red robe trimmed with fur. Download the PDF Pere Noel picture: www.everythingsl.net/downloads/pere_noel.pdf.
- Pere Noel brings toys to children in a sack. As he comes, he calls out “tralala, tralala, bouli, bouli, boulah.”
- Families go to church at midnight on Christmas Eve. After church everyone eats a huge dinner called “Le Reveillon” www.everythingsl.net/downloads/french_reveillon.pdf. After this large dinner of goose, turkey, chicken, or beef; a fish dish, cheese, bread, wine, and fruit, many families serve a “Buche de Noel.” The Buche de Noel is a sponge cake decorated like a yule log. Some families burn a real log in the fireplace. Download the PDF Yule Log: www.everythingsl.net/downloads/buche_denoel.pdf.
- French families think that mistletoe is also lucky and hang it everywhere. Have your children write a wish for the New Year on an index card and attach it to the downloaded Mistletoe picture: www.everythingsl.net/downloads/mistletoe_france.pdf.
- Teach your children how to say “Joyeux Noel” (Merry Christmas) and “Bonne Annee” (Happy New Year) to each other: www.santas.net/howmerrychristmasissaid.htm and www.merpy.com/newyear. Happy Hanukkah is “Joyeux Hanukkah.”
- Teach your children to sing “Jingle Bells” in French. Here are the words:
  - Tintez Cloches, Tintez Cloches
  - Tintez dans la nuit
  - Pere Noel et ses grand daims
  - Arrivent toute de suite...ite

**Traditions of light: Hanukkah**

Hanukkah is the Jewish Festival of Lights celebrated in countries all over the world. In 165 B.C. there was a great battle between the Maccabees and the Syrians. The Jews won the battle and when they went to their temple, they found that the Syrians had allowed their sacred light to go out. They only had oil for one day. The miracle of Hanukkah is that the oil lasted 8 days until a messenger could return with more. There are nine candles in the menorah. One of these is used to light the other candles and the other eight stand for the eight days that the oil kept burning.

- Let your children play a game with a spinning top called a dreidl. This game can be played online at Torah Tots: www.torahtots.com/holidays/chanuka/dreidel.htm.
- Make special foods such as potato pancakes.
- On Hanukkah it is traditional for parents to give their children money or “gelt.” You can replicate this tradition by distributing small bags of chocolate “gelt” which is wrapped in foil to look like money.
- Have your children send Hanukkah cards at Primary Games.com: postcards.primarygames.com/hanukkah.htm..
Saint Martin once saw a beggar,
Who needed some food and some clothes
So he ripped his cape in two pieces
And eased some of the beggar’s woes.
Martin, Martin
He always helped those in need, in need
Martin, Martin
He was a saint, yes indeed!

Martin was a good and kind man. On a winter night he was returning home during a snowstorm. He was wearing a cloak. A homeless man appeared in the darkness. Martin felt sorry for the man and gave him half of his cloak. He is now called St Martin and is known for his kindness to strangers. That is why Saint Martin’s Day is celebrated in Holland.

- Make a paper lantern with your children, family and friends and walk through the neighborhood singing holiday songs. (Make sure to check out this month’s activity in Multilingual Living Magazine for directions on how to make a paper lantern.)

Festival of Light: LoxKrathong (loy-krathong) Festival in Thailand
This holiday is celebrated in Thailand in November each year. “Loy” means “to float” and a “Krathong” is a lotus-shaped vessel made of banana leaves. The Krathong usually contains a candle, three joss-sticks, some flowers and coins. The festival starts at night when there is a full moon in the sky. People carry their Krathongs to the nearby rivers. After lighting candles and making a wish, they place the Krathongs on the water and let them drift away. People are offering thanks to the Goddess of water.
It is believed that the Krathongs carry away bad luck. The wishes that people make for the new year will start. It is the time to be joyful and happy as the sufferings are floated away.
- Make a paper boat with your children to launch. Boats in Thailand have flowers and candles on them.
- Brainstorm with children what bad feelings or happenings they would like to put on the boat to send away. Explain how children in Thailand come to school dressed in special costumes on this day to launch their boats.
- Have students look at pictures of this festival on the internet. Go to Holidays of Thailand: sunsite.au.ac.th/thailand/special_event/loykratong/index.html.

Festival of Light: Diwali in India
Diwali, meaning “array of lights,” is a Hindu light festival. It symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness. It is one of the most important celebrations in India.
- Although it was originally a Hindu celebration, Diwali is now enjoyed by people of every religion in India. It is a family celebration which takes place in October or November and lasts for five days.
- This festival of lights celebrates the victory of good over evil and the glory of light. Commemorating Lord Rama’s return to his kingdom, Ayodhya, after completing a 14-year exile, people decorate their homes, light thousands of lamps and give out sweets. There are fireworks in the streets.
- Diwali is a time for fun and rejoicing. However, before the celebration begins there is a lot of preparation.
- The house must be thoroughly cleaned and windows opened in order to welcome the Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. People light up their homes using thousands of clay oil lamps to welcome the Goddess.
- During Diwali, Indians buy puffed rice to offer to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity. Have your children put one cup of puffed rice in small squares of plastic wrap. Tell them to hand the rice out to friends.
- New clothing is also purchased to be worn during the celebration.
- In India a design using rice flour is made on the floor in front of the family’s shrine. Have your children make their own Rangoli design. Use white chalk to draw a design on black construction paper. Have your children color in the design with colored chalk. You can find a pattern at Diwali: www.web-holidays.com/diwali/craft/c2.htm. Be sure to spray the finished designs with a fixative.

Festival of Light: Christmas in Egypt
Many Christians in Egypt belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church. Christmas is celebrated on January 6th and 7th. The churches have always been decorated with special lamps and candles. Copts also give candles to the poor. They represent the candles Joseph used to protect Mary when Jesus was born.
- On the night of the 6th, the Coptic Christians go to the church for mass and at midnight they eat dinner. On the morning of the 7th gifts are exchanged and people visit each other.
- There are four weeks of Advent during which a candle is lit each week. In Egypt, Advent lasts for forty-five days and people fast. They do not eat any meat, poultry or dairy products.
- Everyone buys new clothes to wear to the Christmas Eve church service.
- Before Christmas, Christian homes are decorated with lights, Christmas trees and small mangers.
- On Christmas morning people people visit friends and neighbors. They bring a gift of shortbread which is called “Kaik.”
Festival of Light: Christmas in the Philippines

The Philippines is the only country in Asia that is predominately Christian. This festival of light is marked by the sight of “parols” or star lanterns.

- Nine days before Christmas a special mass is celebrated where the story of the birth of Jesus in reenacted.
- Parols are displayed and fireworks heard over the next nine days.
- On Christmas Eve a procession is held and Mary and Joseph’s search of shelter is reenacted. Members of the procession carry “parols” to light their way.
- Paroles of all sizes can be found decorating the homes of people in the Philippines. There are contests to pick the most beautiful parols.
- Families may pass down their expertise in parol making from one generation to another.
- Strolling musicians play handmade banjos in the streets. This is an important feature in the celebration of Christmas in the Philippines.
- Have your children make their own lantern to decorate your home.

Festival of Light: Christmas in China

Christmas in China celebrate Christmas by lighting their houses with paper lanterns.

- They also decorate Christmas trees called “Trees of Light,” with paper chains, flowers, and lanterns.
- Chinese Children hang muslin stockings and await a visit from Santa Claus, whom they call “Dun Che Lao Ren” (dwyn-chuh-lau-oh-run) which means “Christmas Old Man.”
- Most Chinese people are not Christian so the main winter festival in China is the Chinese New Year which takes place toward the end of January. This is when children receive new clothing, eat fancy meals, get new toys, and enjoy fireworks.
- Discuss with your children what the main winter event is in your household and whether it matches with the main winter event of your community.

Festival of Light: Christmas in Mexico

During the nine days prior to Christmas, Mexican families march from house to house with candles looking for a room at the inn. They are replicating Joseph and Mary’s search in Jerusalem.

- Have your children discuss one of their own holiday customs which is different from the community.
- Point out Mexico on the map and ask questions about the location of Mexico such as “On which continent is Mexico? Is Mexico north, south, east or west of where you live? What language is spoken there?”
- Explain that most Mexicans are Catholic and celebrate Christmas. In Mexico Christmas holidays start on December 16th and last 9 nights. Each night families act out the journey that Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem. They knock at doors asking for shelter.
- Families gather together. They march around the house singing a special prayer and carrying candles. They pretend they are Mary and Joseph looking for a room in an inn. This procession is called the “posada.”
- Introduce the piñata to your children. Ask them if they have ever seen a piñata and what they remember about it. Explain that piñatas come from Mexico and are made of paper-mache. If you can not obtain a real piñata, have your children color a picture of one and write a few sentences about how it is used.
- Families go to midnight church services on Christmas Eve.
- On January 5th the children put out their shoes for a visit from the Three Wise Men who leave gifts.
- Have your children compare their holiday celebrations with Christmas in Mexico.

Other Festivals of Light

New Year’s Eve in Brazil

It is summer in Rio de Janeiro on December 31st. Although this isn’t strictly a New Year’s Eve celebration, people go to the beach at midnight and ask Iemanja, the African goddess of waters, to give them good luck. Hundreds of candles are lit in the sand. People throw white flowers into the water as a gift to Iemanja. They also give her combs and perfume. The celebrations, with drumming and singing, begin at midnight and goes on until dawn.

Kwanzaa in the United States

Kwanzaa begins on December 26th to honor African harvest traditions. It was created in 1966. Candles representing the seven principles of Kwanzaa are lit each night for a week. Family and friends come together to take pride in their unique culture and to celebrate their common heritage.

This lesson, “Festival of Light Around the World” was adapted with permission from Judie Haynes, an ESL teacher from New Jersey, USA, with more than 26 years of teaching experience. In addition to my classroom work, I have authored and co-authored four books on ESL, co-written a chapter for TESOL’s Integrating Standards into Classroom Practice and am contributing a column for Essential Teacher magazine. You can find this original lesson and much more on Judie’s website: www.everythings esl.net.
I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Christmas...

By Corey Heller
Dear Christmas,

I just wanted to write to say thank you. I know these last few years have been tough on you. We haven’t been the best hosts and you have had to pay the price.

Before the kids were born, when you visited we just kind of took things as they came. Family and friends often took the role of directing the activities of our holidays and we were happy to just go with the flow. But after the kids arrived, things changed, as I’m sure you noticed. Each year when you arrived, we probably seemed to be a little stressed out, a little restless and frustrated. I don’t think we really understood why we were feeling the way we were but clearly something wasn’t working right. I hope you know that it wasn’t because of anything you did. It was because of us and the fact that we hadn’t quite figured things out. In fact, we didn’t really even know that there were things to figure out!

Thank you for keeping quiet when we offered you our crazy mixture of foods and treats: lebkuchen and pumpkin pie, eggnog and wurstchen, brussel sprouts topped with nutmeg and butter as a side dish. It was a little strange for us at the beginning as well but now it all just feels right. As I’m sure you have noticed, we don’t complain about these little issues anymore. We all seem to have accepted the compromise and actually look forward to our mishmash of flavors and smells.

You may have also noticed that we are working through our language issues. When my mother and brother visit, I speak English with the kids. Yes, my husband continues to speak German regardless of visitors since it is his native language. This used to seem extremely counterintuitive since we go to such lengths to encourage our kids to speak German with us at all times but we haven’t seen any negative effects of this so far and it has helped to create an atmosphere in which all can participate and feel welcome. You may not have known, but some of our holiday frustration came from us trying to figure out these complicated language issues. And we often still wonder if we are doing something wrong.

As you can probably sense, there are still a few things that we haven’t quite figured out. My husband is still very nostalgic for home during the holidays and it is hard to console him. After I spent a few winter holiday seasons in Germany I can understand how he must feel. There is nothing like the smells, tastes and sounds that one encounters while walking through the outdoor holiday markets. And, of course, he misses his family tremendously, especially during these special times of the year. These are elements which simply can never be replicated here in the States. Conversations with his mother, brothers and sister next to the stove, with a cup of coffee in hand can not be replicated with a telephone call. The long pauses between topics, the facial expressions, and the atmosphere are all missing. We know we will never find a solution to this and must simply accept the realities of our life, of our decisions. But this probably means that a visit to our home during the holidays will continue to include a slight edge of homesickness and nostalgia.

And while my husband feels the lack of his family during the holidays, you have probably sensed that my mother has had to go through her own process. Her life-long expectations of holiday rituals have had to undergo some alterations, something she had a hard time with at the beginning but, together with all of us, is slowly getting used to. Being the grandmother of bilingual and bicultural children has certainly expected more from her than she originally thought!

And what about me? Well, you’ve probably noticed that I tend to act like a mediator; like a referee. Whether it is needed or not, I end up feeling like someone has to stand in the middle with a view over everything to ensure we are celebrating with a good balance of traditions. A little of this here and a little of that there and not too much of either. As each year passes, though, I find there is less and less of a need for this role and I am more and more sitting back and enjoying the natural balance as it falls into place.

Ultimately, things seem to be going fairly well. After a few years of working things out, I think we have found a reasonable balance and blending. It is probably more due to the fact that we have all simply gotten used to things that at first seemed so new. It’s kind of like marzipan. If you have never eaten it and aren’t sure what it is, the first time you try it you are probably going to be in for a big surprise. But in time it kind of grows on you. I was surprised to find my mouth watering this year while walking through the marzipan store in Luebeck and later I was ready for a fight with my husband over some of my newly favorite pieces. So, you see, just give us some time and we’ll come around.

You have probably noticed that our kids seem to be taking everything in stride, at least so far. At this point they don’t question the mixture of holidays that we have created for them and seem to enjoy things as they are. But as the years pass, we hope you will stick with us as we adjust, adapt, discuss, consult, disagree and compromise our way through the holidays as our children grow and mature. There will be no end to this process but we will try and make it as painless as possible for you so that you will always look forward to visiting us during this special time of year.

Corey Heller is the founder of the Bilingual/Bicultural Family Network and the editor and publisher of Multilingual Living Magazine. She works as a Sr. Software QA Engineer and is the mother of three young children. She and her German husband are raising their children bilingually in German and English using the "minority language at home" method. Corey is always delighted to hear from readers: corey@biculturalfamily.org.
ASK-A-LINGUIST FAQ

PHOTO: © iStockphoto.com/Kati1313
QUESTION: Can my new baby learn two or more languages at home?

ANSWER: Although I agree with much of what Professor Ruuskanen says about this question, I would like to take a slightly different stance on one or two points. Her answer refers to a common pattern of bilingualism, but there are others. My own experience of child bilinguals has been mainly in Singapore and India.

In Singapore nearly all children come to nursery school at age 3 already able to speak 2 languages. Many can speak 3. A child growing up with only one language is quite rare. The reason for this is that most adults routinely use two or three languages in their daily life, both at home and at work, and switching between languages is the norm for everyone. There are also many ethnic groups in Singapore, associated with many different languages, and people need to know languages which they can speak to people from other communities. Lots of people come from families where language shift has taken place, so that their best language might not be a language their parents spoke at all. Parents are fairly relaxed about their children hearing a rather rich language stew, and expect their children to pick up languages. They do worry (like parents everywhere) about their children being able to develop good skills in reading and writing the languages they have to do at school.

In India, being able to speak only one language is a more common than it is in Singapore, but it is associated with poorer groups -- the richer you are, on the whole, the more languages you can expect to be exposed to from infancy. In both these places, bilingualism is not necessarily linked with biculturalism. English, for example, which is one of the languages usually spoken by bilinguals, is not associated with particular ethnic groups. English is a language of India and of Singapore -- it’s not part of a foreign culture -- speaking with a UK or US accent would be seen as having a foreign accent. The pattern of bilingualism and the attitudes associated with it are quite different from attitudes in parts of the US and parts of Europe.

Will my child be bilingual? Will bilingualism affect my child’s intelligence?

Most people who learn more than one language do so because they need to. Languages are worth learning if they are some use. That use can be practical, or emotional, or (for adults) aesthetic. If people need to learn a particular language, they generally will. Children are no different to adults in this respect. (Professor Ruuskanen also discusses this fact.) You can expect your child to learn a language if the child thinks it’s some use.

It’s crucial to examine your situation and decide what language is most ‘at risk’ in your family. If you live in a place where there is a clear dominant language in the society, which is the language of the children your child will be playing with, you can be sure your child will learn that language. YOU don’t need to worry about it at all. If you speak a language that is not used much in the community you live in, and especially if you use the dominant community language with your partner, you are going to have to work hard to develop your child’s skills in that language.

But if you live in a place where there are lots of people who speak the same two languages, and where the child is exposed to Language X, Language Y, and all sorts of mixtures of X+Y, then you can relax. The chances are that the child will learn both of them. This is the usual experience for (for example) people growing up in educated families in Delhi -- they’ll hear lots of Hindi and lots of English (and in some families lots of some other language(s) as well) and grow up with both, like most of their friends.

Occasionally people have deliberately introduced a second language into the home even though they are not in a situation that would naturally lead to bilingualism. This is usually because they think it is a good thing to know more than one language. If you want to do this experiment, you won’t do any harm, but unless you create a need for the language it’s not likely to be successful either. Lots of things are good for children to learn (e.g. swimming, painting, clay modelling, horse riding, music) -- you can’t do EVERYTHING, and there is no special magic in bilingualism.

Bilingualism does not increase (or decrease) intelligence. There are bilinguals of all degrees of intelligence, just as there are monolinguals of all degrees of intelligence.
Will hearing me speak more than one language confuse my child? Should I use the one-parent-one-language method?

Children are not confused by hearing more than one language. We have known for a long time that bilingual children separate their language from the age of 2: current research suggests they separate them from the beginning. People who grow up in bilingual communities like Singapore take bilingualism for granted. Parents typically speak both languages to children, and parents and children often mix languages in the same sentence. Even mixing languages in the same sentence doesn’t confuse children. The children have to be exposed to mixtures of language in order to learn the complex rules for when to use which language (and when you can use a mixture). They start to demonstrate that they know these rules by the age of 2. By the age of 2 we can clearly see that bilingual children faced with a monolingual adult will do their very best to speak in the language the monolingual knows.

The ‘one-parent-one-language’ method is sometimes put forward as the only way to raise bilingual children. It isn’t. There are many routes to this end. If both parents can speak a minority language then their best strategy might be to speak only the minority language to their children, and let them learn the majority language of the community outside the home. If the family live in a place where everyone is bilingual in the same two languages, then they should behave naturally, switching languages and mixing them as they normally do.

Is the speech of bilingual children delayed?

It used to be suggested that bilingual children were a little slower learning to speak than monolingual children. This is no longer an accepted view. In any case, any such difference would be very small. A bilingual child whose speech is delayed (for example, if they have not said the first word by 18 months) should be treated exactly like a monolingual child. It is dangerous to think that the child’s speech is delayed because the child is bilingual. Bilingual children vary from one another just as monolingual children do -- some will be early and some will be late speakers. But all children whose speech is delayed should be assessed by a doctor and (if necessary) a speech-language practitioner, because if the child is deaf, or if there is some reason for the speech delay, it should be dealt with.

I am worried that my child will learn my faulty pronunciation.

Many people in bilingual communities or in mixed marriages need to speak to their child (at least some of the time) in a language which is not their native language. There is nothing at all wrong with doing this. Language shift (moving to a language which is not the language of your ancestry) is a normal part of human behaviour. Some parents worry that they will pass on an ‘incorrect’ accent to their children. Don’t worry about this. Once children start mixing with other children (from the age of 2 or 3) they start to learn their accent from their friends. Parents soon discover that they are not the model for their children’s language behaviour, any more than they are the model for their dress sense. Children acquire the language of the children’s community they are in. Be prepared for this (you might not like it!). The hearing children of deaf parents often grow up bilingual too, learning a sign language at home. They begin to model their speech on their parents’ faulty pronunciation, but as long as they spend about 10 hours with speakers of oral languages, they seem to have no problem learning an oral language as well.

My child refuses to speak our native language.

As Professor Ruuskanen says, it is common for a child brought up in a place with a strong community language to reject a minority one. My own daughter rejected her father’s language when she was 2. When this happens it is because we have failed to provide the need for the language. In deciding on your reaction, you need think about your relationship with the child as well as about your desire for them to learn a language. All of us have to accept that we cannot control our children’s life experiences. They will be their own people and make their own life which will be different from our lives, and which will not be as we envisaged their lives would be. Accepting language shift is part of accepting generational differences.

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I met my husband Santi in the spring of my sophomore year in college, while I was doing a semester abroad in Madrid. We dated casually, and when it was time for me to go back home, we promised to write, but that was it. Neither one of us would have believed that seven years later, we would end up getting married!

Back in the States, I filled my time with my studies and more travel: a summer in the mountains of Mexico with the American Friends Society, after graduation a few months in Costa Rica doing AIDS education with teenagers, and then after a brief stop home, back to Costa Rica, this time with the Peace Corps. Through it all, Santi and I kept up our correspondence. He kept inviting me back to Spain, but there was always somewhere else to go, or something else to do.

After my Peace Corps service ended, I again declined his offer, but this time turned the tables: Why didn’t he come join me on my trip to Ecuador and Peru? Much to my surprise, he accepted, and soon we were faxing back and forth to make our plans. When he called me in Costa Rica to pin down the last-minute details, it was strange to hear his voice again after so long. His Castilian “th” for “c” seemed so foreign, and the cadences were jarring after I had gotten so used to the smoother, more melodic tones of Latin America.

But then we spent ten days in Ecuador, getting reacquainted, and it all came back. It was a romantic vacation, but would that be all? We flirted with the idea of keeping things going, but the idea of a long-distance relationship didn’t really appeal to either of us. He had a steady job that would be hard to duplicate in the States, and I was anxious to get back to my own country again, get a job, go back to school, and finally settle down. Once again, we promised to write.

I found a job with a teen pregnancy prevention program while I looked into Master’s programs. Should I get a degree in Social Work? Public Health? And where? Though I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, I did know one thing: I wanted to be able to use my Spanish.

I researched programs online, and tried out this new thing called email that my father had told me about while I was away. At the beginning of 1998, Santi got an account as well, and suddenly our periodic communication turned into daily messages. I raced home from work every day to check my inbox, and Santi got up early to check his before work. And the rest, as they say, was history. A few months later, I decided to take the plunge, and we agreed to get married.

At the time, it seemed a little bit crazy. Sure, we had been writing back and forth for several years, but there hadn’t been much “face time.” Still, I held my breath and bought a ticket for Spain. Now, eight years later, we are still going strong. Surprisingly, we haven’t had to overcome many cultural differences in our relationship, aside from the ongoing debate over the proper consistency of cooked vegetables (he says mushy; I say firm.) Now I am working on getting a teaching degree that will qualify me to teach English in the public schools. And yes, I am getting to use my Spanish!
Kate, Santi and their two children.

PHOTO: Kate MacVean
Laterne, Laterne, Sonne, Mond und Sterne,
Brenne auf mein Licht,
Nur meine liebe Laterne nicht.
St. Martin’s Lantern

In Flanders, Netherlands, Germany and Austria, the Lantern festival on November 11 commemorates St. Martin, Roman mercenary and later Bishop of Tours. Legend says that one freezing winter night, Martin shared his cloak with a beggar by cutting it in half. The lanterns, carried by children during the procession, symbolize light in the darkness of winter.

Materials:
- The lid of a round cheese box (a camembert box is ideal; or cut a circle out of hard cardboard using a small plate, and bend 1 cm of the rim upwards, making small cuts into the edge)
- Colorful cardboard paper
- Baking parchment
- Fall leaves, dried and pressed
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Staples & Stapler
- Hole punch
- Tea light
- Wire of approx. 35 cm length, better if it is encased in plastic

How to do it:
1. Cut out two large rectangles from the baking parchments - follow the size and circumference of the cheese box/cardboard circle and add 2 cm. The height is approx. 25 cm.
2. Arrange leaves in a pretty pattern on one parchment and glue them on. Place second parchment on top and glue on.
3. Staple parchments to the edges of the cheese/cardboard box.
4. Add 3 cm wide strip of colorful cardboard to strengthen top and bottom edge.
5. With hole punch, make a hole on each side. To create a handle, pull the wire through the holes and fasten.
6. Place tea light into the lantern.

The finished product!
Make a Passport and Take a Trip for the Holidays!

Your multilingual and multicultural children most likely have their own real passports which you have packed away for safe keeping. But there’s no fun in that! Help your children make their own passports and then take an imaginary trip to visit family abroad for the holidays!

To Make a Passport You’ll Need...
- Photo of your child, cut so that only their face shows
- Colored paper (both regular and heavy weight)
- White paper
- Stapler
- Pens
- Glue
- Ink stamps (optional)

To Take A Trip You’ll Need...
- Suitcases for each traveler
- Different articles of clothing
- Humor and laughter
- Willingness to role play

Make Your Passports...
From the heavy-weight colored paper, cut out a rectangle. Fold it in half so that it becomes the front and back covers for the passport. Cut out a few white pieces of paper the same size as the heavy colored paper. Place these inside the colored paper and staple them all together in the middle to form a book. On the first inside page of the passport glue your child’s photo and write information next to it: Name, Age, Birth Date, etc. With the regular-weight colored paper, cut out a piece a little smaller than one sheet in the passport. Color it and add wording to make it into a VISA for travel to a specific country. Cut out smaller rectangles from the white and colored paper and use pens to make them into customs stamps. Or use the ink stamps as custom stamps. Let your passports dry while getting ready for your trip.

Take this opportunity to talk with your children in your language about the items used (paper, glue, stamps, etc.). Discuss why a person travels and why they need a passport. Does everyone need a passport to travel to all countries? Which countries can you reach by car, train, boat and which can you only reach by plane? Help your children understand why people travel with different modes of transportation.

PHOTO: © iStockphoto.com/jc_design
Time To Travel...

Now that everyone has passports, it is time to take that trip to visit family! Start by figuring out who will do the traveling and who you will visit. Then figure out how you will get there. Bus, train, plane? How about taking a cruise part of the way and then a train the last leg? Once you have decided the basics, figure out what you need to take with you. Will it be warm at this time of year or cold? Will you be swimming in the ocean or sledding in the snow? Don’t forget to bring the appropriate footwear! Find your children’s suitcases and have them pack them themselves. Talk about the different clothing types and colors. Use the opportunity to practice counting: Decide with your children how many shirts they need, how many pants, how many socks, etc. and then count them out together.

Once the suitcases are packed, make sure to bring a few snacks for the trip. With your children, put together a small bag with a few snacks and maybe juice boxes as well. Talk about which foods are best for the long trip (why chocolate in warm hands is not the best idea) and which snacks are your children’s favorites. Once everything is together, it is time to travel!

Set up destinations throughout the house. (You can do this ahead of time with your children or while your children are doing something else so that it is a surprise.) Say goodbye to your children and send them off on their imaginary trip to visit family! Tell them to give you a call when they arrive. Or, if you children would rather travel with you, all of you can take the trip together.

As your children make their way from home to their imaginary destinations, you can play the part of the host or have another child or family member do this. Are your children visiting grandma? Then pretend like you are grandma. Or maybe your children are visiting Aunt Emma? Have fun with the language and try your best to imitate the visited family member. Tell your children how much you have missed them and how delighted you are that they came for a visit. Ask them how things are back home and how mom and dad are. This is a great opportunity to role play with your children to get an idea of their feelings about family abroad and thoughts that might be on their mind.

Do the same as your children travel from one place to another. Perhaps they make a detour along the way to hang out on an imaginary beach or swim in an imaginary ocean? Or maybe they go hiking up an imaginary mountain and camp out under some imaginary pine trees. Each destination is full of opportunities to use vocabulary in your native language!

When your children arrive back home, make it a special time to sit and chat about their big travel adventure. Ask them how it felt to travel to visit family and their thoughts about it. What parts of their trip did they enjoy the most and which did they not like? Ask them to tell you what happened while they were visiting each family member and what each of them said. Take this chance to get your children to use their language skills and to feel comfortable talking about how they feel about their extended family members living far away.

In the end it is time to unpack the suitcase again and put everything away. Do you still have the same number of socks? Better count them out together! And make sure to talk about which clothing was most useful at each location and which were not. Maybe next time you’ll all pack differently!
HOLIDAY ACTIVITY

EASY TO MAKE BEESWAX CANDLE

You and your children can make your own candles this year to use in your holiday rituals. And while you are at it, share insights into your culture’s festivals of light.

Never made a candle before? This activity is extremely easy and your children can participate every step of the way!

PHOTOS: © iStockphoto.com/nojustice & iStockphoto.com/stepanjezek
**MATERIALS:**
- Sharp knife (craft knife is best)
- Ruler (or other material to make a straight cut)
- Wicking (for the wick in the middle of the candle)
- 8-by-8 inch piece of honeycomb beeswax
- Pieces of wax in different colors
- Blow dryer

**BASIC CANDLE DIRECTIONS:**
First decide how tall you would like your candle to be and then cut the wick so that it is the right length plus a tiny bit extra.

Lay the piece of beeswax out flat and heat the top side of it with the blow dryer, starting with the side which will be rolled first (and be inside the candle next to the wick). When the beeswax is warmed and soft enough to roll it easily, shut off the blow dryer, lay the wick along the warmest edge and start rolling the beeswax sheet so that the wick will end up in the very middle of the candle. As you are rolling, if the wax is not warm the whole length, turn on the blow dryer and heat it. Gently roll the beeswax but make it tight enough so that it stays tight together. When you get to the end of the wax, make sure the last part of the beeswax sheet is very warm and almost melting (this edge will create the outside seam) so that it will stick better. Once all rolling is done, gently run your fingers along the edge to press the final seam into place.

Decorate your candle with pieces of wax or beeswax that have been cut into different shapes. Make sure to blow-dry the pieces to warm them before pressing them gently onto your beeswax candle.

**FANCY CANDLE DIRECTIONS:**
Cut the 8-by-8 inch sheet of beeswax diagonally from corner to corner. Cut the wick so that it is the length of the sheet from the straight side up to the corner. Place the wick in place and roll from one of the corners of the sheet so that the flat edge forms the base of the candle. The finished candle will have a point at the top when it is finished.

**MORE IDEAS AND TIPS:**
- Shorter candles are easier to make, so try a few small ones first before moving onto larger ones.
- The most common width for candles would be from a sheet that is 8 inches wide but if you want a wider candle, use a sheet that is 10 inches wide.
- Try using two different color sheets of beeswax and roll them together to create a dual-color candle.
- Decorate your candle with sequins, ribbons, ornaments, etc. (Remember to remove flammable items before lighting the candle.)
- Try cutting the beeswax into different shapes before rolling.
- Once your candle has been rolled, wrap thin strips of beeswax around the candle to add extra color and designs.
- You can also squeeze your candles a bit to shape it (this is best with short, wide candles).
Telephone
Having fun with language is easy when you include games!
See how well your kids can keep the sentence going...

Rules of the Game:
This game is best played with at least three people. Both children and adults can play. Everyone sits together in a circle. One player is chosen to think up a sentence consisting of a few words. That player then whispers the sentence into the ear of the person sitting next to them so that no one else can hear. The person who heard the sentence from the first player now turns to the person next to them and whispers the sentence into the next person’s ear. Each player whispers the sentence to the person next to them until the last person has heard the sentence. The game ends when the last person says the sentence out loud and the first person repeats what the original sentence was. It is great fun to hear what the original sentence was in comparison to the final one!

Tips:
If the game is being played with mainly younger children, have a parent or an older child be the first player so that they can think up easy sentences. If there are only two of you, go ahead and have fun playing the game as well. Just limit yourselves to only stating the sentence once and then seeing what the other person thinks was said. Either way this is a great pronunciation builder!
Shout It Out!

Your kids will delight in this game which you can play anywhere. Your kids will be building up their vocabulary without even knowing it!

Rules of the Game:
Parent and child call out everything that they see in their immediate vicinity (e.g. the kitchen or the living room), taking turns. The parent tries to add in a few less common items and thereby encourages vocabulary. Remind your child that to play the game you both need to shout out the name of the items in a specific language. If your child has a hard time with sticking to one language, then help with gentle reminders or even repeating the word in the target language.

Example for playing the game:
Parent: “stove!”
Child: “table!”
Parent: “microwave”
Child: “pan”
Etc.

Tips:
Start out slowly and with easy, more obvious items to give your child time to look around and think of the right word for different items. Then you can try to speed up things a bit.

Try it first in one language, then in another! Play it at home, in the car, on a walk…
Test Your Knowledge!
Holidays Around the World
Holidays not only mean days free from work that one may spend at leisure but also are days to commemorate or celebrate a particular event. They also can be a religious feast day or a holy day. People all over the world celebrate holidays with similar and different customs and practices. Take the following quiz from World View to test your knowledge about major holidays around the world. Answers are provided on page 96 of this issue of Multilingual Living Magazine, where you will also find internet links to lesson plans and activities and resources to learn more about holidays and celebrations across the globe.

1. In which country are Christmas traditions celebrated regularly with bright tropical and island flowers, parades, and family dinners of chicken and pork tamales?
   a) Australia  
   b) Russia    
   c) Costa Rica 
   d) Canada

2. Hanukkah (or Chanukah), the Jewish holiday for the Festival of Lights, lasts how many nights?
   a) 4  
   b) 6  
   c) 8  
   d) 19

3. Each fall, believers of which religion celebrate Diwali (or Deepavali or Deepawali), another Festival of Lights?
   a) Hinduism  
   b) Christianity  
   c) Judaism    
   d) Muslim/Islam

4. This month-long Muslim/Islamic celebration, marked with prayer, charity, and fasting from dawn to sunset, celebrates the time when the Prophet Mohammed revealed the Qur’an to Allah is known as _____?
   a) Christmas  
   b) Independence Day  
   c) Labor Day  
   d) Ramadan

5. While 2005 was the Year of the Rooster, on January 29, 2006 the Chinese New Year began with the Year of the _____?
   a) Rabbit  
   b) Dog  
   c) Dragon  
   d) Monkey

6. In which country does a three-day water festival, called Songkran Festival, mark the Buddhists’ celebration of the New Year?
   a) Ecuador  
   b) Peru  
   c) United States  
   d) Thailand

7. In which city is the International Mother’s Day Shrine?
   a) Mumbai, India  
   b) Grafton, West Virginia, USA  
   c) Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
   d) Warsaw, Poland

8. A common practice for celebrating Christmas in New Zealand is _____?
   a) Taking the family camping or to the beach and feasting on a barbeque  
   b) Building a snowman  
   c) Celebrating Christmas twice a year (one in December, one in July)  
   d) a and c above

9. What is the name of the Turkish holiday celebrated each year on April 23 that illustrates that children are the future of the nation and represents the day in which Turkey became an independent nation after the fall of the Ottoman Empire?
   a) Çocuk Bayrami  
   b) Victory Day  
   c) Ataturk Commemoration  
   d) Republic Day

10. The tradition of filling an Easter basket with eggs and sweets was started in the 18th Century by settlers from this country:
    a) Switzerland  
    b) France  
    c) Germany  
    d) Netherlands

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Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

Top holiday tips from...

Hand in Hand
This is a fun game for the whole family and easy for the little ones! Children from all over the world hold hands in this game, and two dices will decide who’s next: a boy or a girl, with or without a hat. It contains 36 picture boards, 2 dices with symbols and instructions. You can also vary this game and play different versions of memory with older children. Age 3+.

Das Ravensburger Buch der Advents- und Weihnachtsgeschichten
This beautiful anthology is filled with lots of stories, songs and poems for the Christmas time. They are telling from Santa Claus and snow men, fairies and gnomes, angels and Christmas trees, and, of course, from the Holy Night.

Different authors like Janosch, James Krüss, Otfrid Preussler, Ursel Scheffler contributed to this 164 p. book, just to name a few. A nice book to share the Christmas spirit with your loved ones, regardless of age.

Die Jahreszeiten
This book is the 10th of a series called Wieso? Weshalb? Warum? Junior which is for children aged 2+. The four seasons are nicely shown and explained in different settings that are known to a child of this age. The book helps the child understand why, for example, we have to dress warm in winter, not in summer and what are goose bumps. There are many lift-a-flaps that reveal more details and are fun to find.
Max auf dem Mond +
Max und der Zauberer
- Doppelpack

Max on the Moon and Max and the Magician can be played in the four languages German, English, French and Spanish and are for children aged 4-8 years. The illustrations are hand drawn and full of details. In each game Max has to look for something: either moon chickens, to help his friend Mona who is stranded with her spaceship on the moon in order to get her keys back from the man in the moon or, help his friend the Magician find the right spell to become a person again. It is easy to play and especially good for computer beginners. For PC and MAC.

Mäuseschlau & Bärenstark
Wissen, Lachen, Sachen machen

A fun board game that gets you moving! The rules are simple and the whole game lasts about 15-20 min. Mouse cards will ask you interesting questions, e.g., when do we see a rainbow?, while Bear cards will ask you to do silly actions like flying like a butterfly around the game table. The clock has to be set if you pick a card and you’ll learn to tell time in no time!

The game contains of 1 board, 6 figures, 1 Clock, 80 cards and instructions. Age 5+.
Harvest Festivals have been held as long as people have been sowing and gathering food. Teach your children how people all over the world celebrate the harvesting of a good crop. Gather with friends and family to enjoy these activities together!
People from various cultures all over the world celebrate the gathering of the harvest. Harvest Festivals have been held as long as people have been sowing and gathering food. For Americans, this harvest festival is held on the fourth Thursday of November and is called Thanksgiving. The Thanksgiving feast goes back to 1621 when Pilgrims shared a celebration with the Native Wampanoag People. Teach your children about the harvest feasts which people around the world celebrate. The following festivals are examples of a few of these celebrations.

**Homowo Festival in Ghana**
- Tell the story of the yam festival to your children: African people have always had festivals at the time of the harvest. In Ghana the Yam Festival (Homowo) lasts three days. The festival begins with a cleansing ceremony to honor family members who have died. Farmers give thanks to the gods who ensure a good harvest. Twins and triplets are honored during this time as a special gift from God. Yams are an important crop in Ghana. During Homowo, they are taken from the ground and are carried to the village. Then they are blessed by the chief. Special foods made from yams are served. Mashed yams with hard boiled eggs are an important part of the festival. People also eat Kpekpele which is made from corn meal and palm oil. During homowo people wear a kind of toga made from kente cloth which is brightly colored. The festival ends with a big feast. People dance and sing to the sounds of drums.
- To celebrate this festival have children taste mashed yams and compare them with mashed white potatoes. Which do they like best? Have them explain the difference in taste, texture, color and smell.
- Children can also design kente cloth made with brightly colored geometric patterns. Find examples of this cloth here: http://www.google.com/u/marshall. (After getting to the Marshall University web site, type “kente cloth” into their search engine.)
- For instructions on kente paper weaving, go to: www.africancraft.com (click on “education” and then on the link for “Kente paper weaving”).

**Harvest Moon Festival in China**
- Tell your children a story about the Chinese Harvest Moon Festival: The Chinese Harvest Moon Festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Chinese lunar calendar in honor of the harvesting of the rice and wheat crops. At this time the moon is at its brightest. This is thought to be the birthday of the moon and Chang-O, a woman who flew to the moon and can be seen when the moon is full, is honored.
- Another legend is that flowers fall from the moon when it is full. The flowers bring good luck.
- Moon cakes are the traditional food to eat during this festival. This dates back to 1368 when China was under Mongolian rule. The Chinese planned a revolution to overthrow the Mongolians. They sent secret messages to plan this revolution in mooncakes which were not eaten by the Mongolians.
- During the Chinese Moon Festival families get together to view the full moon, a symbol of luck, harmony and abundance. Adults will eat many different varieties of moon cakes with a good cup of piping hot Chinese tea. Along with the mooncakes, children have parades with lanterns and puppet shows.
- Chinese Moon Festival is also celebrated in Taiwan, Singapore, and Vietnam.
- Have your children develop several questions or riddles about the Harvest Moon Festival. Ask them to write each question on separate squares of paper. Fold the paper several times. Then make moon shaped pockets out of yellow construction paper and place their questions in their “mooncake.” Have your children pass their “mooncake” to another child. Divide your children into teams. Each child finds the questions in the mooncake he/she is holding and answers them. If a child cannot answer the question, the other team gets a chance to respond.
- Let your children make “good luck” cards with flowers in them to comemmorate the Harvest Moon Festival. Use yellow construction paper in the shape of a full moon. Have your children draw pictures of flowers and cut the picture out. Attach the picture to the inside of the card.
- Using a Venn Diagram (www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/tvenn.htm), have your children compare the Harvest Moon Festival with the Yam Festival in Ghana: Which parts are different from each festival? Which are similar? Record everything on the Venn Diagram.
- Read stories associated with this festival at Harvest Moon stories: www.chinesefortunecalendar.com/mid-fallstory.htm.

**Chu Suk in Korea**
- Present the story of Korean Thanksgiving to your children: Chu Suk is a Korean harvest celebration which is considered the Korean Thanksgiving. It is held on the 15th of the eighth month of the lunar calendar. Memorial services are held during which family members visit the tombs of their ancestors and offer them rice and fruit. There is a special feast to show thanks for each other. The feast starts with a family gathering.
at which “Songphyun” is served. These are special rice cakes made of rice, beans, sesame seeds, and chestnuts. The eve of Chu Suk is called Kang Kang Sue Wol Lae. During this ceremony women make a circle and sing and dance. They wear their best hanbok. People also have wrestling, archery, folk music, and they play a game called turtle tag. Chu Suk is the time to celebrate the family and give thanks for their blessings.

* Have your children compare Chu Suk to the Chinese Harvest Moon festival using a Venn Diagram. Make a list of things that are the same and those that are unique to each celebration.

* The Korean hanbok is one of the most distinct aspects of Korean culture. The top part of the hanbok is called a jeogori. It is like a short blouse with long sleeves. Women also wear skirts called chima. This traditional clothing is bright colored. The hanbok is often worn during national holidays and festive occasions. Various accessories such as foot gear, jewelry, and headdresses or hair pins completed the outfit. Have students visit the website Traditional Korean Clothing: www.lifeinkorea.com/Culture/Clothes/clothes.cfm. Ask your children to pick a type of clothing from the menu and write about it. They can also make a drawing of the clothing they choose.

**Trung Thu in Vietnam**

* Tell your children the story of Trung Thu which is celebrated in Vietnam (beautiful pictures of this holiday can be found in the book, “Children Just Like Me - Celebrations”):

In Vietnam, Têt-Trung-Thu is a mid-Autumn celebration which takes place on August 15th. This is a family celebration and children are the center of the holiday. It is an occasion for parents to show their love of their children. This festival is also called the Children’s Festival. This holiday also celebrates the harvest moon which is whiter and brighter at this time of year. There is a parade to promote success in school. Parents buy their children lanterns so that they can be in the procession. Vietnamese market stalls sell all kinds of lanterns but the most popular is the star lantern. The frame is made from bamboo and a candle is put in the center so that children can have light during the parade. Children also like to make or buy masks for this celebration. Traditional Vietnamese dances such as the Unicorn dance are popular during the festivities. Vietnamese parents tell their children fairy tales and give them mooncakes and other treats to eat. A favorite story is about a carp that wants to be a dragon. The carp works very hard and finally turns into a dragon. The moral of this story is that if children work hard in school, they can become anything they want.

* Have your children read or listen to the Vietnamese harvest story Watermelon: kicon.com/stories/watermelon/e_index.html.

* Have your children make a mask for this holiday. They can make colorful masks from construction paper or use the paper mache masks featured at Kinder Art: www.kinderart.com/multi/machemask.shtml. Directions for making masks from paper plates can be adapted from Enchanted Learning: www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/Mask.shtml.

**Holi in India**

* Tell your children the story of Holi: Holi is a harvest celebration marking the end of spring. It is celebrated each year on the day after the full moon in early March all over India. This is one of the most colorful Indian festivals. Bonfires are lit to banish the cold winter and grains from the harvest are offered to the flames. During the festival there is plenty of color throwing, prayer, fasting and feasting. People run through the streets throwing colored powder and water at each other. There are exchanges of greetings, the older people give out sweets and money and everyone joins in dancing to the rhythm of the drums. This is a celebration of joy and hope which is eagerly awaited by Indians.

* There is a very good story on the internet from India. Go to The Rupee Tree: www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/tikka-billa/stories/rupee.shtml?world.

* Have your children learn about Indian culture. Take them to Time for Kids to learn about a day in the life of an Indian child: www.timeforkids.com/TFK/specials/articles/0,6709,214518,00.html.

* Have your children color a rangoli pattern online at Rangoli Patterns: www.snaithprimary.eril.net/rangoli.htm.

* Let your children study Indian culture through clothing, toys and other interesting topics at Indian Toys: www.snaithprimary.eril.net/toys.htm.

* Have your children color a rangoli pattern online at Rangoli Patterns: www.snaithprimary.eril.net/rangoli.htm.

* Help students learn a few words of Hindi at India Past and Present: library.thinkquest.org/11372/data/MUSIC.htm.

This lesson, “Harvest Festivals Around the World” was adapted with permission from Judie Haynes, an ESL teacher from New Jersey, USA, with more than 26 years of teaching experience. In addition to my classroom work, I have authored and co-authored four books on ESL, co-written a chapter for TESOL’s Integrating Standards into Classroom Practice and am contributing a column for Essential Teacher magazine. You can find this original lesson and much more on Judie’s website: www.everythings esl.net.
A Very Short Fanciful Story

By Sharon K. Cook-Gordon-Spellman

Once upon a time in an America of the late 1900’s and early 2000’s, some descendants of Columbus and the Pilgrims and some descendants of Turtle Island’s* native people fell in love with one another, married and raised children. Every October and November they celebrate Columbus Day, Indigenous People’s Day, Halloween, All Souls Day and Thanks-giving, and all families are now living happily ever after.

The End

*Turtle Island” is a Native American term for the North American continent

During the elementary school era of my childhood, Columbus Day was not associated with genocide. No mention was made of slaughter, exploitation or slave trade. As elementary school children, we celebrated the beauty and grace of three wooden sailing ships, the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa Maria. We celebrated the ocean currents beneath the ship’s hulls, the winds that filled the ship’s sails and the navigational techniques that allowed the sailors to move three wooden ships safely across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492. Even more, we celebrated the questing, adventurous spirit of exploration and discovery, the daring attempts of a group of people who were determined to conquer ignorance with truth. We celebrated the eye-opening knowledge, finally made known to ordinary people, that the earth was in fact not flat, but round.

Now, in the year 2006, bolstered by the eye-opening knowledge that mistreatment, genocide and exploitation of fellow humans was never supposed to be, nor was it ever a necessary component of, this great scientific achievement and exploration, is it possible to redeem Columbus Day? Is it possible to throw out the proverbial “dirty bath water” without throwing out the proverbial baby? May we celebrate, and vicariously recall and remember, the joy and elation associated with this great adventure, which was accomplished by some of our ancestors, while simultaneously feeling a sense of humility, atonement and maybe even shame, for past wrongs committed by some other of our ancestors and perpetrated upon some other of our ancestors? Can the sense of wonder and praise for the awe-inspiring diversity of human cultural and social origins be reconciled with deep-felt regret for those human enactments and deeds which brought harm to that diversity?

On Columbus Day, I listened on the car radio to some Indigenous People’s Day celebrations. I heard wise elders speak ideas, histories, practices and ways of living they hope to teach and pass forward to their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. I heard beautiful voices sing traditional and modern Native American songs; heard drumming of sounds like earth’s heart beats, moving like liquid life, in rhythmic tides still flowing within all things. In mind’s eye I saw converging paths: The path of Columbus from across the ocean blue in 1492; the steady gradual foot paths of millennia of generations before and behind him; the steady footpaths of millennia before and behind these wise elders I was listening to, crossing from Asian steppes, through eons of time to North and South America; other footpaths of anonymous explorers crossing through millennia of time over sheets of ice, over land, from continent to continent; all paths, like streams and tributaries of one great river, originating from a single main headwaters somewhere in Africa.

Today I remembered some other kinds of moments, from over two years ago, while rocking my second-born grandson to sleep in my arms, and gazing into his newborn eyes. As I walked and rocked and hummed him to sleep, an instrumental, “Kissing in the Rain,” by Tori Amos, was playing over and over on the stereo, and these thoughts and words kept recurring in my mind and I whispered them to him: “Here you are with us now, and think how long it has taken you to get here, to be here, on this planet, just as it is right now.”

Happy Columbus Day, Indigenous People’s Day, Halloween, All Souls Day and Thanks-giving to one and all.

Sharon K. Cook-Gordon-Spellman has been a year-round resident of the western slopes of the Sierra foothills, near Nevada City, California, since 1972. Her monthly column for Multilingual Living Magazine is about the joys, trials and tribulations involved with being a grandmother of three bilingual children.
**Did You Know?**

“Feed your child a diet of rich language experiences throughout the day. Talk with your infants and young children frequently in short, simple sentences... describe the world around them to expose them to words.”


**Basic findings: The stages children move through in learning to speak.**

- They babble in syllable combinations, typically from 7 to 18 months, exploring sounds to experiment with oral language.
- First words are usually spoken from 10 to 18 months. A naming explosion also occurs around this time.
- Two words are usually combined around 18 months.
- First sentences frequently occur from 24 to 30 months.
- Eventually children acquire phonemic awareness, the ability to recognize spoken words as a sequence of sounds.

**Tips for parents to increase a child’s vocabulary:**

1. Talk directly to your child beginning at birth.
2. Describe daily events.
3. Sing songs, tell stories, recite nursery rhymes or poems to your child.
4. Read books and point out and repeat the names of things.
5. Name objects in the child’s environment.
6. Listen to your child’s attempts at words and reinforce them by repeating words or phrases that the child says.
7. Encourage your child’s speech with positive responses such as "yes, that is a ball." using the correct word and then add a phrase to expand on it such as "Let's play with the red ball."
8. Play word games to link words with actions. Tickle, touch toes, point to head, hands.
9. Engage in dramatic play with your child.
10. Provide opportunities for your child to interact socially and talk to other children.
11. Participate in story times for all ages and other early childhood programming with your child at your local library.

Whether you are raising a bilingual, multilingual or monolingual child, it is important that your child receive the kind of stimulation that will encourage language development.

**Start Today!**

Find ways to incorporate these tips, suggestions and ideas into your child’s life!

**Books:**

“How Babies Talk; the magic and mystery of language in the first three years of life” by Roberta Michnick Golinkoff and Kathy Hirsh-Pasek. Dutton, 1999.


**Web Sites:**

**Building Baby’s Brain: Learning Language.** The University of Georgia/college of Family and Consumer Sciences. www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/bbb/

**The Why Files.** Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin. whyfiles.org/058language/baby_talk.html

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Books For Parents

Think your child has a language disorder? Are you a German-speaker looking for the fundamentals?

Mit Zwei Sprachen Gross werden:
Mehrsprachige Erziehung in Familie, Kindergarten und Schule
By Elke Montanari

Bilingualism in everyday-life: how does it work? What are typical bilingual family models? How do we overcome problems? What aspects do we have to consider to succeed? Mit Zwei Sprachen Gross Werden introduces the fundamentals of Bilingualism in non-theoretical language, by discussing all aspects of multilingual life at home, kindergarten and school. Practical advice and tips make the book very accessible, as do the richly illustrated examples and case studies of other families. This book will be of particular interest to newcomers to bilingualism, as well as to those who have German as one of their languages at home.

Dual Language Development and Disorders:
A Handbook on Bilingualism and Second Language Learning
by Fred Genesee, Johanne Paradis, Martha B. Crago

Parents raising bilingual children know how difficult it is to find books that provide detailed information about childhood bilingualism while at the same time being “readable” for the non-expert. Lucky for us, Genesee, Paradis and Crago have done just that. For parents of bilingual children who have been diagnosed with language disorders, this book is essential. Parents will find the up-to-date discussion on the differences between monolingual and bilingual language development invaluable, and will appreciate the encouragement to seek diagnosis specifically from experts in the field of bilingual language development so that their children will receive the most accurate evaluation possible. For parents whose children have not been diagnosed with a language disorder, this book will help to ease concerns and answer the questions which are often at the back of our minds. The eight case studies introduced at the beginning of the book are referred to throughout and are useful in proving the valuable examples and explanations.
“...And They Lived Happily Ever After”

Isn’t that how every child’s story should end?

Colorín Colorado refers to a popular ending to many Spanish language fairy tales. It is equivalent to “…and they lived happily ever after!” ColoringColorado.org is a free website which brings parents and educators together to help students learn, and it literally puts parents and classroom practitioners on the same page. The easy to use content of the Web site includes tools and tips for parents on helping their children build literacy skills. It also has instructional tools and tips for educators of ELL students. It’s a one-stop shop for parents and educators looking to help these students in achieving academic success.

As an added bonus, ¡Colorín Colorado! establishes a crucial link between home and school. With language barriers out of the way, parents can feel more empowered to be a part of their child’s education. We know that the more involved a parent is with schooling, the more successful their child is likely to be. Parents and educators can use these resources to help children gain the academic skills needed to thrive in school...and beyond. We believe that’s what education is all about – success!

After all, doesn’t every child deserve to live happily ever after?

Look for ColorinColorado’s tips in each Multilingual Living Magazine!
Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

- **Talk to your child.**
  Ask your child to talk about his day at school. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played during recess.

- **Say silly tongue twisters.**
  Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.

- **Read it and experience it.**
  Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.

- **Use your child’s name.**
  Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, “John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name. *John, jump.* And they both begin with the same letter, J.”

- **Play with puppets.**
  Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, “My name is Mark. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does *park* rhyme with *Mark?* Does *ball* rhyme with *Mark?”

- **Trace and say letters.**
  Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter’s sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

- **Write it down.**
  Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage her to use the letters and sounds she’s learning about in school.

- **Play sound games.**
  Practice blending sounds into words. Ask “Can you guess what this word is? *m-o-p.*” Hold each sound longer than normal.

- **Read it again and again.**
  Go ahead and read your child’s favorite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.

- **Talk about letters and sounds.**
  Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! “I’m thinking of a letter and it makes the sound *mmmmm.*”

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**www.ColorinColorado.org**

*Practical, research-based information on how to help English language learners read ...and succeed!*
Ce que Winnie l’Ourson a fait.

What Winnie the Pooh did. Winnie helps his friend Porcinet who is stuck at home during a flood. By Disney in collaboration with the renown french publisher Bibliothèque Rose. It is made of a beautiful durable softcover, and has colorful illustrations on every page to enhance the storytelling experience. Ages 4 to 8, 58 pages. $9.50.

Le Clan des Sept à la rescousse.

The Clan des Sept to the rescue. A little girl has disappeared; however, every night, she comes back to her grandmother’s house to get food... Ages 8 to 12, 122 pages. $9.90.

Mon premier dictionnaire Gallimard Jeunesse.

My first dictionary, from Gallimard Jeunesse. Contains more than 2000 words and hundreds of images to illustrate those words. These definitions have been edited to be read out loud to the children at first, and later on, as they grow older, they will be able to utilize this dictionary full of humor on their own. Ages 4 to 7, 265 pages. $39.50.
Camille pêche en Alaska.
Camille fishes in Alaska. For babies to preschool aged children, glossy pages and cover, contains 24 pages. $7.50.

Le joueur de flûte de Hamelin.
The flute player of Hamelin. The classic tale from the collection Contes et Fables de Toujours. Ages 6 and up, 60 pages, Hardcover. $17.80.

L’été de mes treize ans.
The summer when I was 13. Charlotte left Casablanca to go live in Paris with her father and her sister. Just before leaving for her summer vacation in Maroc, she received an odd piece of mail with no words nor signature: only a photo that she had never seen before. A photo of her family... Charlotte will spend this summer in the country that she loves, while trying to solve this mystery. Ages 10 and up, 74 pages. $11.90.

Hand-picked books for children of all ages!

Family-owned and operated boutique that offers a carefully selected collection of classic and modern books for children. We also offer a selection of audiobooks and music CD’s. Everything you need to build your children’s bibliothèque française!
All Soul’s day is celebrated in Ecuador on Nov. 2. Typical food for this day is “colada morada,” a delicious fruit drink, together with “guaguas de pan,” a brioche-type of bread in the shape of a little child, which in Quichua is called “guagua”.

Colada Morada & Guagas de Pan
**Colada Morada Ingredients:**
1 pound blackberries
1 pound blueberries
10 cloves
10 allspice (sweet pepper balls)
6 cinnamon sticks
4 orange leaves
12 ounces maicena (corn starch)
1/2 pineapples, diced
15 strawberries, halved
1 1/2 cup sugar

Traditional recipe requires the following Ecuadorian spices and fruits, which may be difficult to get. If not available, you can omit them. The result won’t be the traditionally “authentic” colada, but it still tastes good:

4 branches of lemon grass
1 branch of lemon verbena
3 naranjillas
1/2 babaco, quartered
10 arrayan leaves
1 ishpingo (Ecuadorian spice)

**Colada Morada Directions:**
Put strawberries, the pineapple and babaco pieces in a pot, adding water until they are covered. Add 1/2 cup of sugar and boil until soft. Set aside.

Boil blueberries (without water), liquefy and press through sieve.

Boil blackberries and naranjillas separately, adding a little water until covered. Liquefy or mash and press the berries through a sieve.

In another pot, add 2 l of water followed by the spices (ishpingo, cinnamon, cloves, allspice lemon grass and lemon verbena, orange leaves and arayan), boil and let stand for another 5 min. Take out the leaves by straining the water.

Pour herbal water and berry juices into a big pot.

Dissolve corn starch in some cold water and add it to the herbal water, bring to a boil.

Add a cup of sugar and add the strawberries, the pineapple and babaco pieces. Add sugar to your taste (some prefer it sweeter, other less so).

Serve in a mug mixed with the fruit pieces. May be served warm or cold, together with guaguas de pan.

*(Recipe from Martha Guerra)*
Guagás de Pan Ingredients
3 pounds of flour
6 eggs
1 pound butter
4 ounces yeast
4 ounces sugar
1 ounce salt
½ l. warm milk

Guagás de Pan Directions
Combine warm milk, yeast and 2 tbsp sugar in bowl and let stand until mixture is foamy and yeast is dissolved, about 10 minutes.

On the table, mix flour and salt, add 6 eggs and the previous yeast mixture, kneading with hands.

Add the butter and continue kneading until the dough no longer sticks to the table.

Cover, and let stand for approximately 15 minutes

Form balls, and shape them into little figures

Bake in oven for approx. 25 min, at 170 C.

Eat together with Colada Morada!
Take a look inside Magellan’s Toy Shop and see what you can find for your little explorer. Help her learn a new language. Encourage him to connect with his heritage. Let her embark on a voyage to discover more about herself and the world. Whatever you need, we’ve got it here, or we will search the globe to help you find it.

Think of Magellan’s Toy Shop as your neighborhood toy store - the neighborhood has just gotten bigger.

www.magellanstoyshop.com
Gather the kids and put on your apron. The whole family can join in to make these holiday goodies. Don’t forget the cookie cutters and sugar sprinkles!
Ingredients:

1 cup butter
2/3 cup sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 1/2 cups sifted flour

Directions:

Cream together the butter and sugar.

Add the egg to the mixture and beat everything together.

Add the vanilla, salt and sifted flour to the mixture.

Mix until all ingredients are well blended (kneading with fingers is best) and then form the mixture into a smooth ball.

Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and chill it in the refrigerator for 3-4 hours before rolling it out.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit (around 177 degrees celsius).

Cut off part of the dough, roll it out to around 1/4-1/2 inch thickness and then cut out cookies with cookie cutters.

Place the cut-out cookies on a cookie sheet. Sprinkle with sugar sprinkles or other toppings as desired. (Or leave off the sprinkles and decorate the cookies after they are done and have cooled.)

Bake the cookies for about 8-10 minutes or until they are barely colored.

Keep rolling out the remaining dough until all of it has been used.

Cookies can be frosted, if desired, after they have cooled.
Ages 0-2: Figuring It Out

There is nothing like having children around during the holidays, especially if your extended family will be able to share in the fun! But now that your little one is around, you may be questioning which traditions and rituals you will want to pass on to her. This is the time to start thinking about these things! Don’t wait until she is already asking you questions about the holidays to start. It may seem to be too soon to start you will need the time to get used to your decisions and to be able to make changes over time as necessary.

Start off by taking time to write out exactly how you picture your ideal holidays throughout the year to be. Have your spouse do the same. Do you want to have certain foods at certain celebrations, do you want to have extended family involved in the planning for some holidays but not all of them? This list is simply for you and your spouse to discuss so feel free to write down exactly what is on your mind without worrying about hurt feelings. Writting down your ideas doesn’t mean you have to act on them, it is just a way for you to brainstorm and to get your thoughts out.

Once you and your spouse have written down your lists, take time to compare notes. What elements do you agree on and which will possibly cause conflict? Just because there aren’t any issues at present doesn’t mean they won’t bubble to the surface at a later point, so take this time to discuss them now.

Once you have addressed the specifics, talk about how each of you feels about each holiday in general. Are there some holidays that cause more stress and tension than others? If so, why? Does this have to do with extended family involvement or perhaps it is nostalgia. Even if there is nothing you can do to change things, it is most to at least understand how you and your spouse are feeling.

It is up to you and your spouse to work through the details of your holiday list. If necessary, number the issues that came up based on priority or severity. Don’t let the little issues bog you down when there are larger, more pressing issues. In time you will be relieved to have addressed these issues sooner than later and can focus on the little details to make your holidays the best they can

Ages 3-5: Establishing Rituals

The holidays really seem to start to burst with fun and excitement when your children are these ages! There is nothing like the excitement from a 4 year old when the lights are turned low and candles are lit or his delight in the smell and taste of holiday cookies and baked apples.

No matter what the traditions are in your household, now is the time to make sure they are consistent from year to year. If you and your spouse are not clear on what traditions will be celebrated during the holidays, then your children will miss-out on the comfort of consistency that holiday rituals bring.

Your children are now old enough to be asking a lot of “why” questions. Why do we have holidays? Why do we attend a special religious service? Why do we light the candles for 8 days? Who brings us the gifts under the tree? These types of questions are topmost in the minds of children at this stage and they will most likely remember your answers. Whereas a few years earlier you could simply change your explanations from one discussion to the next, you are no longer given the same freedom with a 3-5 year old. They are interested in the details because they are piecing everything together in their minds to form a full picture.

One way to get your child involved in the different aspects of your family’s cultures is to share in holiday rituals and songs. Children at this age seem to be hardwired for learning the words and melodies to songs. Share some of your holiday favorites with your children and make sure to sing them each year during the holidays. The same is true for other rituals that you perform during the holidays. Explain to your children exactly what you are doing and why. If you are lighting candles for a specific reason, explain to your child why you are doing this at this time of year and on this day. If a particular tradition comes from one of your family’s cultures and is not performed in the other, then share this piece of information with your child. Remember that you are the only source of consistent information about your culture’s rituals and traditions so get ready for a lot of explaining and discussion.
Ages 6-10: Staying the course

As your children get older, they want to participate in family rituals during the holidays but more and more on their own terms. They can get bored easily and if they aren’t sure why a certain ritual is performed, they can quickly lose interest. One way to deal with this is to include your children in the planning of holiday activities and rituals. Pick out parts of each holiday ahead of time which can be the responsibility of your children. Perhaps one child will be tasked with choosing or making the holiday cookies while another decorates the house. Remember that the holidays are for coming together and sharing in each other’s joy and love, not to worry about less than perfect cookies or a livingroom decorated differently than you would have chosen.

The mixture of holiday traditions and cultures in your family might start stand out more now. Your children may start to feel uncomfortable celebrating traditions which their classmates or neighborhood friends neither celebrate nor understand. It is important that you acknowledge how your child is feeling about your family’s unique mix of cultural traditions while at the same time helping her appreciate them in their own right. A fun way to work through these feelings is to brainstorm brand new traditions with your children which pull from a little of each of your family’s cultures. Or come up with something totally new that neither culture has as part of its traditions.

To keep your children motivated and involved during the holidays, have multicultural and multilingual activities planned ahead of time. Your children can help you come up with a list and even be responsible for organizing them. Perhaps they will feel motivated to put on a play or theatre piece for their neighborhood friends or classmates who do not share in the same traditions? Or perhaps there are some activities in which other children can participate - for example, making lanterns together and then everyone joining to do a lantern walk through the neighborhood. Whether your children appear to appreciate their cultural traditions or not, it is important to stick with them. In time they will become second nature to you and your family and down the road will be very meaningful to your children.

Ages 11-18: Time Together

Although your teenage children may complain that they would rather be spending time with their friends than hanging around with the family during the holidays, your children are most likely enjoying the fact that they have some dedicated time with you. The traditions that you established when your children were younger are now paying off. But this doesn’t mean that you can stop being firm about the importance of cultural traditions and can stop insisting that all family members participate. Your teenagers are old enough to understand this yet still need your guidance to stick with rituals.

As with younger children, find ways in which your older children can participate directly in the festivities. Your children are at a stage where they might truly enjoy the associations of certain traditions with your native culture. Explain to them what the holiday was like for you as a child in your home country. Talk about all aspects: the smells, the community, the voices and music, the temperature in the air. Your children are most likely very excited to learn more about your childhood as well as the origin of their family’s cultural traditions.

A wonderful way to share across cultures is to have your family put together an end-of-the-year family letter or newsletter to send to extended family and friends. You can outline what each family member was up to during the year and can include overall family highlights. Make sure to have the family create one in each language so that it can be sent to family members on both sides. Cultural aspects from both cultures can be highlighted so that families on both sides can share in the mixture of your family’s cultures. Make sure your children participate in this activity! It will not only help their language skills, it will keep them reminded of family members in other countries. At the very least, share holiday photos and stories with family abroad via the internet. The best way for families abroad to keep up with changes is through photos and the sharing of stories and anecdotes. Remember that spending quality time together as a family will have the most positive, long-term impact on your children.
Websites Worth Visiting!

Websites on the World Wide Web for families interested in language, culture and more!

Christmas Around the World Scavenger Hunts
Pleasant Grove Elementary school has put together four fabulous scavenger hunts for finding Christmas around the world! It is a great way for you and your children to learn about traditions while adding in a whole lot of geography. The scavenger hunts also include links to other sites where you can learn more about world traditions and perhaps add more multicultural fun to your holiday season!
Website: www.henry.k12.ga.us/pges/projects/around.htm

Cultural Profiles Projects
This site is the first place you should visit when searching for information about a country, including holidays and traditions. Click on the country’s name and then click on the “holidays” link to the left. And while you are there, don’t miss the list of other fabulous links! For each country you can learn more about its past, family life and much, much more. This is a great site to share with your children when you want to learn more about your multicultural world. Look up the countries of origin for your family and see what this site has to say. Does it match your experiences? Get your children involved by asking about their impressions.
Website: www.cp-pc.ca/english/index.html

Multicultural Calendar
A fabulous listing of holidays celebrated around the world organized by month! Do you know which culture celebrates Shichi-go-san and when? And why are the Haitians talking about Christopher Columbus on December 5th? Click on the month of interest and see what you can find. Don’t miss the monthly spotlight where an individual and his or her cultural traditions are featured.
Website: www.dom.com/about/education/culture/nov.jsp

The History of Toys
For most children around the world, the holidays are all about toys! But how much do we even know about these things called toys? Start by taking the quiz to see how much you already know. Find out where some of your favorite childhood toys originated and make sure to check out the article about crayons and where they got their start!
Website: www.history.com/exhibits/toys/index.html

Calendars Through the Years
We often consult our calendars throughout the year to find out when holidays will arrive. But where did our calendars come from in the first place? Why do we have calendars? What does the sun and the moon have to do with the history of calendars and why are calendars what they are now? At this site you can learn all of this and much more. Click on the “International” link to learn about the history of calendars in different countries around the world.
Website: webexhibits.org/calendars/year.htm

Multicultural Calendar from KidLink
Read what children around the world are writing about their holidays! This is a great compilation which you can’t help but share with your children. The entries are organized by month, holiday, country and author. Click on the holiday link and you will be amazed with the list of holidays around the world! Who knew there were so many!
Website: www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/MCC/
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Dear Zoo

A great gift for the little ones in your family. This is a dual-language version of Rod Campbell’s popular lift-the-flap board book about a child who is sent all kinds of animals from the zoo. Books for Keeps, the largest independent monthly review magazine for children’s books in the UK, says “The Layout of the book with its superb bold illustrations and lots of space around both language texts, makes for an excellent reader-friendly dual language book.” This book is available from www.LanguageLizard.com in English with the following languages: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Chinese-Simplified, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Lithuanian, Panjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Slovakian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Welsh and Yoruba. Recommended for ages 1-4.

Nativity Poster

Bring something special to your next Christmas celebration and teach kids how to say “Merry Christmas” in many languages including Czech, French, German, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian and more. The Nativity Poster shows the 3 wise men, the shepherds with their sheep, and baby Jesus with Mary and Joseph in the manger. Beautifully illustrated by award-winner Richard Johnson. This poster and many more are available at www.LanguageLizard.com. Size 30 cm x 150 cm.

My Talking Dictionary: Book and CD Rom

A fun and educational gift for the early language learner. This unique bilingual picture dictionary introduces 750 widely used words, arranged thematically. Themes include Clothes, Feelings, Family, Fruits, Playground, Classroom, Music, Weather, Town, Sports, Numbers, etc. The hardback book comes with an interactive CD Rom, which allows you and your child to hear and practice spoken words and do speedy word searches and other exercises. The dictionary is available from www.LanguageLizard.com in English with your choice of the following languages: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Chinese, Chinese-Simplified, Croatian, Czech, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Lithuanian, Panjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Slovakian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Welsh and Yoruba. Best for Pre-K through Grade 6.

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Festivals Poster

Use the holiday season to begin teaching kids about world cultures and holidays. This poster shows illustrations of the following festivals: Wesak (Buddhism - April); Chanukkah (Judaism - December); Easter (Christianity - March/April); Diwali (Hinduism - October/November); Baisakhi (Sikhism - April); Eid-Ul-Fitr (Islam - January/February) and Chinese New Year. The Festivals Poster and many more are available at www.LanguageLizard.com.

Size 30 cm x 160 cm.

Hansel and Gretel

Begin exposing children to folk tales and fables around the world... in 2 languages! Hansel and Gretel is just one of many stories available in Language Lizard's folk tales and fables collection (www.LanguageLizard.com). Lost and hungry, Hansel and Gretel find a magical house made of sweets and cakes. But when they take their first bite, a strange woman invites them in. With a slightly more “mature” theme, this powerful retelling of the classic Grimm’s fairy tale is a good gift for slightly older children (ages 4-8). This dual-language book is available in English with: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Chinese-Simplified, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Panjabi, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese and Yoruba.

Audio CD of 7 Stories (dual-language)

Looking for something special for the bilingual child or the language learner? These audio CDs contain 7 stories in English followed by narration in one other language of your choice. The 7 stories included on the CD are Busker’s of Bremmen, Dragon’s Tears, Lima’s Red Hot Chilli, Mei Ling’s Hiccups, That’s My Mum, Three Billy Goat’s Gruff and Sam’s First Day.

Surprise the child with just the CD -- great for car rides -- or purchase several of the stories so kids can follow along with the stories. The audio CDs and stories are all available from www.LanguageLizard.com. Audio CDs are currently available with the following languages: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Czech, French, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Spanish and Urdu. More languages will be added in the future.
1. c) Costa Rica
Christmas decorations in Costa Rica consist of bright tropical flowers. Wild orchids are gathered from the jungle areas to decorate the portal (manger scene) in the home. Wreaths are popular, though they are not made from pine or holly. Instead Costa Ricans use cypress leaves and red coffee berries. Following Midnight Mass, there is a festive meal of tamales and other local dishes.
http://www.homestead.com/santalives1/christmasaroundworld.html

2. c) 8
Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, is a celebration of the victory of the Maccabees and the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple. When the Jews were preparing to rededicate the Temple, they only found enough oil for the Temple lamp for one day. According to legend, the oil lasted for eight days. The lighting of candles for eight consecutive nights has become the traditional way to celebrate Hanukkah. Every year between the end of November and the end of December, Jewish people around the world celebrate this holiday.

3. a) Hinduism
The sound of firecrackers announces the start of the celebration of Diwali (or Deepawali or Deepavali). Homes are decorated, sweets are eaten, and thousands of lamps are lit. Of all the festivals celebrated in India, Diwali is by far the most glamorous and important. The ancient story of how Diwali evolved into such a widely celebrated festival is different in various regions and states of India. In the north, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Bihar and the surrounding areas, Diwali is the day when King Rama’s coronation was celebrated in Ayodhya after his epic war with Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. By order of the royal families of Ayodhya and Mithila, the cities and far-flung boundaries of these kingdoms were lit up with rows of lamps, glittering on dark nights to welcome home King Rama after 14 years of exile.
Source: http://www.ruchiskitchen.com/festivals/deeplegend.htm

4. d) Ramadan
During this holy time, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar year, Muslims do not eat, drink, or smoke from sunrise to sunset for an entire month. Muslims see Ramadan as a time for cleansing and renewing the body and spirit, and refocusing on the worship of Allah. At the end of Ramadan, each Muslim family gives a special donation of food to the poor, so that everyone can have a holiday meal and participate in the celebration of Eid al-Fitr (“The Festival of Fast-Breaking”). On the day of Eid, Muslims gather early in the morning in outdoor locations or mosques for the Eid prayer. After the prayer, Muslims usually visit family and friends, give gifts (especially to children), and make phone calls to distant relatives to give well-wishes for the holiday (“Eid Mubarak!”).

5. b) Dog
There are 12 animals in the Chinese calendar, and each year is designated with an animal according to a repeating cycle: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Boar. Chinese New Year starts with the New Moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. The 15th day of the new year is called the Lantern Festival, which is celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade.
Source: http://www.123chinesenewyear.com/chinesenewyear/ritual
6. d) Thailand
The Songkran Festival, April 12-15, is the traditional Thai New Year. This is the time for Thais to pay homage to Buddha images, clean their houses, and sprinkle water on their elders in a show of respect. Parades feature huge statues of Buddha that spray water on passersby. Anyone who ventures out on the streets is likely to get a thorough dousing of water, all in good fun, but also quite welcome at the peak of the hot season. People also release fish into rivers as an act of kindness.
Source: http://www.sriwittayapaknam.ac.th/songkran.html

7. b) Grafton, West Virginia
The International Mother’s Day Shrine built in Grafton was the site of the first unofficial Mother’s Day celebration as created by Anna Jarvis, May 10, 1907. Mother’s Day in Britain or Mothering Sunday came to be celebrated again after World War II, when American servicemen introduced the custom and other commercial enterprises. The second Sunday in May is Mother’s Day not only in the United States, but also in other countries including Denmark, Finland, Italy, Turkey, Australia, and Belgium. By the end of Anna Jarvis’ life, Mother’s Day was celebrated in more than 40 countries.
Source: http://womenshistory.about.com/od/mothersday

8. d) Camping and barbeque and celebrating twice a year
Sometimes the traditional dinner is cooked on the barbecue outside and may include a whole variety of typical Kiwi treats, such as lamb chops, along with the usual Christmas fare. Because so many people from the Northern hemisphere now live in New Zealand, it has become the tradition to have two Christmases, one on the 25th of December and the other in July, which is mid-winter. Many hotels, restaurants and homes put on the full Christmas celebration, complete with tree, gifts and of course all the foods which were just too heavy to serve in the heat of summer.

9. a) Each April 23, Turkey celebrates Çocuk Bayrami, or Children’s Day
Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk declared the holiday in 1920, as Turkey was becoming an independent nation after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, to illustrate that children were the future of the new nation. Children all over Turkey dress up in special outfits or the national costume for Çocuk Bayrami. Boys who dress in the national costume typically wear baggy silk pants, a colorful vest, a white shirt and a sequined hat, called a tepelik. Girls wear a long colorful gown called a kaftan and an ornate veil. Many children perform in plays or musicals. The centerpiece of Çocuk Bayrami takes place in Turkey’s capital, Ankara, where children from all over the world sing and dance in a spectacular pageant.
Source: http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0909585.html

10. c) German settlers brought the tradition to the United States in the 18th century
The Easter Basket tradition has its roots in the German folklore of the Easter Hare. Germans believed a white hare would leave brightly colored eggs for all good children on Easter morning. By the 19th century in the U.S., the Easter hare had become the Easter bunny delighting children with baskets of eggs, chocolates, candy, jelly beans and other gifts on Easter morning.

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Some Final Words of Wisdom...

Let yourself be intrigued and inspired by the these words from the Encyclopedia of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education by Colin Baker and Sylvia Prys Jones and published by Multilingual Matters (www.multilingualmatters.com)!

Language Purism

[Language] purism has little to do with the pragmatic, instrumental aspect of language or with effective communication. People can communicate just as adequately in a community where codeswitching from one language to another is the norm, or when people's speech is peppered with foreign borrowings. When people borrow words from a neighboring language for new objects or concepts, or adopt foreign phrases or idioms that appear to have a particular communicative force, they are facilitating communication, not hindering it. (Pages 217-218).

Integrative and Instrumental Attitudes

Two groups of attitudes are located in second language learning. One group concerns a wish to identify with, or join another language group. Learners may want to identify with a different language community, or join in with a second language group's cultural activities, or form new friendships. Other students with negative attitudes to language learning may reject the second language culture and its people. The more a student admires the second language people and its culture, wants to read its literature, visit a particular area on holiday or find employment that requires a second language, the more successful the student is likely to be in learning that language. This is termed an integrative language attitude.

The second type of language attitude is called an instrumental attitude. This refers to learning a second language for useful, utilitarian purposes. Learners may want to acquire a second language to find a job, further their career prospects, pass exams, help fulfill the demands of a job, or assist their children in a bilingual education program.

Research on instrumental and integrative attitudes tends to find that integrative attitudes have a greater likelihood of aiding proficiency in the second language. (Page 176).

Language Learning vs Language Awareness

There is an important difference between language learning and language awareness. The traditional aim of language learning has been for learners to acquire an accurate knowledge of language, with the accent on correct grammar, spelling and pronunciation of a standard form of the language. Irrespective of whether the language is a first language, a second language or a foreign language, the accent in the school curriculum has been on accuracy and conformity to a standardized norm.

In the 1970s, language teachers adopted a different view of language to that of accuracy. They saw language, not as a pattern or structure, but as having different purposes or functions. A functional approach to the study of language emphasizes the importance of using appropriate communication in varying contexts. The language to be used depends on whom a person is speaking to, on what occasion, where, and particularly for what purpose. Differences in context require different uses of language.

There is the language of the shop, of science lessons, of the street, and of story telling. Whether students were studying their first language or learning a second or foreign language, the emphasis was on using contextually appropriate language.

In conjunction with this, the idea that bilinguals use their languages in different contexts and domains (as in the concept of diglossia) became important. A child might use Gujarati at home, Arabic in the Mosque, English at school and learn French as foreign language. A bilingual's languages have different purposes and functions and are used in different contexts. (Page 628).
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Developed by a parent raising bilingual children, Bilingual Families Connect began as a survey of other bilingual families from various language and cultural backgrounds. Their stories were fascinating. Parents were so enthusiastic about sharing their insights and learning from one another that Bilingual Families Connect was created. ©2006