

Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa: A Bibliography of Resources in the Erwin Library, Wayne Community College

Christmas (December 25)

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

The birth of Jesus Christ, described in this passage from the *Gospel of Saint Luke* in the New Testament, has been celebrated by Christians for more than 1600 years. Christmas (from Old English Cristes maesse or "Mass of Christ") is observed annually on December 25 although the exact date of Christ's birth is not known. The Christmas season begins on the First Sunday of Advent and ends on Epiphany.

Christmas is celebrated in many different ways around the world. In the United States and other countries, many churches and homes display a crèche, or Nativity scene. These scenes include figurines of Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus in the stable. They are usually surrounded by the shepherds, angels, the Magi, and animals. Some churches also have a live nativity service. Such services originated during the Middle Ages when many people could not read Latin, the language of the Church. St. Francis of Assisi is generally credited with the idea of recreating the stable scene with a wooden crib occupied by a wax figure of the infant Jesus. However, local people played the roles of Joseph and Mary and the shepherds. Live animals usually completed the re-enactment.

Many Christians attend a midnight Mass or other Christmas Eve services at churches which are usually decorated with poinsettias, candles and greenery. These services are often followed by another service on Christmas Day.

Christmas is also a popular secular holiday which focuses upon the many versions of St. Nicholas and other traditions such as Christmas carols, mistletoe, Christmas cards, and giftgiving. Children write letters to Santa Claus and tell him what they'd like to receive for Christmas. With help from his elves, Santa prepares the gifts and then, on Christmas Eve, he leaves the North Pole in his reindeer-guided sleigh. Rudolph leads the reindeer across the sky and onto each housetop. Santa carries the gifts down the chimney at each home and places them under the Christmas tree. Usually, the children of the house leave cookies and milk for Santa.

Santa Claus is known by other names in different parts of the world. For example, in Germany, he is known as Kris Kringle (from Christkindle or "Christ child") while the French call him Père Noël.

Many people celebrate Christmas with elements of both the religious observances and the secular rituals. However, some Christians reject the customs with pagan origins and many

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secularists discount the story of Christ's birth. Regardless of whether the celebration is religious or secular, the main spirit of the season remains.”

University of Kansas Medical Center Diversity Calendar. Web. 3 Dec. 2012.

< http://www3.kumc.edu/diversity/ethnic_relig/christms.html >

Hanukkah (or, Chanukah) (December 8-16, 2012)

“Chanukah –the eight-day festival of light that begins on the eve of the 25th of the Jewish month of Kislev—celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, of purity over adulteration, of spirituality over materiality.

More than twenty-one centuries ago, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who sought to forcefully Hellenize the people of Israel. Against all odds, a small band of faithful Jews defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of G-d.

When they sought to light the Temple's menorah (the seven branched candelabrum), they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks; miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity.

To commemorate and publicize these miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah. At the heart of the festival is the nightly menorah (candelabrum) lighting: a single flame on the first night, two on the second evening, and so on till the eighth night of Chanukah, when all eight lights are kindled.

On Chanukah we also add the *Hallel* and *Al HaNissim* in our daily prayers to offer praise and thanksgiving to G-d for "delivering the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few ... the wicked into the hands of the righteous."

Chanukah customs include eating foods fried in oil—latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiot (doughnuts); playing with the dreidel (a spinning top on which are inscribed the Hebrew letters *nun, gimmel, hei* and *shin*, an acronym for *Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*, "a great miracle happened there"); and the giving of Chanukah gelt, gifts of money, to children.”

“What is Hanukkah?” *Chabad.org.* Web. 5 Dec. 2012.

< http://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/article_cdo/aid/102911/jewish/What-is-Hanukkah.htm >

Kwanzaa (December 26-January 1)

Dr. Karenga, the founder of Kwanzaa in 1966, explains: “First, Kwanzaa was created to reaffirm and restore our rootedness in African culture. It is, therefore, an expression of recovery and reconstruction of African culture which was being conducted in the general context of the Black

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Liberation Movement of the '60's and in the specific context of The Organization Us, the founding organization of Kwanzaa and the authoritative keeper of its tradition.

Secondly, Kwanzaa was created to serve as a regular communal celebration to reaffirm and reinforce the bonds between us as a people. It was designed to be an ingathering to strengthen community and reaffirm common identity, purpose and direction as a people and a world community.

Thirdly, Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce the Nguzo Saba (the Seven Principles.) These seven communitarian African values are: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith). This stress on the Nguzo Saba was at the same time an emphasis on the importance of African communitarian values in general, which stress family, community and culture and speak to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. And Kwanzaa was conceived as a fundamental and important way to introduce and reinforce these values and cultivate appreciation for them.

The word "Kwanzaa" comes from the phrase, "matunda ya kwanza" which means "first-fruits." Kwanzaa's extra "a" evolved as a result of a particular history of the Organization Us. It was cloned[d] as an expression of African values in order to inspire the creativity of our children. In the early days of Us, there were seven children who each wanted to represent a letter of Kwanzaa. Since kwanza (first) has only six letters, we added an extra "a" to make it seven, thus creating "Kwanzaa."

The Official Kwanzaa Website. <http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml> Web. 5 Dec. 2012.

Scope of the Bibliography:

Internet Resources are completely annotated and have been selected by the Erwin Librarian.

Books are divided into **Non-Fiction** titles, which include books on history, cultural traditions, and holiday cooking and decorating, as well as other topics related to Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Titles in the **Fiction** section will be found in one of four areas in the library, representing three basic, but in many cases interchangeable, reading levels which include **Easy, Juvenile, Young Adult**, as well as **Adult (Fiction)**. Many readers will be intrigued by books from any of these reading levels. A few books, such as poetry, will be found in the General Collection area.

If there is a particular item that you are searching for that is not available in the Erwin Library, it could still be obtained by an Interlibrary Loan request made to the Erwin Library, either in person at the Circulation Desk, by telephone at 919-739-6891, or by submitting an online request from the Interlibrary Loan link on the library's webpage.

Library of Congress Subject Headings may be used in a subject search to search the Erwin Library Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) for more books. The Library of Congress Subject Headings can be excellent search terms, and can be typed into the search box of any major databases.

Internet Resources:

Christmas

“Christmas.” HISTORY.com. <http://www.history.com/topics/christmas>

This website is rich in December holiday resources: the history of Santa Claus, Christmas Traditions Worldwide, History of Christmas Trees, the Christmas Truce of 1914, as well as Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. As the site notes, December has long been a time when human beings have needed a break in a tedious, hard year to celebrate light and hope: “The middle of winter has long been a time of celebration around the world. Centuries before the arrival of the man called Jesus, early Europeans celebrated light and birth in the darkest days of winter. Many peoples rejoiced during the winter solstice, when the worst of the winter was behind them and they could look forward to longer days and extended hours of sunlight.”

New Advent. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03724b.htm>

This fascinating and detailed entry from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* will answer any questions you may have on the origin of the holiday, the name, when and where it was first observed, and so on down through the subsequent centuries. Once the date was in place by long custom, however, the holiday became the highlight of the Christian (and often not-so-Christian!) year. “In England, Christmas was forbidden by Act of Parliament in 1644; the day was to be a fast and a market day; shops were compelled to be open; plum puddings and mince pies condemned as heathen. The conservatives resisted; at Canterbury blood was shed.”

NORTHPOLE.COM <http://www.northpole.com/>

Okay, there’s an Elf Blog on this website for any of you elves out there, especially if Christmastime proves especially stressful with all the extra work making toys in the current economy. Also present are links for kids to Send Santa a Letter, or Pick Up a Letter from Santa (I never got one back myself, but, hey, it’s a new generation out there!), or even to Send Postcards, if you just want to say “Hey, Santa! Wish you were already here!” Activities for Parents, including recipes, are listed. Parents are encouraged to sign in to the Elf Blog. Hmm ... Parents ... Elves making toys: are they in the same business? Does Santa Know?!?

Hanukkah (or, Chanukah)

“Chanukah.” *Chabad.org* .

http://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/default_cdo/jewish/Hanukkah.htm

Find everything here: Chanukah Basics, Chanukah How To, including Menorah Lighting Guide, Chanukah Recipes, How to Play Dreidel, as well as Chanukah Texts & Prayers.

“Hanukkah: The Festival of Lights.” *MyJewishLearning*.

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays.shtml>

“*MyJewishLearning.com* is the leading transdenominational website of Jewish information and education. Offering articles and resources on all aspects of Judaism and Jewish life, the site is geared toward adults of all ages and backgrounds, from the casual reader looking for interesting insights, to non-Jews searching for a better understanding of Jewish culture, to experienced

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learners wishing to delve deeper into specific topic areas.” As to Hanukkah: “Though initially a minor holiday, Hanukkah has become one of the paradigmatic Jewish holidays. Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Jews over the Syrian Greeks in 164 BCE, and is celebrated by lighting a *hanukkiyah*, or menorah, for eight days, eating latkes, and playing dreidel.”

Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. <http://www.hillel.org/index>

“Hillel's mission is to enrich the lives of Jewish undergraduate and graduate students so that they may enrich the Jewish people and the world. Hillel student leaders, professionals and lay leaders are dedicated to creating a pluralistic, welcoming and inclusive environment for Jewish college students, where they are encouraged to grow intellectually, spiritually and socially. Hillel helps students find a balance in being distinctively Jewish and universally human by encouraging them to pursue *tzedek* (social justice), *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and Jewish learning, and to support Israel and global Jewish peoplehood. Hillel is committed to excellence, innovation, accountability and results.” Under Jewish Resources on this webpage find the Holidays link <http://www.hillel.org/jewish/holidays/default> to access a list and explanation of all the Jewish holidays, including Chanukah. There's even a link to send e-cards for many of these holidays, as well as a Chanukah prayer: “We thank You for the miracles, for the redemption, for the mighty deeds and triumphs, and for the battles which You performed for our fathers in those days at this season.”

The Jewish Museum. <http://www.thejewishmuseum.org/>

Under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Jewish Museum is located in New York City. View online exhibits of museum collections containing many Hanukkah related items. You may also download a free a:

“Light My Fire Hanukkah App”

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/light-my-fire-a-hanukkah-app/id577559908?mt=8>

“Celebrate Hanukkah wherever you are! Select a contemporary or traditional Hanukkah lamp from the world-renowned collection of New York's Jewish Museum. Choose a unique background to place it on, light the lamp and then share with your family and friends. You can also save the lamps to your very own collection.”

The Shiksa in the Kitchen. <http://theshiksa.com/>

Tori Avey (The Shiksa in the Kitchen) is a culinary anthropologist and convert to Judaism. She specializes in telling the story behind the recipe, allowing readers to recreate and enjoy the flavors of the past. All recipes on *TheShiksa.com* are thoroughly tested and kosher. Hanukkah is not a time of food denial! Click the link for Hanukkah <http://theshiksa.com/in-the-kitchen/recipes/hanukkah/> and try recipes for Crispy Panko Potato Latkes (pancakes) or Rugelach (flaky dough and chocolate fruit filling). With Jewish populations all over the world the traditions for Jewish holiday foods are influenced by many cultures and make the best of all of them.

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Kwanzaa

The Official Kwanzaa Website. <http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml>

This web site is sponsored by the Organization Us, chaired by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies at California State University in Long Beach, California, who also created Kwanzaa in 1966 as “a cultural holiday, not a religious one, thus available to and practiced by Africans of all religious faiths who come together based on the rich, ancient and varied common ground of their Africanness.”

“Kwanzaa Songs.” *Songs For Teaching.* <http://www.songsforteaching.com/kwanzaasongs/>

“Celebrate Kwanzaa! Whether you need songs for teaching the seven principles of Kwanzaa and lighting the kinara or for celebrating ancient traditions, you'll find a varied selection These Kwanzaa Songs are for children of all ages ... and many will also appeal to grown-ups.” Kwanzaa is also described in a simple way:

“Kwanzaa is an African American holiday celebrated (by people of African descent throughout the world) for seven days—from December 26th through January 1st. The word Kwanzaa is Swahili for “the first fruits” of the harvest. It is rooted in the ancient celebrations of the harvest held throughout the continent of Africa—North, South East and West. Dr. Maulana Karenga formulated and celebrated the first African American Kwanzaa in 1966.

The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa are at the heart of this celebration and are symbolized by the seven candles of the Kinara and embodied in Swahili words for each principle:

- 1) Umoja for Unity,
- 2) Kuchichagulia for Self Determination,
- 3) Ujima for Work and Responsibility,
- 4) Ujamaa for Collective Economics,
- 5) Nia for Purpose,
- 6) Kuumba for Creativity, and
- 7) Imani for faith.

A candle is lit each night for the principle of that day, and added to the candles lit for the previous nights. These principles are focused and reflected upon through our eyes as the African peoples of the Americans.”

Books:

Non-Fiction

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Library of Congress Subject Headings:

African American cookery

Christmas

Christmas. Fiction

Christmas. History

Christmas. Juvenile poetry

Christmas music

Christmas stories

Christmas Truce, 1914

Hanukkah

Hanukkah. Fiction

Hanukkah. Juvenile literature

Hanukkah. Miscellanea

Hanukkah stories

Holiday cookery

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa. Fiction

Kwanzaa. Juvenile fiction

Jesus Christ. Nativity. Fiction

Santa Claus. Fiction

Santa Claus. Juvenile poetry