

JFK Weekly Newsletter

Friday, February 4, 2022 Sara Raabe, JFK Principal

Black History Month

February is Black History Month. At JFK, we strive to incorporate black history into our everyday work. We do take this month as an opportunity to look at how and what we teach and make conscientious changes to ensure we are fully incorporating black history into our daily teaching.

Here are some Do's and Don'ts that were shared with the JFK staff last week from [Deonna Smith Consulting](#) and [Learning for Justice](#):

Don't:

- **Focus on Struggle, Struggle, Struggle:** Yes, it's true that Black Americans have experienced an incredible amount of oppression and trauma in this country, but when you focus only on oppression, it teaches kids to associate being Black with being oppressed when in reality, there's so much more.
- **Craftivity after Craftivity:** The Harriet Tubman coloring pages, the MLK cut-outs, the Civil Rights flipbooks- there are developmentally appropriate ways of talking about these issues that don't include removing all opportunities for critical thinking. I think that there's definitely a place for some thoughtful crafts, but we need more.
- **One Hit Wonders:** You roll out all the materials on February 1st and then come the 28th it's back into the closet!
- **Starting with Slavery:** I know you've heard it before but it's worth repeating! Slavery is part of American history- not Black history!
- **The Parade of Firsts:** The first Black person to... when we talk about heroes and key figures we often get stuck with the "first this" and "the first that"- instead let's try and tell a cohesive and celebratory story!
- **Stop your "regular" curriculum,** to do a separate lesson on Rosa Parks, on the Civil Rights Act or on Martin Luther King Jr. This trivializes and marginalizes anything you are teaching, making these leaders a token of their culture and ethnicity. Students will get the message that the diversion it is not as important as the "regular" curriculum.
- **Decontextualize heroes or holidays,** separating them from the larger social movement or historical place. Great leaders don't make history all by themselves. For example, if you teach about [James Farmer](#), you must also address the work of the [Congress on Racial Equality](#) (CORE) and the [Freedom Rides](#).

Focus on superficial cultural traits based on stereotypes. It's ok to celebrate black music, but teachers should also explore the political and social contexts that give rise to musical forms like hip hop.

Talk about black history in solely "feel-good" language, or as a thing of the past. This fails to help students examine how racism manifests itself today.

Limit the presentation to lectures and reading. Be sure to allow students an opportunity for discussion and reflection.

Teach with little or inaccurate information. Review resources to make sure they don't promote a Eurocentric perspective, which may misrepresent historic figures and social movements.

Shy away from controversial, ambiguous, or unresolved issues. Share the real-life experiences about racial realities in developmentally appropriate ways.

Do:

Incorporate black history year-round, not just in February. Use the month of February to dig deeper into history and make connections with the past.

Continue Learning. Explore how to provide an in-depth and thorough understanding of black history. Textbooks are notorious for omitting information about the struggles of communities, and what they include is limited, so use the textbook as one of many resources. While exploring multiple resources, allow for opportunities to learn along with your students.

Reinforce to students that "black" history is American history. Make black history relevant to *all* students.

Relate lessons to other parts of your curriculum, so that focusing on a leader, like [Fred Shuttlesworth](#), expands upon rather than diverts from your curriculum. By the time February comes around, the context of the struggle for civil rights and social justice should be familiar to students if you have already addressed such issues across the curriculum.

Connect issues in the past to current issues to make history relevant to students' lives. For example, ask students to gather information with a focus on what social disparities exist today and how a particular leader has worked to change society.

Include the political and social context of the community's struggle for social justice. For example, talk about Daisy Bates' political affiliations and her political ideologies. You see her bravery not as just a personal act but as coming out of community determination.

Focus on JOY: There is so much joy and celebration in Black History! Let your students learn about and experience the magic

Keep it Current : Yes it's Black History, but that doesn't mean your lessons have to be stuck in the 50's. You can bring in contemporary issues and stories.

Use Your Resources: Engage your community and the families at your school to make the celebration resonate outside your classroom

Make It Cohesive: Just like with any other unit you're trying to tell a story, avoid peppering in random activities- make it meaningful and intentional.

Chinese New Year

Tuesday, February 1st was Chinese New Year. Chinese New Year is a festival celebrating the start of the new year in the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar and is one of the most important celebrations among East and Southeast Asian cultures.

Each year in the lunar calendar is represented by one of the 12 zodiac animals - the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. 2022 is the year of the tiger, which represents strength, courage, and bravery,

As part of our spiraling JFK multicultural holiday curriculum, students learn about the Gregorian New Year, Chinese New Year, and other multicultural holidays.

Student Submission



by Asher, June, and Zinnia

Dedicated to our families

Important Dates

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

12:15 Early Dismissal

Monday, February 21, 2022- Friday, February 25, 2022

No School

March 17, 2022

11:00am Early Dismissal

March 18, 2022

11:00am Early Dismissal

March 31, 2022

11:00am Early Dismissal

JFK Conferences

April 1, 2022

11:00am Early Dismissal


JFK Conferences





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