



Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice

*A monthly update on the
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
work happening at NGFS*

December 2023

MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Whole School

Our winter holiday Meeting for Worship highlighted different winter holiday traditions, including Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Christmas, Diwali, and Los Posadas.

GUILFORD CAMPUS

Lower School

- A Child's Garden Crocus (Preschool) created a "Love Makes a Family" bulletin board featuring pictures of students with their families as part of their understanding of the diversity of families. Crocus friends have also enjoyed learning about Christmas and Hanukkah traditions. They decorated their felt Christmas tree, explored with their wooden menorah, and read stories about both holidays.
- A Child's Garden Iris (Pre-K) read "Light The Lights! A Story About Celebrating Hanukkah And Christmas" by Margaret Moorman, about a family that celebrates both holidays. The students learned about traditions that are significant to each holiday; they spun tops and dreidels and played the dreidel game.
- A Child's Garden Sunflower (Pre-K and TK) celebrated Native American Heritage month by reading stories and participating in a read-aloud and drum-together activity where they learned many Cherokee words. Sunflower friends also explored the idea of "simple gifts". They read stories and had class discussions regarding the simple gifts of friendship, nature, time, acceptance, and sharing. The children also explored several December holidays with songs, coloring sheets and stories.
- Sunrise (Kindergarten) "traveled" to many countries through their "Holidays Around the World" unit. They began with "visits" to Palestine and Saudi Arabia and learned about Ramadan and Eid-Al-Fitr. They drew their own crescent moons and shared a delicious treat of half moon cookies. Next, they traveled to Italy and learned about some traditional Christmas celebrations. Their own Old Befana delivered panettone and pizzelle cookies to taste. Next up, they learned about St Lucia, Hanukkah, and Los Pasados. Then it was off to Australia, Germany, the United States, and Canada to talk about how Christmas celebrations are different in these countries and what they have in common. They also celebrated Kwanzaa and the Winter Solstice and spent time exploring nature and what this special time of year brings. As Sunrisers have learned about various holidays, they have discovered an emerging theme of togetherness and light in the dark.
- In Rainbow (1st-2nd grades), first grade readers are learning about Early World Civilizations. They began their students with a focus on Mesopotamia and Babylon, where they enjoyed writing their names in cuneiform and building ziggurats out of blocks. Next, they focused on Ancient Egypt and learned about the importance of the Nile River and different gods and practiced writing their name in hieroglyphics. Second grade readers are learning about Ancient Greek Mythology and how Greek myths were used as a way for the ancient Greeks to help explain the world around them.

- Horizon (3rd-4th grades) started their “Countries of the World” unit. They shared about this unit study with their guests on GrandFriends Day and interviewed them about experiences they have had around the world and traditions they know or celebrate that are different from ones typically observed in the United States.
- Galaxy (5th-6th grades) completed their celebration of Native American Heritage Month. They also introduced a new read aloud book about Marie Curie that ties into their Chemistry unit and talked about what a pioneer she was as a female scientist during that time period.

PAGE-FREDERIKSEN CAMPUS

Middle and Upper School

- Middle School DEIJ committee member Rob Mies created a slide presentation of different holiday celebrations, which he presented to the entire middle school before their Simple Gifts exchange. Rob’s presentation featured Christmas, Kwanzaa, Diwali, and Hanukkah. He concentrated on the major activities included in the festivities for each holiday celebration and did a fabulous job presenting to his teachers and peers.
- In conjunction with Middle School History’s current World Religions unit, students are reading articles, short stories, and a novel involving religions from various cultures. They also read Eboo Patel’s (founder of Interfaith Youth Core) article regarding the importance of having open discussions about religion/faith/heritage/heroes, not just as required in class, but to get to know peers as people. Students used the article and a series of related questions to center classroom norms about how we speak to each other during class discussions about the texts we are reading.
- Middle School History classes continued their study of World Religions. They discussed and completed activities on Judaism (Hinduism in November) and wrapped up discussing Kwanzaa (non-religious cultural winter holiday) and Christmas.
- Upper School History classes have focused on the Civil War and Reconstruction. Students participated in a simulation of an abolitionist group’s meeting and researched abolitionists from the early 19th century.
- English 10/11 students have recently been exposed to cultural diversity through a 1957 film adaptation of “Macbeth” by Akira Kurosawa, which is set in 16th-century feudal Japan. The film is in part inspired by the style and characteristics of Noh drama, the oldest ongoing theatrical form in Japan, circa 14th century.
- In grades 9-12, students viewed the Netflix movie “Rustin” about the Black gay Quaker activist Bayard Rustin and the March for Jobs and Freedom in Washington in 1964. Following the film, grade-level discussions were facilitated by teachers to process the messages in the movie on empowerment, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and non-violent activism to produce change. These norms were shared with students to guide these discussions.
 - Use “I” statements, not “we” or “you”.
 - Try to speak one time to allow room for all to process and share their perspectives.
 - Allow time for reflection.
 - When you have nothing to say or agree with something that has been said, you can use the phrase, “Friend speaks my mind.”

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Middle School English teacher Barry Bell has continued to build his knowledge with several articles about how to help students discuss religion in the classroom.
- Danielle Cardille attended a 2-day workshop: UNC TEACCH Autism Program: Strategies for Success in General Education for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Stay Tuned for What's to Come

Horizon (grades 3-4) will be hosting several guest speakers to share about their experiences living in different countries.

Middle school History and English teachers work together throughout the World Religions Unit to have students write a comparative research paper on two religions of their choosing.

History classes in Middle School will study Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism to wrap up the unit on World Religions.

The Middle School DEIJ committee is working on the hallway presentation board. For January, they will have information about MLK Jr, National Day of Racial Healing and about Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Students in Upper School Astronomy and Oceanography will watch a film on Stephen Hawking, who became disabled but persisted in being a great astrophysicist.