What do people celebrate and why?

Interact Discovery Sheets
Social Science
Years 1-4

By Julie Owen
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INTRODUCTION

What do people celebrate and why? This Interact Teacher Manual forms part of the theme, God is faithful and wants us to be faithful. In this investigation we will explore the reasons that people celebrate, and the different ways in which they do this. Most importantly, we will learn about our need to celebrate the things that demonstrate God’s faithfulness to us.

Everyone loves a celebration! Since earliest times, people have looked for reasons to celebrate – from the phases of the moon, to the bounty of the harvest, to the myriad of milestones in an individual’s life. They have danced, decorated and dressed up, sung songs, told stories, feasted and performed rituals to acknowledge or ensure their good fortune.

Every society finds reasons for, and ways to celebrate. Celebrations are about people sharing their joys and sorrows surrounding their ideals, beliefs, their experience and their history, and are often expressed in ways that become traditions for that society. Remembering and celebrating are ways in which people pass on their values to future generations.

The Bible makes it clear that celebration is to be an important part of our lives. Through the prophets, God gave clear instructions about how the children of Israel were to remember and celebrate God’s faithfulness to them. An important part of their calendar was the Lord’s Passover, in which the Jews were to remember God’s deliverance of their people from slavery to the Egyptians. Jesus was sharing this festival with his disciples when he laid down the model for a new celebration of God’s faithfulness – the Lord’s Supper or Communion.

God wants us to celebrate his faithfulness. Remembering and celebrating God’s goodness to us in the past gives us confidence about God’s goodness to us in the present, and ensures that future generations will continue to recognise God’s faithfulness to them.

“The living, the living — they praise you, as I am doing today; parents tell their children about your faithfulness” (Isaiah 38:19).

If you are new to Interact resources we invite you to turn to Appendix I to learn about the Interact Learning Path on which this Teacher Manual is based, and to gain additional planning help.
the key competencies are:

**Practise participating and contributing**

the habit of character focus is:

**Reliability**

the habit of mind focus is:

**Applying past knowledge to new experiences**
the big idea is:

**God is faithful and wants us to be faithful**

the key understanding is:

**It is good to celebrate God’s faithfulness together**

the focus question is:

**What do people celebrate and why?**
What Can You Find?

Read the clues to find things that are hidden in the picture, and then write the secret word that tells us when these things might be seen or used.

__  __  __  __  __  __ We light these
Easter __  __  __  __  __  __ We hunt for these
__  __  __  __  __  __ We raise these
__  __  __  __  __  __ We watch these in the sky
__  __  __  __  __  __ We blow into these and tie them up
__  __  __  __  __  __ We wave these
__  __  __  __  __  __ We eat these
Christmas __  __  __  __  __  __ We decorate these
__  __  __  __  __  __ We string these up and turn them on
__  __  __  __  __  __ We hang these up
__  __  __  __  __  __ We sing or play to make this

Use the secret word to complete the sentence:
We might see or use any of these things at a special __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  __  .
My Jigsaw

Write your name on each of the shapes below. Paste this page onto light cardboard. When it is dry, draw a picture of a special celebration that you have enjoyed, on the cardboard side. Use the lines below to cut your picture into a jigsaw puzzle for someone else to assemble. Cut carefully!

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name:
A Family Celebration

An important family tradition or celebration in my family is ______________________

We celebrate this because ________________________________________________

We celebrate it by ________________________________________________________

Special things we do are

This celebration is important to me because ________________________________

Name: ___________________________
Can You Guess?

List things associated with celebrations under the following headings, and then complete the questions below. Each of the answers will be a word you have written in the boxes. Invite a friend to see if they can guess which words are the answers to which questions!

Names of celebrations
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

Things you might do at a celebration
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

Names of celebrations
_____________________________________________________________

Something you might see or use at a celebration
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

Something you might eat at a celebration
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

Question
1. What is the celebration called when people ___________________________________________?
   ___________________________________________

2. What is a celebration that starts with the letter ________________________________________?
   _________________________________________

3. What is something celebrated in the month of _________________________________________?
   _________________________________________

4. Where would you see a ____________________________________________________________?
   __________________________________________________________

5. Where would you use a ____________________________________________________________?
   __________________________________________________________

6. What celebrations need a _________________________________________________________?
   __________________________________________________________

7. When would people ______________________________________________________________?
   __________________________________________________________

8. What might people do at a ________________________________________________________?
   __________________________________________________________

9. When would people ______________________________________________________________?
   __________________________________________________________

10. What celebration food is ________________________________________________________?
    __________________________________________________________

11. What food might you eat at a _____________________________________________________?
    __________________________________________________________

12. What celebration food has ______________________________________________________?
    __________________________________________________________

Name: __________________________

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key areas of investigation

We are investigating:

1.0 What special events cause people to celebrate?
People everywhere celebrate things that are important to them. Celebrations tell us what people believe and value. Use the categories below to sort the information you gather about different celebrations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Celebration</th>
<th>Name of Celebration</th>
<th>When it is Celebrated</th>
<th>Who Celebrates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Things from the past</td>
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<td>Things in the present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Things that are important to remind ourselves about</td>
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</table>

Name: ____________________________

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Weddings

Weddings are the beginning of a very important covenant of marriage. They are a covenant made before God. He is a witness. Ask someone in your family about their marriage ceremony.

I asked ________________________ about their wedding ceremony.

What wedding covenant vows did they make? ________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What gift or reminder of the covenant was given? (rings etc) ________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Who were the witnesses? ________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What else happened in the ceremony? Why? ________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

To think about: Why is a marriage covenant so important?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Why should we honour marriage in our society?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
My Family Celebrates

Being part of a family group is important, and many families like to celebrate special events together. What kind of celebrations does your family like to celebrate? Look at the headings below and ask your family to help you list celebrations in each box that you enjoy together. Explain when you celebrate each event and why it is important to your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we celebrate</th>
<th>When we celebrate</th>
<th>Why we celebrate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special milestones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Remembering special events</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Special achievements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Things my family believe are important</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Name: ____________________________

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key areas of investigation

We are investigating:

2.0 How do people celebrate?
Wherever people are celebrating, you will find decorations of some kind being used. Decorations are often very brightly coloured and beautiful, making everyone who sees them feel happy.

People like to put decorations in their houses and gardens or in the local community, to tell everyone that they are celebrating something that is important to them. Sometimes, people even decorate themselves, wearing special clothing and colours or painting their skin in traditional ways.

Since ancient times, people have put up decorations when they celebrated. At first they did it to make their ‘gods’ happy, because they thought that if they did not, bad things would happen to them. Some people would decorate trees when they lost their leaves in winter, because they thought the bright colours would encourage the ‘tree spirits’ to make the leaves grow again.

Draw or write your answers to the questions about decorations used as part of celebrations, in the boxes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What decorations make you feel happy?</th>
<th>What decorations are used in houses, garden and communities?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>How do some people decorate their bodies for a celebration? Why?</td>
<td>Some decorations tell us what people believe. Can you give an example of this?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Giving gifts to each other has always been an important part of celebrations.

Cards are sent, or things are lovingly made or chosen to give to family and friends. Sometimes, people give their time by presenting a voucher that gives a promise to do something special for that person.

The wise men brought presents for the baby Jesus when he was born in Bethlehem, but people believe that gift giving began long before that. Long ago, people gave simple gifts like twigs or vegetables they had grown. Over a hundred years ago, people in England gave gifts using a tradition they called ‘cobwebs’. Each family was given a coloured string which they had to follow through a maze of other strings, to find the present at the other end. Some families gathered around a large bowl of grain and took turns dipping their spoon in to find the treats hidden there.

What are some other gift-giving traditions that are part of people’s celebrations?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Why do you think that giving gifts is an important part of celebrations?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
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Food is an important part of celebrations everywhere. Sometimes, people prepare special feasts of traditional dishes as a part of their celebration, and at other times they may fast, which means that they eat very little.

Christmas and New Year Festivals
All around the world, people have developed the custom or habit of serving certain foods at Christmas time. An English tradition is to bake fruit mince tarts and fruitcake, and to eat roast meats like turkey and ham. A Canadian and American custom is to bake gingerbread and pecan pie, while in Russia, many people bake twelve different dishes to represent Jesus’ disciples.

In Scotland, haggis is shared as a part of New Year celebrations. In Spain, some people pop a grape into their mouth for every chime of the clock at twelve midnight.

What food does your family traditionally eat at Christmas or New Year?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Birthday Celebrations
Children in Mexico celebrate their birthdays by the sharing of a piñata, which is a papier-mâché container in the shape of an animal and filled with lollies. In some parts of Africa, it is a custom to eat a dish made from fried plantain, which is a kind of banana.

What foods are a part of birthday celebrations in your family?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Wedding Feasts
When people are married in Italy, little bow-shaped pieces of dough dipped in sugar are served, because they represent good luck. In Indonesia, noodles are shared because they are said to give the new couple long life.

What foods are served at wedding celebrations in our country?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
In the Bible, God told the Jews that they were to prepare certain foods to eat as a part of their celebration. In the boxes below, record some information about foods that are part of different celebrations around the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Celebration</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
Our Traditions

Ask your parents, grandparents or family friends about the different things that they make or do, places they go and see, or events they participate in as part of a celebration.

Gather your information to complete the statements below.

__________________ (name) said, “When we celebrate ________________________________, we like to _____________________________________________________________________________ because _____________________________________________________________________________ ________________________________________________________________________________________.”

__________________ (name) said, “When we celebrate ________________________________, we like to _____________________________________________________________________________ because _____________________________________________________________________________ ________________________________________________________________________________________.”

__________________ (name) said, “When we celebrate ________________________________, we like to _____________________________________________________________________________ because _____________________________________________________________________________ ________________________________________________________________________________________.”
Christmas is a very important time when we remember the birth of God’s son. Jesus was born in a stable to Mary and Joseph, and came to tell us and show us about God’s faithfulness. Today, there are many different symbols that have become a part of Christmas celebrations, but many of us do not think about where they came from.

The story of Santa Claus begins with a bishop called Saint Nicholas. He tossed pouches with gold coins through the windows of needy people in his town. In Holland, children called him Sinterklaas and would leave their wooden shoes by the fireplace for him to place treats inside. Eventually, Sinterklaas became known as Santa Claus.

Candy canes were first made to look like a shepherd’s staff and remind us of the shepherds who came to visit the baby Jesus. The red is a symbol of Jesus’ blood and the white is for his purity.

Lights and candles are to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus said that people who follow him will have the light of life.

Christmas stars and angels are a reminder of the events that happened at the birth of Jesus. A star came to rest over the stable where Jesus was, and angels sang “Glory to God in the highest.”

Christmas wreaths are the shape of circle. Circles have no beginning and end—just like God. He always existed, and always will.

The red and green colours of holly also remind us of Jesus. The red of the berries helps us to think about the blood that he shed on the cross when he died for our sin. The green of the leaves reminds us of evergreen trees, a symbol of the eternal life that God gives to those who are faithful to him.

What is your favourite Christmas symbol? What does it remind you about?
We are investigating:

3.0 Why is celebrating important for people?
A Jewish Celebration

A celebration that is important to the Jewish people is ______________________

It is called this because ______________________

It is to remind them of ______________________

They celebrate it by ______________________

The people involved are ______________________

Here is a picture of part of their celebration. It shows ...

What we could learn from this celebration is ______________________
Talking to Older People

Talk to an older person in your family about his/her life and special events.

I talked to ____________________________________________

An important event in his/her life was _______________________________________

______________________________________________________________

A special time he/she likes to remember is ______________________________________

______________________________________________________________

A tradition or celebration he/she keeps is ______________________________________

______________________________________________________________

He/she does this because ____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Something that is different between ____________________________ and me is

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Something similar between ____________________________ and me is

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________
Christian Celebrations

Christians everywhere remember four important celebrations: Communion or the Lord’s Supper, Baptisms, Christmas and Easter. Can you answer these questions?

What do Christians remember at communion or the Lord’s Supper?
__________________________________________________________________________

How do Christians celebrate this event?
_____________________________________________________________________________

Why is it important for Christians to celebrate this event?
__________________________________________________________________________

What do Christians remember at baptisms?
_____________________________________________________________________________

How do Christians celebrate this event?
_____________________________________________________________________________

Why is it important for Christians to celebrate this event?
_____________________________________________________________________________

What do Christians remember at Christmas?
_____________________________________________________________________________

How do Christians celebrate this event?
_____________________________________________________________________________

Why is it important for Christians to celebrate this event?
_____________________________________________________________________________

What do Christians remember at Easter?
_____________________________________________________________________________

How do Christians celebrate this event?
_____________________________________________________________________________

Why is it important for Christians to celebrate this event?
_____________________________________________________________________________
We are investigating:

4.0 How can we help people to celebrate important things?
A New Celebration

Recall a time when God showed His faithfulness to someone in your family. Think about a new celebration that you could begin in your family to celebrate and remember a time when God showed His faithfulness to you.

Our new celebration would be to remind us of ________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

We could celebrate it by ______________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

I think this would be a good family celebration because ____________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

The people involved could be _________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

HERE IS A PICTURE OF WHAT WE COULD DO TO CELEBRATE GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO US
Celebrating Together

In the Bible, we read some stories that Jesus told to help people understand what God celebrates. Read what he said to help you answer the questions about how we can celebrate together.

**Luke 15:1-7**

What did the man lose? __________________________________________

What did he do to find it?_________________________________________

What did he say when he found it?_____________________________________

How does this story help us understand what God celebrates? ____________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

**Luke 15:8-10**

What did the woman lose?___________________________________________

What did she do to find it?_________________________________________

What did she say when she found it?________________________________

How does this story help us understand what God celebrates? ________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

**Luke 15:11-24**

What did the father lose? ___________________________________

What did the younger son lose? _____________________________

What happened when the son came home? __________________

_________________________________________________________________

How does this story help us understand what God celebrates?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

God celebrates whenever people choose to be faithful to him, and we should too!

Name: __________________________

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Think of celebrations that you share with your family, your friends, your community or your country. For each celebration, write a reason to celebrate that reminds us of God’s faithfulness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we celebrate ...</th>
<th>We can celebrate because...</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Celebrations are a good way to remind us of God’s faithfulness. How has what you have learned about people and celebrations, changed how you feel or think, or what you will do and say in the future? Talk about your learning with your teacher, and then complete these statements.

God has been faithful to me by __________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

When I think about the ways that God has been faithful to me in the past, I feel ___________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Before I learned about the ways different people celebrate, I thought that __________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Now I know that ____________________________________________________________________________

Now that I have learnt about God’s faithfulness to me, I am going to ____________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

I am going to tell other people about _____________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

When I think about what I have learnt, I think that is really important to remember that _______
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Name: __________________________