

Festival of Midsummer

Exploring the Summer Solstice of Scandinavia



Midsummer festival, the dances, learning heritage

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General overview

This exercise focuses on the importance of a long-standing tradition – Midsummer Festival – Midsummer is a celebration that is generally celebrated in Sweden.

In Sweden, the most common celebration of midsummer is tied to a dance around the 'Maypole' a pole garnished in leaves and flowers. People form rings around the pole and begin dancing to famous traditional songs.

Another famous tradition of Midsummer is to create a garland or 'Flower Crown' out of flowers and this wreath, that will be worn during the festivities.

In popular performances, the feast has pre-Christian origins, but evidence of a pre-Christian Scandinavian feast around June 24 is missing. The Christian church celebrates the birth of John the Baptist on June 24 since the 300's.

Traditional Midsommar - Activity 01

Activity overview

“According to Sweden's Nordic Museum, Midsummer celebration originally developed from a Christian holiday for John the Baptist, which took place on the 24th of June. Rather than having midsummer always fall on a different day of the week, it was decided in 1953 that it should always be on the Friday between the 20th and 26th June. Though Midsummer itself wasn't celebrated in pagan, pre-Christian times, it's likely there were other ceremonies and celebrations dedicated to the summer solstice.”

“The Midsummer celebrations usually start around noon, when friends and family gather in the nearest park or archipelago to enjoy a small picnic. The maypole stands tall in the middle of the park, and the festivities begin. It's customary to dance around the pole, and sometimes the first dance is done by a troupe wearing traditional dress before everyone else is invited to join in. Make sure to take part in the *Små grodorna* (The Little Frogs) dance, when people jump around the pole pretending to be frogs – it has to be experienced to be believed.”

The following activity is proposed as a less strenuous learning exercise, the students will understand about cultures through:

Research - Creativity - Quizzes - Manual crafts - Socializing

These methods are not as formal as lectures and can be grasped easier, and enjoyed more. The exercises will cover information about European traditions, holidays and about having a sense of initiative.

Descriptive activity sheet

Stage 1

Description / Instruction

This is for the whole class, and the students will work as individuals or as their groups.

The teacher will say the name of a celebration from across Europe and the students will guess what the date is (2 weeks within the correct answer is acceptable).

Entry level Basic

Objectives

This will increase the amount of knowledge students will have for celebrations across Europe and maybe even invite them to research themselves after if they are interested.

Key competences

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Cultural awareness and expression.

Resources

This [website](#)

And materials that could be added to a crown e.g. Cloth, Paper, different flowers, leaves etc.

Duration

10 - 20 minutes depending on the amount of supplies and on student engagement.

Stage 2

Description / Instruction

Arts and Crafts for individuals or small groups (1-2 Person/s).

Gather the materials you will be using for the creation of the garland. (Wire, Flowers, Etc.)

Have the students State a european celebration, and a date, if the date is within 2 weeks of correct then the answer is referred to as correct, (As the teacher use the internet and search available to check if the provided answer is correct, with the proposed link "https://www.eupedia.com/europe/european_festivals_holidays.shtml")

1. Construct the frame of your crown



With a piece of craft wire, wrap the circumference of your head where you want the crown to go (with care to make sure it is not too tight). And wrap the wire together. Cut off any Excess wire and form the rest into a circular shape.

2. Add greenery to your crown



For those who wish to add greenery to their crown, simply wrap the greenery around the wire circle previously made. Simply use tape to go around the base of any greenery or flowers attached to the base previously made.

3. Add your flowers and fill in



Once you have made a green base of the crown, it is time to add flowers. Simply use any colored or type of flowers that you wish too, making sure to secure them to the crown using tape. Fill in spaces with different types of greenery or flowers to finish creating your crown.

Entry level Basic

Objectives

To increase understanding of written or spoken instructions, to increase people's ability to design and create and to reinforce motor skills when it comes to manual work.

Key competences

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Cultural awareness and expression.

Resources

Thin wire (pipe cleaners work also), flowers, leaves, or alternate assortments of adornments, tape and a tool to cut wire. A computer for the teacher with Internet access.

Duration

The amount of time for this activity will vary from 30 minutes - 45 minutes.

Stage 3

Description / Instruction

This is for the entire class to do as individuals.

Have the students give somebody a flower crown, while the students are giving the other person a flower crown they must give them 3 compliments

Entry level Basic

Objectives

This increases the students capacity to network and increase their social abilities, it also gives a practical example of creating something for it to be given away giving the students a sense of entrepreneurship.

Key competences

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Social and civic competences;
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;

Resources

A completed Flower crown

A person who hasn't been given a flower crown

Duration

This activity may take 30 minutes.

Traditional Celebratory dances - Activity 02

Activity overview

This activity is to bring upon knowledge and understanding around a tradition of many European countries, improving the awareness and abilities of students that will be attending this activity. Dancing is a very important part of many cultures worldwide, it can be dancing for emotions, celebrations, mourning and many more.

The following activities will give the students a basic understanding about European dances and the traditions associated with them, this will improve their ability of social interaction and can lead to an improved sense of social relations, and appreciated of the arts and culture of traditions linked with dancing itself.

Descriptive activity sheet

Stage 1

Description / Instruction

This will be individual work for the students so they can get a broader understanding of different cultures.

The students will research different dances or performances from different countries and they will create a list of ones they have found.

Entry level Basic

Objectives

To expand understanding of cultural differences and performing arts which leads to being more confident and assertive

Key competences

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Digital competence;
- Cultural awareness and expression.

Resources

Internet connection and a device to access information (Phone, Computer, etc.).

Duration

This activity will need no more than 20 minutes

Stage 2

Description / Instruction

This can be completed in groups or as individuals (1-4 people).

The students will choose a dance they will learn and spend the time learning the dance and the music needed.

Entry level Basic

Objectives

This will allow students to take initiative and make decisions and communicating with each other if in groups.

Key competences

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;

Resources

The lists from the previous exercises, an internet connection and a computer.

Duration

This may take quite some time as dances could be difficult to learn (1 hour).

Stage 3

Description / Instruction

This is a whole class activity.

The students will perform their dances for the class, and teach each other the dances they learnt to each other.

Entry level Basic

Objectives

This will exercise initiative and expression, it also leads in areas such as social expression, civic competence and cultural understanding.

Key competences

- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- Cultural awareness and expression.

Resources

The dances they will have learnt, and if they wish, music and a music player.

Duration

There must be time to share dances with each other for 1 hour.

Notes

Potential links to use:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=swedish+midsommar+dances&qpv=swedish+midsommar+dances&FORM=VDRE>

<http://www.thrillophilia.com/blog/world-dance-forms/>

https://dance.lovetoknow.com/Cultural_Dances

Midsommar Dag - Activity 03

Activity overview

All of the exercises listed below are a comparative effort to hold a traditional Midsommar day with the class. There are multiple stages such as researching, learning, comprehending cultures, and cooking/ hospitality.

This activity heavily features the class pairing up and cooking traditional Midsommar food which the students will research and find the recipes. this covers many fields of understanding such as:

Hospitality - Learning to cook, clean, serve, and host.

Digital - Learning how to use the internet and a computer to research and find certain articles or information.

Language - The research that will be found may only be substantial in languages other than the students mother tongue.

Expression - Dancing as a class can provide insight to creative expression and leads to alternate forms of activity.

Social prowess- Dancing and communicating in groups provides first-hand knowledge on socializing and networking with others around them.

Descriptive activity sheet

Stage 1

Description / Instruction

Students will in groups of two learn about Swedish Midsommar.

Students in groups of two will research Swedish Midsommar, including:

Dances

Foods

Traditions

Proceedings

Entry level Basic

Objectives

This will increase the knowledge of students in the fields of:

Cultural

Heritage

Foods/Hospitality

Digital and researching competence

Key competences

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Digital competence;

Resources

An internet connection is required and a computer to access the internet.

Duration

Give the students time to research thoroughly (1 hour).

Stage 2

Description / Instruction

Students in their original pairs will cook their chosen dishes // Students as a class will determine a location.

Have the students prepare their chosen traditional Midsommar dishes, and prepare a location (Classroom/venue).

Entry level Basic

Objectives

This gives the students a deeper and more meaningful understanding of a tradition held in a different country.

Key competences

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- Cultural awareness and expression.

Resources

An ingredient list and cooking process for a traditional Midsommar dish.

Duration

Give time for cooking and preparation (1 Hour) ((Varies depending on chosen foods)).

Stage 3

Description / Instruction

Students as a class will hold a traditional Swedish Midsommar.

The students will hold a traditional swedish midsommar celebration in their chosen location, performing the dances they have learned and presenting the food they have cooked.

Entry level Basic

Objectives

Gives the students a practical activity to perform what they have been researching and allows them to practice hospitality training.

Key competences

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Social and civic competences;
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;

Resources

The cooked foods, a venue or location, a 'Maypole' (can be substituted with any readily available object), dances.

Duration

Depending on the length of time used to perform etc. (Max: 1.5 hours)

Notes

After this has been completed the teacher can ask simple reflection questions e.g.:

- Was the cooked food a success? Why/Why not?
- Was the Midsommar a success? Why/Why not?
- Did you learn something from this exercise? What?
- Was the outcome of the activity clear? Why/Why not?

References

Floral crown creation:

<https://www.zola.com/expert-advice/decor-inspiration/flowers/how-to-make-a-flower-crown>

Brief Midsummer history:

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/sweden/articles/a-brief-history-of-swedens-midsummer-festival/>