

Japan: Carp kites
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Lesson Plan Title: Go Fly a Kite!

Concept / Topic To Teach: Celebration of Children's Day by making and flying carp kites.

Ohio Standards Addressed:

Content Standard: Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts

Students understand the impact of visual art on the history, culture, and society from which it emanates. They understand the cultural, social, and political forces that in turn shape visual art communication and expression. Students identify significant contributions of visual artists to cultural heritage. They analyze the historical, cultural, social, and political contexts that influence the function and role of visual art in the lives of people.

Content Standard: Creative Expression and Communication

Students create artworks that demonstrate understanding of materials, processes, tools, media, techniques, and available technology. They understand how to use art elements, principles, and images to communicate their ideas in a variety of visual forms.

Content Standard: Valuing the Arts/Aesthetic Reflection

Students understand why people value visual art. They present their beliefs about the nature and significance of selected art works and their reasons for holding these beliefs. Students reflect on and respect diverse points of view about artworks and artifacts.

Content Standard: Connections, Relationships, and Applications

Students connect and apply their learning of visual art to the study of other arts areas and disciplines outside the arts. They understand relationships between and among concepts that are common across subjects in the curriculum. Students recognize the importance of lifelong learning and experience in visual art.

General Goal(s): Children should know the date and reasons for celebrating Children's Day in Japan and make a simple carp kite to hang.

Specific Objectives: Students make and decorate a carp kite.

Required Materials: large sheets paper (at least 11 x 17 inches) or large rolls of paper, any colors for fish bodies, yarn or string, hole punch, scissors, glue, glitter, construction paper scraps, various craft cut outs, foam sheets, markers, crayons, colored pencils or any other crafting items wanted to decorate the kite bodies; paper clips or wire “o” rings; paper reinforcements.

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In): Show various images of carp kites. Ask students how they differ from the ubiquitous diamond kite. Tell students about Children’s Day in Japan, when it happens and why it is celebrated.

Children’s Day is celebrated on May 5 in Japan. The festival is mostly for boys (the Doll Festival is mostly for girls). Up until 50 years ago, Children’s Day was called Boys’ Day. Traditionally, children fly streamers or kites in the shape of carp or koi fish. They are flown from a tall pole. There is one kite for each male in the household. The youngest has a red carp and the oldest has a black one. Green and blue are for the children in the other positions in the family. Because carp swim work hard to swim upstream they are a symbol of strength and perseverance—good qualities for boys. On Children’s Day, samurai warrior boys’ dolls are displayed. Boys may take baths in water with iris leaves because the leaves are shaped like the blades of swords. It is believed that because of their shape, they give strength, health and keep away evil spirits. Rice cakes wrapped in oak or bamboo leaves are served on Children’s Day.

Step-By-Step Procedures:

1. Depending upon your students’ needs, talk about the festival of Children’s Day in Japan and the flying of carp kites as part of the Celebration before, during, or after making the kites.
2. Dependent upon the age and skills of your class, either you or your students will draw one side of a koi or carp on one large sheet or sheet cut from a roll.





3. Place a second sheet or piece of the same size beneath the page with the fish outline. Carefully hold them together and cut the fish out keeping the two sheets together.
 4. Decorate both fish outlines with the markers/crayons/colored pencils, glitter, glue, cutouts. The fish may be as stylized as desired.
 5. Place the two cut outs, wrong sides together with decorated sides out and hole punch around the edges creating holes to lace the fish cutouts together. Fish may also be stapled or glued around the edges if desired. If using glue, do not glue the two pieces completely together but allow the fish to remain hollow by only gluing the edges. Leave the mouth area open; do not seal.
 6. Punch one hole on either side of the fish's mouth.
 7. Put paper reinforcements around each hole.
 8. Thread a paper clip or "o" ring into each hole.
 9. Cut two hanging/flying strings of desired length.
 10. Tie one string/yarn to each hole.
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11. Knot both strings together about halfway down the yarn/string and at the very end for ease in classroom display.