

## Kwanzaa

Since most children (and adults for that matter!) don't know what Kwanzaa is, this is a great opportunity to introduce this wonderful holiday to children.

Kwanzaa is a time for African Americans to honor their people, their past, and their unique culture. It lasts seven days, from December 26th to January 1st. Have children hold up seven fingers every time the word seven is sung, or a picture of the number seven. Gather several traditional African instruments to play. Or make special shakers decorated with African designs.

See the Homemade Instruments page for suggestions.

Have three pictures of African Americans to represent family, history (example: a picture of Martin Luther King), and creativity (example: African textile). Three children can be given the pictures to hold up during the corresponding words in the song.



### Discuss the following:

1. Kwanzaa is celebrated by African Americans to honor their families, their history, and creativity.
2. Kwanzaa lasts seven days, and a different principle is honored each day
3. Kwanzaa and the many words associated with it are Swahili. Kwanzaa means "first fruits of the harvest".

NOTE: Although there are 7 different principles of Kwanzaa, for the purposes of simplicity when teaching young children, family, history, and creativity are used in the song.

Recommended for more information and related activities:

Kwanzaa, by Sharon Gale (paperback \$1.95)

## Kwanzaa

Seven days of Kwanzaa, seven days to celebrate  
Seven ways of Kwanzaa, seven reasons to celebrate  
Celebrate your history, celebrate your family  
Honor creativity, and celebrate with me  
Seven days of Kwanzaa, seven days to celebrate  
Seven ways of Kwanzaa, seven reasons to celebrate  
Kwanzaa, Kwanzaa, Kwanzaa



## How To Make Your Shaker

### MATERIALS:

1. **Cardboard tubes** (empty toilet paper tubes are perfect- and free)
2. **Small paper cups**- these fit perfectly into the empty cardboard tube and are widely available in grocery stores and Dollar Store
3. **Pre-cut paper** ( 4 1/2" X 6") to cover the toilet paper tube: Here are some ideas; you can just use what you have. You can use colored paper, patterned scrapbook paper, wrapping paper, plain white paper the kids can color first, or aluminum foil.
4. **Something to fasten the paper to the tube:** tape, a sticker, a rubber band, or glue
5. **Tape** (at least one inch wide) to attach the paper cups to the tube
6. **Rice to fill:** Use one of the paper cups to measure just one cup for each shaker
7. **Optional:** Scraps of whatever you have to decorate: ribbon, colored paper strips, pipe cleaners to wind around, button to glue on.
8. **Whatever you put out, children will use!** So keep a collection box going for odds and ends from other projects. Nothing will go to waste!

### HOW TO ASSEMBLE

1. Cover the tube with a piece of paper (if you're using white, you can color it first)
2. Attach paper with a sticker, tape, rubber band, or glue
3. Insert a paper cup into one end of the tube and tape in place
4. Fill the other cup with rice and pour into the open end
5. Insert the second cup into the tube and tape in place
6. Decorate if you want (this is the most fun and can take the longest!)
7. Put on the music and shake, and enjoy!

### MORE FUN

- ◆ Use different fillers, but don't tape the second cup. Children can compare the sounds, choose their favorite, and then fill and seal
- ◆ Notice how holding and shaking the shaker in different ways changes the sound. When the rice rolls around in the tube it's quiet, but when it hits the cups it's louder, because it resonates
- ◆ Decorate with birthday wrapping paper for easy make and take birthday favors