



**BCDI**

Black Child  
Development Institute

ATLANTA

# A HOLIDAY TRADITION

## CELEBRATING KWANZAA

### DECEMBER



# ACTIVITY GUIDE

**FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN**

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**A HOLIDAY TRADITION**  
**CELEBRATING KWANZAA**  
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## A Holiday Tradition: Celebrating Kwanzaa Activity Guide

*Kwanzaa, a unique and profound cultural celebration, was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga. It is a week-long holiday, observed from December 26 to January 1, that uniquely honors African American heritage and reinforces community values. At its core, Kwanzaa provides families with a distinctive opportunity to connect with their cultural roots, reflect on shared principles, and strengthen intergenerational bonds. The foundation of Kwanzaa lies in the Nguzo Saba—seven core principles that guide community building and personal growth:*

- *Umoja (Unity)*
- *Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)*
- *Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)*
- *Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)*
- *Nia (Purpose)*
- *Kuumba (Creativity)*
- *Imani (Faith)*

*Each day of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba. This structure offers families a flexible framework for cultural celebration, education, and meaningful interaction. It allows families to tailor their celebrations to their own needs and interests, while still emphasizing collective empowerment, personal reflection, and the rich tapestry of African American experience.*

*Unlike many holidays, Kwanzaa is not a religious observance but a cultural one, welcoming families of all backgrounds to explore its rich traditions. It provides a powerful platform for:*

- *Celebrating African heritage*
- *Reinforcing family connections*
- *Teaching children about cultural identity*
- *Practicing community-centered values*

*Through intentional activities, storytelling, and shared experiences, families can transform Kwanzaa from a simple commemoration into a profound journey of understanding, growth, and collective strength.*

### ***The Seven Principles (Nguzo Saba)***

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**Day 1: Umoja (Unity)**

**Day 2: Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)**

**Day 3: Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)**

**Day 4: Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)**

**Day 5: Nia (Purpose)**

**Day 6: Kuumba (Creativity)**

**Day 7: Imani (Faith)**

# Day 1: Umoja (Unity)

**Principle Explanation:** *Umoja emphasizes the importance of unity in family, community, and cultural connection.*

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1

## Family Unity Banner (All Ages)

- **Materials:** Large poster board, acrylic paints, brushes
- **Instructions:**
  1. Each family member adds handprints
  2. Create collaborative artwork
  3. Discuss family connections

2

## Unity Puzzle Play (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Large floor puzzle
- **Instructions:**
  1. Work together to complete the puzzle
  2. Talk about helping each other
  3. Celebrate completing the puzzle together

3

## Family Story Circle

- **Materials:** Comfortable seating, optional recording device
- **Instructions:**
  1. Share family stories and heritage
  2. Each member contributes to the narrative
  3. Highlight family connections

4

## Unity Dance Party (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Music playlist, open space
- **Instructions:**
  1. Play cultural music
  2. Dance together
  3. Create silly group dance moves
  4. Laugh and enjoy family time

# Day 2: Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)

**Principle Explanation:** *Kujichagulia means defining, naming, creating, and speaking for oneself.*

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## 1 I Am Special Craft (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Construction paper, stickers, markers
- **Instructions:**
  1. Create self-portrait
  2. Write or draw your favorite things
  3. Share what makes each person unique

## 2 Family Goal Setting

- **Materials:** Poster board, markers
- **Instructions:**
  1. Discuss individual and family goals
  2. Create visual representation
  3. Support each other's aspirations

## 3 Dress-Up Identity Play (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Dress-up clothes, mirrors
- **Instructions:**
  1. Try on different outfits
  2. Talk about dreams and abilities
  3. Encourage self-expression

## 4 Cultural Affirmation Circle

- **Materials:** Notebook, candles (optional)
- **Instructions:**
  1. Write personal affirmation statements
  2. Share statements
  3. Provide supportive feedback

# Day 3: Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)

**Principle Explanation:** *Ujima focuses on collective problem-solving and mutual support.*

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## 1 Family Chore Dance (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Cleaning supplies, music
- **Instructions:**
  1. Turn cleaning into a fun activity
  2. Give age-appropriate tasks
  3. Dance and clean together

## 2 Community Service Project

- **Materials:** Project-specific supplies
- **Instructions:**
  1. Research local community needs
  2. Plan family-friendly service activity
  3. Reflect on community impact

## 3 Responsibility Sticker Chart (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Large chart, colorful stickers
- **Instructions:**
  1. Create a chart of simple tasks
  2. Award stickers for completed chores
  3. Celebrate collective achievements

## 4 Family Problem-Solving Game

- **Materials:** Scenario cards, whiteboard
- **Instructions:**
  1. Present family challenges
  2. Brainstorm solutions together
  3. Practice collaborative thinking

# Day 4: Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)

**Principle Explanation:** *Ujamaa promotes cooperative economics, supporting Black-owned businesses and collective economic empowerment.*

1

## Penny Saving Jar (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Clear jar, stickers, coins
- **Instructions:**
  1. Decorate the family savings jar
  2. Everyone adds coins
  3. Count money together
  4. Discuss saving as a family

2

## Black-Owned Business Exploration

- **Materials:** Local business directory, notebook
- **Instructions:**
  1. Research local Black-owned businesses
  2. Visit family-friendly locations
  3. Make intentional purchases
  4. Discuss supporting community businesses

3

## Story of Madam C.J. Walker (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Children's book, drawing paper
- **Instructions:**
  1. Read Walker's entrepreneurship story
  2. Draw pictures of dream jobs
  3. Talk about helping others
  4. Create a "Dream Job" poster

4

## Family Economic Game

- **Materials:** Play money, board game
- **Instructions:**
  1. Create a simple economic game
  2. Practice sharing resources
  3. Learn financial concepts
  4. Make game interactive

# Day 5: Nia (Purpose)

**Principle Explanation:** *Nia centers on collective purpose, emphasizing community advancement and generational legacy.*

---

1

## Family Dream Collage (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Large paper, magazines, glue
- **Instructions:**
  1. Cut out pictures of dreams
  2. Create family collage
  3. Talk about hopes and goals
  4. Display artwork prominently

2

## Family Mission Statement

- **Materials:** Poster board, markers
- **Instructions:**
  1. Discuss family values
  2. Collaboratively draft mission statement
  3. Create visual representation

3

## Story of Our Family (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Photo albums, paper
- **Instructions:**
  1. Look at family photos
  2. Tell simple family stories
  3. Draw pictures of family
  4. Create a family storybook

4

## Time Capsule Project

- **Materials:** Container, letters, mementos
- **Instructions:**
  1. Write letters to future selves
  2. Collect meaningful items
  3. Seal and store the capsule
  4. Discuss family legacy



# Day 6: Kuumba (Creativity)

**Principle Explanation:** *Kuumba celebrates creativity and continuous improvement.*

---

1

## Kinara Craft (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Cardboard, paint, candles
- **Instructions:**
  1. Create simple kinara
  2. Paint and decorate
  3. Learn about candle colors
  4. Display family creation

2

## African-Inspired Art Project

- **Materials:** Canvas, paints, references
- **Instructions:**
  1. Research African art styles
  2. Create collaborative artwork
  3. Discuss artistic techniques

3

## Music and Dance Party (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Music, instruments
- **Instructions:**
  1. Play African music
  2. Create simple instruments
  3. Dance together
  4. Explore rhythms

4

## Family Storytelling Performance

- **Materials:** Costumes, props
- **Instructions:**
  1. Create original performance
  2. Assign roles
  3. Practice together
  4. Perform for each other



# Day 7: Imani (Faith)

**Principle Explanation:** *Imani focuses on faith in people, parents, teachers, leaders, and the righteousness of struggle.*

1

## Gratitude Circle (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Candle, comfortable seating
- **Instructions:**
  1. Share things you're thankful for
  2. Use simple, kind language
  3. Listen to each other
  4. Create positive atmosphere

2

## Family Hope Chest

- **Materials:** Decorative box, letters
- **Instructions:**
  1. Discuss personal and family hopes
  2. Write hope letters
  3. Decorate hope chest
  4. Store for future reflection

3

## Inspirational Story Sharing (Preschooler-Friendly)

- **Materials:** Children's books about heroes
- **Instructions:**
  1. Read inspiring stories
  2. Discuss courage and kindness
  3. Act out favorite moments
  4. Talk about making a difference

4

## Family Intention Setting

- **Materials:** Poster, markers
- **Instructions:**
  1. Discuss family goals
  2. Create visual intentions
  3. Support each other's growth
  4. Celebrate collective potential

# Conclusion

Kwanzaa is more than a holiday—it is a profound cultural celebration that bridges generations, honors African American heritage, and reinforces essential community values. Through the seven principles of Nguzo Saba, families create meaningful connections, learn about their history, and build a shared vision of strength, creativity, and hope.

Each activity and shared moment during Kwanzaa represents an opportunity to:

- Strengthen family bonds
- Celebrate cultural identity
- Teach children about their heritage
- Practice collective values
- Inspire future generations

By engaging in these traditions, families transform Kwanzaa from a simple celebration into a powerful cultural experience. The principles of unity, self-determination, collective work, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith become more than words—they become a way of living and understanding our shared human experience.

As you celebrate, remember that Kwanzaa's true power lies in the activities and the love, respect, and connection you share.

Haraka, Haraka! (Quickly, Quickly! - Embrace the journey!)

[Click here for the survey!](#)

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STORY



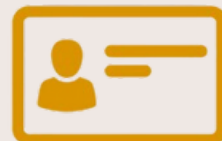
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