

Dear friends and fellow learners,

World peace and harmony begin and we develop understanding of people's thoughts and feelings, their beliefs. Their most important, core beliefs are often celebrated on special occasions, holidays, holy days. We learn to **respect** our world neighbors and community members by learning the history and significance of these holidays, *why* they do what they do. As we **think critically** about the similarities and differences between these belief-based holidays, we learn to **value** the goodness in each other. Our educated understanding helps us **communicate courteously** with people holding different views. We truly become **global citizens** that **work collaboratively** to shape a world where all are welcome and pursue happiness together.

This supports many of our Vermont Day School Guiding Principles, such as:

- Education should be *vibrant, stimulating, relevant and meaningful*. *Innate curiosity, creativity and passion for learning* are life-long qualities to foster.
- *Respect for diversity and individual differences is the foundation of a healthy community of learners. Patience and tolerance, kindness and gratitude, are important attributes to cultivate.*
- *Innovative approaches to learning should be encouraged and celebrated; there is not just one right way.*
- *Effective communication skills* in speaking and writing *are essential competencies.*
- *Learning* is not only about memorizing information; it's about *knowing what to do with it.*
- *Collaboration with peers—at the table, in the community and across the globe—promotes communication, open-mindedness and flexibility.*
- Work habits of persistence, initiative, *adaptability and self-reflection contribute to effective learning.*

There are thousands of resources for exploring our rich world diversity.

As Erin Lynch said (on sadlier.com), "Educators have a responsibility to acknowledge the diversity of students and foster cultural awareness in the classroom."

What a joyful responsibility to foster the cultural understanding that will increase the peace and harmony of our communities at home and around the globe! I am so excited to learn alongside you as we study world holidays.

Con amor y esperanza,

Señora R.