



## **City of Lakes Waldorf School Festival Guide 2011-2012**

"Celebrating festivals can bring us consciously to what we all experience instinctively in our daily lives, the changing cycles of the seasons and of life itself. Through various festivals and rituals we acknowledge and celebrate our connection to and our responsibility toward each other and the world." *excerpted from Festivals by Marilyn Pelrme.*

Throughout the year, we celebrate festivals to connect us with the cycles of nature, establish a yearly rhythm for the children, and strengthen our community. Festivals help us to nourish our souls through the sharing of stories, food, songs and activities linked to the seasons and expressed with beauty and reverence. In addition to the community wide festivals listed here, teachers celebrate other festivals in the classroom, including those connected to different cultures being studied or the religious traditions of the students in the class.

The grades festivals also provide a time for the grades children to share an offering of their classroom work. We hope you are able to attend our seasonal festivals and enjoy the sharing of the gifts of our children.

### **Meaning of Festivals**

More in-depth information on the meaning of the festivals will be provided in the Weekly Update or website prior to each festival. The following books contain information on the rhythm of the year and festivals. They are available in our school store.

*Waldorf Education: A Family Guide*, edited by Pamela Johnson Fenner and Karen Rivers  
*All Year Round: A calendar of celebrations*, by A. Druitt, C. Fynes-Clinton, M. Rowling

## Practical Information

The early childhood and grades classes participate in separate festivals. Many of the festivals are open to the community. Early childhood families are welcome to attend the grades festivals which are usually held at a later time on the same day. We request that all who attend watch the performances respectfully - without talking until the festival is over. Please keep younger children seated with you at all times. It can be difficult for young children to remain attentive to a festival the entire time. When your younger children have reached their capacity for quiet attendance, we ask that they be accompanied to an area away from the festival.

To honor festival days, we ask that grade students wear their best attire.

Locations: Early childhood festivals are held in the school building. Grades festivals are usually held at the Seventh Day Adventist Church located across the street from the school.

## Description of Festivals

(Please note separate times for grades and early childhood festivals. If parents and community are invited to attend, the time and date are included in bold print.)

### Rose Ceremony

The Rose Ceremony takes place on the first day of school as part of an opening day assembly. It is a memorable occasion in which we honor the new first grade students as they cross the threshold from early childhood into the grade school. The children hear a special story from the first grade teacher and each new first grader receives a rose from an eighth grade student as they cross the rainbow bridge to the year ahead. **Parents of first and eighth graders are invited to attend.**



## **Michaelmas**

The first festival celebrated during the school year is Michaelmas. Celebrated on or near September 29th, Michaelmas is a festival little known in North America. The festival takes place near the autumnal equinox when daylight grows shorter. The festival is named for St. Michael, known as the protector of humanity, who inspires qualities of courage, initiative and steadfastness.

### **Grades Michaelmas Festival - Friday, September 30 at 1:30 p.m.**

The grades students participate in activities that reflect the values connected to these qualities. During the grades festival, classes share poems, songs or pageantry. Parents should arrive at Fair Oaks Park by 1:30 p.m. Grades students will process to the park. After the festival, students will return to their classrooms and will be dismissed as usual.

### **Early Childhood Michaelmas Festival - Friday, September 30 at 11:30 a.m.**

In nursery and kindergarten, the primary emphasis is on the celebration of the harvest. The children are engaged in classroom activities such as grinding of grain, planting of bulbs, dying fabric and making harvest soup. Children and teachers use the fruits of the harvest to decorate a house for Mother Earth, then parade out to the play yard in golden capes and crowns to meet her there. This festival occurs during the school day and is not attended by parents.



## **Halloween**

Halloween has its origin in the Celtic festival of Hallowmas, a celebration of the beginning of a new cycle of the Wheel of the Year. At CLWS, we seek to rekindle the light of Halloween through our in-school celebrations. Early childhood classes have a separate celebration from the grades. For students in grades 1-8, the celebration includes the carving of pumpkins with older children helping younger children, and a special assembly with a story in the darkened and pumpkin-lit gym.

## **Day of the Dead (El Día de Los Muertos)**

The Day of the Dead is celebrated in Mexico on November 2. Mexican families construct special altars in their home to honor the spirits of their deceased loved ones. The altars

may be simple or elaborate. At CLWS, the Spanish teacher brings this tradition to life with an altar in the lobby. Children may bring a picture of a loved one who passed away for the altar. The display includes candles, flowers and fruit.

### **Martinmas**

The Festival of Lanterns recognizes the beginning of the time of deep darkness and winter. The children make lanterns in an effort to bring their inner light to this darkest time of the year ahead. The lanterns are often decorated with moons and stars, motifs which are heard in their songs and represent the heavenly forces which want to live in the souls of human beings on earth.

Early childhood students walk with their lanterns, singing songs of light, in the darkened gym. Afterward they are treated to a shadow puppet play. This event occurs during the school day and is not attended by parents.

### **Grades 1 through 4 Lantern Walk - Friday, November 11 at 6 p.m.**

Students and parents gather at the Lake Harriet Rose Garden for an evening lantern walk and to hear the story of the historical Martin. St. Martin turned from Roman soldier to Saint when he sought to share his light with others.



### **Advent Garden**

The Advent season begins with an Advent Garden at school that involves the children walking through a spiral garden as a way of presenting a visual picture of the inner journey the soul makes at this time of year. As each child spirals inward along the path, towards the central flame, so must each of us turn within if we are to find the source of our inner light.

The spiral is set up in the gym on the lower level.

**Grades Advent Garden - Sunday, November 27 at:**

**4:30 for families with last names A-K**

**6:30 for families with last names L-Z**

**Pre-K Advent Garden - Sunday, November 27 at 2:30 p.m.**

**Kindergarten Advent Garden - Monday, November 28 at 5:00 p.m.**

Students meet their teachers in their classroom and parents find a seat in the darkened gym. A mood of quiet is maintained throughout the entire event. After the event, parents pick up their children in the classroom. Pre-K students will sit with their parents and remain with them for the entire event.

This is a season of preparation, of waiting, and of listening for what is to come. There are four weeks of Advent, celebrated by the lighting of a candle each week. During the first week, the mineral kingdom is the focus of our gratitude and in the classroom, children may present small shells, crystals, and minerals to place around the Advent wreath as the first candle is lit. The second week is the celebration of the plant kingdom, the realm of life and growth. Children bring bits of bark, plants, nuts, and dried flowers and light the second candle. The third candle is lit with sympathy and recognition for the animal kingdom as a way of acknowledging the more unconscious forces of nature. The children offer small animals made of stone, wood, clay or wax. Finally, in the fourth week, the last candle is lit in recognition of the human spirit.

### **Chanukah**

The Jewish festival of light commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrians in 165 B.C. and the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem. The eight days of Chanukah are in memory of the eight days that a holy lamp stayed lit even though it only held enough oil for one day. In school, the children may celebrate by lighting the menorah and making potato pancakes and playing a special game with a spinning top called a dreidel.

### **St. Nicholas Day–St. Lucia Day**

Coming near the beginning of Advent is a celebration of St. Nicholas on December 6th. At school, St. Nicholas visits the younger children, who put out their shoes for him overnight and return to school to find bags of nuts and fruit. His visit gives the children a chance to reflect on their past year's behavior and to make resolves for the coming year!

Light is also the image for the feast of St. Lucia on December 13th. In many northern European countries, it is celebrated by a girl wearing a crown of lighted candles. She symbolizes a young girl who was killed by Romans fifteen hundred years ago for refusing to give up her religion. There is also a legend that during a time of great hunger in Sweden, with her head surrounded by a halo of light, she miraculously appeared and provided food for the country.

## **Winter Festival**

The Winter Festival takes place on the last day of school before the Winter Break. The theme of light shining within each individual in the midst of the darkness of the season is at the heart of the winter festival.

### **Grades Winter Festival - Thursday, December 22 at 10:30 a.m.**

(Seventh Day Adventist Church) Students arrive at school at the usual time. Parents should be seated by 10:30 a.m. for the festival. The school is closed at noon and parents should pick up their children in their classrooms after the festival.

### **Early Childhood Winter Festival - Thursday, December 22 at 9:00 a.m.**

Parents and children should arrive in time for the festival and are dismissed at the end of the festival. There is no morning class or afternoon care on this day.



## **Candlemas**

February 2 is one of the great cross quarter-days that make up the wheel of the year. It falls midway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox and marks the beginning of the return of light and springtime renewal of life. It takes the name Candlemas from the tradition of blessing candles on this day for use in church throughout the year. There is an old belief that all hibernating animals, such as the groundhog, wake up on Candlemas Day and come out to see if it is still winter; if the groundhog sees his shadow, there is more winter to come. The early childhood celebrates by making candles and having a bonfire and warm drinks in the play yard.

## **Valentines Day**

The early childhood students observe Valentines Day by making homemade cards for one another and exchanging them at special celebrations in class. Grades students may also share valentines and have an in-class celebration as determined by the teacher.

## **Spring Festival**

The Spring Festival takes place on the last day of school before the Spring Break. This festival celebrates the themes of nature's breathing out, the rebirth and growth of new plant life, the lengthening of the day light hours and the strengthening force of the sun.

**Grades Spring Festival - Friday, March 30 at 10:30 a.m.**

(Seventh Day Adventist Church) Students arrive at school at the usual time. Parents should be seated by 10:30 a.m. for the festival. The school is closed at noon and parents should pick up their children in their classrooms after the festival.

**Early Childhood Spring Festival – Friday, March 30 at 9:00 a.m.**

Parents and children should arrive in time for the festival and are dismissed at the end of the festival. There is no morning class or afternoon care on this day. No school on Friday, March 30.



**Maypole Dance**

May Day is celebrated with a maypole dance. Each year, the fifth graders learn the maypole dance and perform it for the grade school and fifth grade parents. Other classes may participate with singing and music making. The early childhood students celebrate May Day in class by making May baskets and dancing around their own maypole.

**Tuesday, May 1, 1:30 p.m. - 5th Grade Parents Invited**

Grade students and fifth grade parents gather in the play yard for a maypole dance.



## **Summer Festival**

The Summer Festival takes place on the closing day of the school year. The early childhood festival provides an opportunity to say good bye to friends and teachers before the summer starts. The grades celebration culminates in the flag ceremony that involves the seventh and eighth grade students. Graduating eighth grade students receive their diplomas and good bye roses from the first grade students who they welcomed in the fall Rose Ceremony. In addition, individual classes share songs, dances and verses to celebrate the year and welcome the summer.

### **Grades Summer Festival - Friday, June 8, 10:30 a.m.**

(Seventh Day Adventist Church) Students arrive at school at the usual time. Parents should be seated by 10:30 a.m. for the festival. The school is closed at noon and parents should pick up their children in their classrooms after the festival.

### **Early Childhood Summer Festival - Thursday, June 7, 9:00 a.m.**

Start in the school play yard before proceeding to Fair Oaks Park (weather permitting). The festival ends at approximately 10:30 a.m. There is no morning class or afternoon care on this day. The last full day of school for the early childhood is Wednesday, June 6.

## Calendar of Festivals

Michaelmas	Friday, September 30
Martinmas	Friday, November 11
Grades Advent Garden	Sunday, November 27
Pre-K Advent Garden	Sunday, November 27
Kindergarten Advent Garden	Monday, November 28
Winter Festival	Thursday, December 22
Spring Festival	Friday, March 30
Maypole Dance	Tuesday, May 1
EC Summer Festival	Thursday, June 7
Grades Summer Festival	Friday, June 8