



Lesson Plan:

Celebrate Children's Day with Koinobori

Ages: 4+

Duration: 60 minutes

Group size: 2 - 12

In Japan, Children's Day is celebrated on May 5th with colorful carp windsocks called Koinobori that fly in the breeze as symbols of children's health, happiness, strength, and perseverance. Families display these carp windsocks - traditionally with one for each child - to honor children and wish them a bright future.

Using Japanese Carp Windsock Kits, students can learn about this joyful cultural tradition while creating their own windsocks that move beautifully in the wind and showcase their artistic expression.



Activity:

1. Start with a short discussion about Children's Day in Japan - a holiday that celebrates children's growth and happiness. Explain that families use carp windsocks (koinobori) to symbolize their family. See further activity introduction on the back.
2. Show pictures or examples of koinobori flying outside homes and schools in Japan.
3. Give each student a Japanese Carp Windsock Kit and washable markers. Ask them to decorate their carp windsocks with colors and patterns that will eventually blend and soak together.
4. Use the prompts on the back to foster discussion while students color.
5. Once finished, spray each design with water to activate the color diffusing paper, watching hues blend and bloom.
6. Once dry, help students assemble and hang their windsocks in a classroom window, hallway, or outdoors and observe how the carps sway with air movement.

Optional:

- Compare Children's Day traditions around the world and discuss how different cultures celebrate children.

Supplies Needed:

1. Japanese Carp Windsock Kit
2. Washable Markers
3. Spray bottle with water
4. String or yarn (for hanging completed windsocks)

Darby's tip:

Keep mess contained with Roylco's Fingerpaint No Mess Tray, but in a pinch, use a large cookie sheet.



Discussion Guide:

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Activity Introduction

Every year on May 5th, the skies above Japan fill with color. Families hang large, beautiful fish-shaped streamers from tall poles outside their homes – and they dance and twist in the wind like they are truly swimming through the air. These magnificent fish are called koinobori, and each one is a wish. A wish for a child. A wish for strength, courage, and a wonderful life ahead.

The fish on the koinobori is a special kind called a koi. In Japan, there is an old story that says a koi fish swam all the way up a powerful waterfall – and because it was so brave and never gave up, it transformed into a mighty dragon. That is why the koi became a symbol of determination and perseverance. When families fly a koinobori, they are saying to their child: "We believe you are just as brave and strong as that koi." Today, you are going to make your very own koinobori – and just like the ones flying in Japan, yours will be a wish, too.

Additional Discussion

1. Have you ever seen flags or decorations flying outside someone's home? What do you think they meant?
2. Why do you think families in Japan chose a fish to celebrate children? Can you think of other animals that represent being brave or strong?
3. What colors are you choosing for your koinobori, and why those colors?
4. The koi fish in the story swam through a rushing waterfall – how can you use colors, patterns, or shapes to make your koinobori look powerful or full of energy?
5. When your koinobori is finished and hanging up, what do you want people to feel when they look at it?
6. If your koinobori is a wish for you, what would that wish be?
7. The koi fish never gave up, even when the waterfall was hard to climb. Can you think of something you did that was hard, but you kept going anyway?