

Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum

The Kukeri Festival (Bulgaria)

10 minutes prep, 30 minutes class time

This unit is meant to enhance students' understandings of Bulgarian folklore by teaching them about the Kukeri Festival that takes place throughout Bulgaria. Students will be introduced to Bulgaria, their folk traditions, and Kukeri costumes and dances; afterwards, students will create their own Kukeri masks.

Required Materials:

1. Store bought masks (we added an extra layer of construction paper to these to facilitate the decorating)
2. Decorations for masks: adhesive jewels, googly eyes, feathers, markers, etc.
3. School glue
4. Miniature bells (optional)

Preparation: Separate out materials into the amounts needed for your activity groups/tables.

Lesson Plan:

1. Begin by point out Bulgaria on a map. Tell them about the Kukeri Festival that happens in Bulgaria by showing them this video (and reading the captions to them): <https://vimeo.com/59987528>. (5 min)
2. Explain to students that the masks and costumes are meant to get rid of scary thoughts and bad feelings. Ask students what sorts of things the mask might help keep out of their minds. Today they will be making their own masks—explain the craft to them and have them take a seat at the table. (5 min)
3. Have students decorate their own masks. As an optional addition, give each students a small bell to ring like the Kukeri dancers do in the video. (15-20 min)
4. Optional: once masks are dry, play Bulgarian folk music for students (Bulgarian Folk Ensemble on Spotify is a good option), and have them dance around the room with their masks.

