



# REEEC

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center  
University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign

## Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum

### **Making Martinka from North Macedonia**

20 minutes prep, 30 minutes of class time

This unit will introduce students to the popular holiday celebrated throughout the Balkans on March 1<sup>st</sup>: Baba Marta Day. Students will learn about the traditions associated with the day and with welcoming the beginning of spring, including the making of *martinka* (also called *martenitsa*)—small decorations made from red and white yarn, usually in the shape of dolls, one male and one female. With some help from an adult, students will be able to make their own *martinka* dolls.

#### **Required Materials:**

1. Red and white yarn, any thickness will work well.
2. A book or piece of cardboard to wrap the yarn around (the same size you want your dolls to be)
3. Scissors

**Preparation:** Cut a large amount of each color yarn and leave them in two separate piles at each student's seat, along with the book or cardboard that will be used to form the dolls.

#### **Lesson Plan:**

1. Begin by asking the children what country we live in, and then help them locate that country on a map or globe. Then show them where the country of North Macedonia is on a map/globe. (2 mins)
2. Use the printed images to introduce the class to North Macedonia, showing pictures of the capital city, Skopje, and photos of *martinka* and other traditions associated with Baba Marta Day. (5 mins)
3. Explain to students that throughout the region, the first day of March is a day where people celebrate the coming of spring and the end of the cold winter months. To help celebrate, people will make bracelets and dolls out of red and white yarn. These decorations are worn on people's clothes and wrists, and they are also hung around town for everyone to see!
4. Explain the activity to the class (10 mins):
  - a. Each student will first begin by wrapping each strand of yarn around the book to create the shape of their doll. Once they are finished wrapping the yarn around the book, take a small piece of yarn and tie it in a knot around the top of the yarn. This will help form the head of the doll and will also act as a hanging loop when we are finished!
  - b. Next, you must cut the bottom of the wrapped yarn to release it from the book. Using a small piece of yarn, tie it tightly a bit below the top of the yarn bunch to form the head. Then, portion out a bit of the yarn from both sides, tying it at the ends to create arms and hands. Do the same at the bottom. For the male doll (white yarn), split the yarn in half to create legs. The female doll (red yarn), will remain open at the bottom, as if wearing a skirt.

