

Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year, is a celebration of new beginnings, the welcoming of spring, and the focus on visiting with family and friends, enjoying meals together, and appreciating each other.

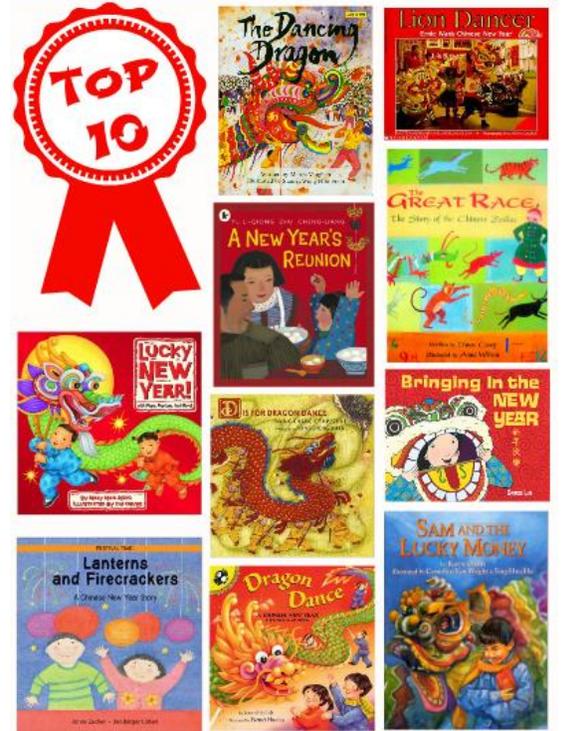
Countries all over Asia celebrate the Lunar New Year – which is a two-week event that follows the lunar calendar. Each year is represented by a zodiac animal. This year, 2022, is the year of the Tiger.

As a parent of two adopted children from China, we are continuously learning about Chinese New Year and Chinese culture. In these few lesson plans, we will learn a few simple traditions and customs using food, colors, activities, song, and books to support the opportunity to learn about another culture and its beautiful traditions.

As an Army wife for 25 years and having the privilege of being associated with units that covered South America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, I learned the most about all of those regions through our unit's native speakers, the dishes they shared, traditions they taught and the time together raising our children while stationed together.

Both of my children agree that learning about other cultures by exploring their foods, music, books, and celebrations are the best ways to learn about countries and communities all over the world.

**Books to Celebrate
CHINESE NEW YEAR**



pre-kpages.com

Materials Needed: Chinese New Year – story and a snack



Books: I love children's books, and I have created a list of a few easy picture books that are engaging and colorful, with some having beautiful photos of families celebrating. Celebrating Chinese New Year by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith. Dragon Dance by Joan Holub and Lucky New Year by Mary Man-Kong

The photo above is a great sample of titles.

Snack Items:

Small oranges or dumplings (variety available in your grocery freezer section or at one of our local Asian markets)

Long noodles (available at your local grocery store or local Asian markets). Cookies and snacks are a bit different in Asia.

My children have always enjoyed unique fruit flavors like dragon fruit and lychee.



Chinese New Year – Snacks and Culture

Crunchy snacks like Pocky sticks, Hello Panda, and rice cracker mixes. When my children discovered Jelly Juice and boba tea (bubble tea), they were always excited when they found them in a new market. (My

daughter was just five years old when we traveled to China to adopt our son. One of her favorite memories was the **entire isle of Oreo cookie flavors!**)

For this experience, keep it simple and choose items that you feel your child will enjoy – maybe the crunchy Pocky and oranges. Remember, you are the model for trying new things – Keep this simple and enjoyable.

How to: When introducing new foods having a chance to explore the item and having a ‘**no thank you**’ bowl can set your child up for an enjoyable and safe experience.

- The idea is to have your child touch the item, smell it, maybe kiss it. If your child is not interested, you can have them put the item in the **no thank you bowl** – this allows them to remove it but still has them touching the item to remove it.
- Reading books with toddlers can be challenging – looking at the pictures together, pointing to faces, everyday items, making silly sounds, or even acting out with different voices can help your child engage in the book for a bit.
- *Give it time* – have other toys out so that your child can go to something familiar.
- If your child enjoys music, you can find some songs on YouTube with videos of dragon dancers, the fan and ribbon dancers, and children singing traditional Chinese New Year songs (links below for some YouTube songs).
- Keep the books out to be explored over a few days and weeks. Offer the snacks a few more times and have your child help with setting the table for snacks, such as putting the choices on the table and the no thank you bowl near their seat.
- One of my favorite traditions in many Chinese celebrations is focusing on family, friends, and spending time together. Chinese New Year is a two-week celebration that allows families the chance to reconnect. Many young adults move to the bigger cities for education and work. Parents are left behind, occasionally helping raise their grandchildren due to cost and pace in the bigger cities. Coming home to reconnect is very common – working together to prep and cook large meals and share stories while keeping traditions alive for the younger generations is encouraged.

Developmentally this activity encourages language development by giving you opportunities to use descriptive language, action words, and silly sounds. Eye/hand coordination and fine motor development are also encouraged by picking up *the* small food items, looking at them, smelling them, and exploring them. Having your child see you playing and exploring, they will try to imitate you – and then you can imitate them. These experiences support self-confidence as you show your child you believe they are someone to follow.

Our goal is to have our children initiate engagement with us.

Learning that they can invite you to interact with them, mimicking each other with actions and sounds while expanding their ability to stay engaged in an activity for a more extended



My daughter and one of her adoption sisters from China. Austin TX 2012.

Chinese New Year – Snacks and Culture

period. Expanding on the length of engagement allows for more time to explore, play, and **play is how children learn**. Being silly, doing something unexpected, new can be exciting and encourage exploration.

Again – use your imagination, plan for what works best for your family and child and HAVE FUN!

Links Below are for YouTube songs, Read Aloud books, and a brief video from both Scholastic Kids and Huffington post that explains Chinese New Year.

Lesson Plan developed by AnnMarie Adams, Special Educator

Photo credit – Google Images, www.prekpages.com and AnnMarie Adams' daughter Emily, age 3 with adoption sister at CNY celebration in Austin, TX 2012.

[Chinese New Year Traditions 中国新年传统习俗 - how to celebrate Chinese new year and things to do - YouTube](#)

[Lunar New Year for Kids | Educational Video - YouTube](#)

[How Asians Celebrate Lunar New Year Worldwide - YouTube](#)

[Dragon Dance: A Chinese New Year Lift-the-Flap Book 舞龙中国新年翻翻书绘本阅读 - YouTube](#)