



Name _____

Date _____

A Light in the Darkness

Directions: Read the passage. Then complete the activity.

There are three main holidays celebrated in December. They are Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. In the northern part of the world, these holidays fall during the darkest part of the year. Each holiday has candles or other lights as part of its traditions.

Jews light a menorah. This word means “lamp.” One candle is lit for each of the eight days of Hanukkah. The candles stand for the oil that kept burning in the temple. One day’s worth of oil burned for eight days. It took that long to purify new oil for the temple. The menorah is placed in a window for all to see. This reminds people of the miracle of the oil. The menorah used in the temple stands for Israel’s mission to be a light to the nations.

Christmas customs around the world use candles and lights. Long ago, people in Europe lit candles to ward off darkness and evil spirits. Some people lit candles during winter solstice celebrations. This reminded them that spring would come. In some places, a large candle would be lit to represent the star of Bethlehem. Today, candles or lights are an important part of Christmas decorations.

During Kwanzaa, families light a kinara in a special ceremony. The ceremony “lifts up the light that lasts.” The kinara holds seven candles. There is one black candle, three red, and three green candles. Black stands for the people. Red stands for their struggles. Green stands for hope for the future. Each candle stands for a principle, or value. These values light the path to bring good to the world.

Activity: Think about what you have learned about the three major holidays in December. Complete the chart to compare the customs and traditions of each holiday. How are they similar? Refer to this passage to get you started.

Hanukkah	Christmas	Kwanzaa

Answer Key *(cont.)*

Harvest Party (pages 93-94)

1. Vivian helps Jenna decorate. / Vivian can reach higher than Jenna.
2. The girls watch Jenna's family get tubs ready for apple bobbing. / Liz sounds excited and keeps the party moving. Jenna calls her sisters.
3. The girls bob for apples. / Beverly gives up. Jenna keeps trying and succeeds.
4. Jenna's mom makes popcorn. / Vivian helped carry the popcorn bowls to the living room.
5. The girls get ready to tell stories. / They (the girls) snuggle on pillows.
6. The lights go out. / Jenna's stepfather calms the girls.

The Many Uses for Pumpkin (page 95)

1. c
2. a
3. Then, they dried the strips and wove them into mats; Other people use pumpkin for medicine; Some people think it will get rid of freckles; Others think pumpkin will make skin soft; People from China use it as a cure for snakebites; They believe pumpkin takes away pain.

A Veteran's Story (pages 99-100)

1. c
2. c
3. Oil sprayed above our ship; Some of our guys were burned from the oil; I was in a room, and a guy stood in the doorway; The force of the blast blew him clear into where I was standing; The main deck of the tanker rolled up like when you open a can of sardines; The man on guard was thrown into the water; We found him about a hundred yards out.
4. Answers will vary

Code Talkers (page 101)

1. Then they worked to create a secret code; It was successful, and more Navajos were asked to join the Marines; They went overseas and used the code during World War II against Japan; "With the Navajo language they defeated the enemy."
2. Answers will vary.

Cranberries (page 106)

1. b
2. c
3. a

The Dreidel Game (page 110)

1. c
2. b
3. Answers will vary.

Gingerbread Cousins (pages 114-115)

1. c
2. The frosting was too thin; they were running out of green candies. They found another box of powdered sugar; they used orange candies for a path.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Drawings will vary.

A Special Gift (page 116)

1. Clothes are a practical gift.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.

Purpose for the Community (page 120)

Answers will vary; possible answer: Tortoise and the Hare fable—the tortoise remained true to the purpose and won the race.

A Light in the Darkness (page 121)

Answers will vary; possible comparisons: candles/lights, decorations, family gatherings, singing (Christmas and Hanukkah), special foods, spending time together