

Unit Title: Celebrating Doll Festival (*Hina-matsuri*)

Language Arts/ Social Studies/Visual Arts (K-8)

Unit goals/ Standards:

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on other's ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words

Lesson Plan One: Doll Making (Grades K-8)

- **One day (40-50 minutes)**

Lesson Plan Two: Doll Sharing and Envisioning the Future (Grades K-8)

- **One day (40-50 minutes)**

Essential questions:

1. **What purposes and beliefs went into the creation of *hina ningyō* dolls in Japan?**
2. ***Hina ningyō* were used to symbolize Japanese ideals for the future of their daughters in earlier times. Do dolls from other cultures serve a similar purpose?**
3. **What kinds of dolls might express your future dreams or the future ideals of people living today?**

Lesson Plan One: (Grades K-8) Doll making

Day 1: (45-50 minutes)

Step one: Read kamishibai: “The One-Inch Boy” (*Issunbōshi*)

Cultural background and synopsis:

In this popular folktale, an old couple wishes for a child. They are granted a child, but he is no bigger than their finger. They take very good care of him, and he grows up to be wise and brave, but he never gets any bigger. When he goes to the capital city of Kyoto to seek his fortune, he saves a princess from an *oni*-demon, who leaves behind a magic mallet. The magic mallet allows the One-Inch boy to transform into normal size and marry the princess!

The central idea behind the Doll Festival is that the dolls symbolize the hopes and dreams of parents for their children’s future. Do dolls in other cultures serve a similar purpose? How do our dolls today express our ideals? Ask students to think about what kinds of dolls they would want to make to express their future dreams.

Step two: Doll making

Materials needed:

- Toilet paper or paper towel rolls cut down
- Paper of different colors and textures
- Stiff construction paper in different colors
- Scissors, pens, and glue
- Yarn and any other material that could be used to make accessories

Students can research Japanese dolls (see websites below) and design their own set of *Hina ningyō*. Have them use the toilet paper rolls or paper towel rolls as backing to the dolls so that the dolls can be displayed upright, sitting or standing. Students can create 3-dimensional dolls with cloth, paper, and other materials glued to the toilet paper or paper towel roll center. Or they can glue 2-dimensional drawings of their dolls to the rolls, as shown.



Paper *hina ningyō* made by Tara McGowan

Step three: There should be shelves available or constructed so that all the dolls can be displayed and admired for several days surrounding the day of the Doll Festival.

Lesson Plan Two: (Grades K-8) Doll sharing and envisioning the future

Day 2: (45-50 minutes)

Step one: Read the kamishibai cards: “The Mouse’s Wedding”

Cultural background and synopsis:

In this story, a father mouse wants his daughter to marry the most powerful being in the world. He starts by asking the sun. Sun convinces him that clouds are more powerful. The clouds persuade him that the wind is more powerful. The wind convinces him that wall is most powerful. But the wall points out that mice are most powerful because they chew holes in walls. Finally, the mouse daughter is allowed to marry her own sweetheart mouse because, after all, mice are the most powerful beings in the world!

Historically, in Japan, the ideal future for a young woman was a successful marriage to a wealthy nobleman, but today, children’s ideals will be as diverse as themselves. This story is about how each creature and person’s happiness is individual to them. Depending on the students’ age, they could be asked to bring in their own dolls or figurines from home for discussion. For older

students, they could be asked to take a critical look at advertisements for dolls today and discuss what ideals these dolls are being made to symbolize. How do these dolls show what is being valued in our society?

Day three (45-50 minutes):

Step one: Younger students could create a display for their own dolls, just as they displayed Japanese-style dolls for the Doll Festival in Lesson One. Older students could create posters or their own advertisements with images of actual dolls or figurines (or dolls of their own design) and write an essay discussing how that doll or figurine reveals what is valued or devalued in society.

Step two or three: Alternatively, or as an extension, students could be asked to draw or write about a doll that would represent their future selves. What kind of doll would represent what they want to be in the future? Just like the mouse in the story, what is most suitable for them?

Lesson Outcomes:

At the end of this two-day lesson plan, students will be able to explain the central idea behind the Japanese Doll Festival and describe through images and words how their own values and ideals for the future compare to those of the past and from cultures other than their own.

Essential Skills:

Cooperative learning, group discourse, critical thinking.

Websites about *hina ningyo*:

http://www.antiquejapanesedolls.com/hina_ningyo.html

<http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/dictio/senshoku/hina.html>

<http://users.clas.ufl.edu/jshoaf/jdolls/hina.htm>

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/calendar/march.html>

Resource sited:

“The One-Inch Boy,” Retold by Joji Tsubota, illustrated by Hisao Suzuki, and translated by Donna Tamaki (Published by Kamishibai for Kids with permission from Doshinsha Publishers, Toykyo, Japan).

“The Mouse’s Wedding,” Retold by Seishi Horio, illustrated by Masao Kubo, translated by Donna Tamaki (Published by Kamishibai for Kids with permission from Doshinsha Publishers, Tokyo, Japan).

Kamishibai cards may be purchased through Kamishibai for Kids: kamishi@kamishibai.com

Website: <http://www.kamishibai.com/>

Other useful resources:

Betty Reynolds, *Japanese Celebrations: Cherry Blossoms, Lanterns and Stars!* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2006).

Florence Sakade & Yoshisuke Kurosaki, *Japanese children’s favorite stories* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 1959).

Gail R. Benjamin, *Japanese Lessons: A Year in a Japanese School Through the Eyes of an American Anthropologist and Her Children* (NYU Press, 1998).

Minako Ishii. *Girl’s Day/ Boy’s Day* (Hawaii: Bess Press, 2007).

Rebecca Otowa, *My Awesome Japan Adventure: A Diary about the Best 4 Months Ever!* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2013).

Setsu Broderick and Willamarie Moore, *Japanese Traditions—Rice Cakes, Cherry Blossoms and Matsuri: A Year of Seasonal Japanese Festivities* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing,

Tokie Ikeda Ching and Sets Arai, *Girl’s Day in Hawai’I with Yuki-chan* (Hawaii: Mutual Publishing, 2007).

Willamarie Moore and Kazumi Wilds, *All About Japan: Stories, Songs, Crafts and More* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2011).