

Japanese Culture and Wellbeing

Kimberley Evans with the Japan Society (2020)

Lesson 2: Friends, Family and Festivals (Connect)

Learning Objectives:

- To think about home and our relationships with others
- To acquire knowledge about the customs and traditions associated with festivals in Japan, particularly Obon.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students can describe what home means to them
- Students complete a craft activity associated with Obon Festival
- Students can explain why connecting with others improves wellbeing

Curriculum Links:

Physical and mental wellbeing

Keywords:

Festival, Obon, Chochin Lantern,

Resources:

Presentation: Friends, Family and Festivals

Video: Obon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcNnWgeFJvo&t=18s>

Worksheets: Instructions for a paper lantern

Additional Resources:

NHS webpage: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing/>

Video: Children's Day <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVivjZdlhal>

Video: Make a paper lantern (alternative task) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miB-NOnga6M>

Task 1

- Use the **Friends, Family and Festivals Presentation**. Explain the theme of today's lesson is exploring the importance of connecting with other people using a Japanese festival.
- Show students the picture of a traditional-style Japanese house. What is this picture showing? Where do they think it is?
- Reveal it is in Japan. Emphasise not all Japanese people live in homes like this.

Estimated Time: 3 minutes

Task 2

- Put the word 'Home' on the board and hand out post-it notes. Ask students to write down three things they think of when they think about home and discuss what they have put with a partner.
- Show the Japanese character for home and explain that it has two meanings: 1. House 2. Wider concept of your family/inner circle where you feel happy/comfortable.
- Discuss links with what pupils wrote. Did any of them write down a physical description of their house or was it more about what makes up their idea of 'home'. Some pupils may have written down the names of family members - discuss how important relationships are when we think about home and happiness.

Estimated Time: 5-10 minutes

Task 3

- One of the most important ways to celebrate family and friends in Japan is through festivals (matsuri in Japanese). What festivals have pupils celebrated? (Eid, Christmas, Diwali etc.)
- Tell students that in Japan, there are many festivals all throughout the year. Look at the examples of Children's Day, 7-5-3 Festival, and New Year's. Then focus on Obon, one of Japan's most important celebrations. Obon celebrates family and ancestors. People return home to spend time with one another and traditionally light lanterns to welcome the spirits of their ancestors back to their homes. Show students the **Obon Video**.
- Use the next slide and the mini quiz to check understanding. Ask students what they saw in the video and how people celebrate Obon.
- Students make a paper lantern decoration to represent the lanterns used at Obon. Remind students that lanterns are used at Obon to guide and welcome the spirits of their ancestors and symbolise a connection with our family history. There are two different lantern decorations, choose the most appropriate for your students.

Estimated Time: 20+ minutes

Task 4

- End with reflection. Ask students:
 - For volunteers to talk about their lantern (alternatively discuss in pairs)
 - Which of the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' do you think is important for Obon?
 - Why do you think that connecting with others is important for our wellbeing?

Estimated Time: 5 -10 minutes
