



# **Holiday Traditions through the Performing Arts**

Curriculum Guide  
Citi Performing Arts Center



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## Program Overview

Citi Performing Arts Center believes it is a right, not a privilege, for every youth to have a creative life, to experience art, and to express themselves creatively regardless of skill level and/or socioeconomic status, and develop their own creative capital. Our philosophy to arts education is inspired by the story of [Walter Suskind](#).

The Citi Performing Arts Center's education program aims to reach people of all backgrounds by providing free and low-cost events that are broad-based and culturally diverse. We are committed to an arts education model that delivers depth, breadth, and impact through city-wide collaboration. We take a holistic approach to arts education and community outreach based on the following themes: Youth Development, Community Learning, and Access.

The SpectrumBoston Ticket Access Program aims to give schools, families and community organizations access to Boston's rich offerings of music, dance, visual arts, theater and cultural events by providing curriculum, show related activities and complimentary tickets to see professional productions. Ticket recipients are from communities that would not otherwise have the opportunity or the funding to share in a singular, unforgettable moment in live performance. Citi Performing Arts Center Community Partners receive first priority when tickets are available through this program.



## Program Set-up

### Curriculum Setup

- The following curriculum targets 1-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, any level of experience, but can be adapted for all ages

### Program Description

- Using a holiday production (such as *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*) as a starting point the youth will explore winter holiday traditions of various cultures
- Youth will use dance and music as an outlet to examine these cultural traditions (i.e. Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa, Chinese New Year, Holiday Traditions of Regional American and/or international cultures, etc.)
- Students will focus on working as an ensemble, developing basic dance and movement skills such as physical warm-ups, body awareness, creative expression, movement sequences across the floor, body levels, pathways, shapes, and an understanding of a variety of dance traditions and techniques.

### Program Activities

- Community building exercises
- Interactive Activities Exploring multiple cultures
- Movement/Dance Warm-ups
- Movement/Dance Floor Exercises based on winter cultural traditions and music
- Attendance at a professional production



The Curriculum aligns with The National Arts Standards set by The Kennedy Center

#### Dance:

- Content Standard 1 (K-4) Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance
- Content Standard 3 (K-4) Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning
- Content Standard 4 (K-4) Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills in dance
- Content Standard 5 (K-4) Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods
- Content Standard 7 (K-4) Making connections between dance and other disciplines

#### Cross Curriculum Activities

- Dance
- Music
- Social Studies
- History

#### Presentation

- Sharing of original work/exercises at the end of the program



## Activity Line

**Introduction to Dance, Movement, and Body Awareness-** The program begins with an introduction to the art of dance and creating a safe space in order to work as an ensemble. Teaching artists will begin with warm-ups and exercises that develop student awareness of their bodies when they move. For example, youth will discover how muscles change through movement. Students will continue this exploration and build confidence in movement through music and dance traditions of a specific culture. They will focus on traditions that are celebrated during the winter season.

**Exploration through Creative Expression and Story-** Once the basic concepts of body awareness are understood by the students, they will begin to investigate how to use movement as a tool to express emotions and story. Utilizing a winter season tradition from a different culture, teaching artists will focus on a specific story that is told through dance/movement. Students will first learn the narrative of the story followed by exploring it physically.

**Exploration through Traditional Dance-** Students will examine a third and final winter dance tradition with the focus on specific dance steps. This might include viewing video and/or photographic samples of traditional dances. Students will have an awareness of the cultural roots of dance steps and put them together to explore the traditional dance routines.

**Rehearsal and Performance-** Students will use all of the elements from the previous sessions to prepare and present a short dance performance that represent the different traditions they explored. They will gather an awareness of the importance of rehearsal and share their presentation with their peers. Students will also create basic costumes and/or props that are part of the one or more of the traditions.



## Section 1: Introduction to Dance, Movement, and Body Awareness

Objectives:

- Students will be able to share their names with the Teaching Artist
- Create a safe space in which they are able to make mistakes, learn together, and take positive risks
- Develop basic dance vocabulary and understanding of warm-up techniques
- Become aware of the different ways in which their bodies move
- Explore the first winter season dance tradition

Activities:

- Name Game Activity
- Movement Warm-ups (these types of warm-ups will be used at the beginning of each day to prepare students for their work and promote dance skills)
- Body Awareness Exercises-
  - Discovering ways in which their bodies move (shapes, tempos, levels, etc.)
  - Understanding how and why muscles move in certain ways
- Winter Dance Tradition Connection-
  - Discussion about the source and relevance of the tradition
  - Using a particular winter dance tradition to highlight Body Awareness and establish comfort with movement.

Reflection:

- Why is it important to warm up your body before dancing?
- What are some different shapes you can create with your body?



## Section 2: Exploration through Creative Expression and Story

### Objectives:

- Students will investigate how to use movement as a tool to communicate and share feelings
- Understand how to use dance to express story
- Investigate a story from a winter holiday tradition and translate it into dance form
- Explore the second winter season dance tradition
- Discover how the dance traditions covered in the residency are similar and different

### Activities:

- Movement Warm-ups
- Creative Expression Exercises
  - movement techniques used to express ideas/feelings; create meaning in movement
- Teaching Artist introduces winter holiday story
  - Depending on the source material students will view or listen to the story and its relation to a certain winter tradition
  - Discussion of the idea of beginning, middle, and end of a story
- Exploration of character and environment
  - Using both dance and non-dance elements students will investigate characters/environment told in the stories
- Recreation of story
  - Utilizing the dance tradition students will recreate the story
- Discussion about differences in this dance tradition and the one previously explored

### Reflection:

- What are some emotions you can express with your body?





### Section 3: Exploration through Traditional Dance

Objectives:

- Students will learn and practice specific dance steps
- Combine dance steps into routines and floor patterns
- Students will have an awareness of the cultural roots of dance steps
- Explore the third winter season dance tradition
- Discover how the dance traditions covered in the residency are similar and different

Activities:

- Movement Warm-ups
- Introduction to specific dance techniques of winter season tradition
  - Demonstrations by Teaching Artist
  - Viewing images and/or video
  - Exploring steps with their bodies
- Dance Combinations
  - Traditional dance steps will be combined into combinations
- Discussion about differences in this dance tradition and the one previously explored

Reflection:

- What was it like putting dance steps together?
- How are these particular dance steps different from the way you dance?



## Section 4: Rehearsal and Performance

Objectives:

- Prepare and present a short dance performance that represents the different traditions they explored.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rehearsal process to prepare for sharing.
- Create or gather basic costumes and/or props that represent an important element to the cultural tradition.

Activities:

- Movement Warm-ups
- Rehearsal
  - Students develop a short sharing that highlights the traditional dances covered throughout the residency
- Costume/prop Creation
  - Using the influence of one or more of the traditions they explored, students will create costumes/and or props to accompany their performance.
  - Students investigate how the costumes/props integrate into the performance
- Students share a short performance for their peers

Reflection:

- Why is rehearsal important?
- What was it like learning new dances from cultures that might be different than your own?