

## **Dear Family Member,**

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Holidays and Celebrations.”

We are beginning our seventh unit in the Benchmark Advance program. As with the previous units, I am providing activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In this unit, your child will read a variety of genres about holidays and celebrations around the world. For example, in the poem “Happy Birthday, USA,” students discover how we celebrate our nation’s birthday while the informational text “The Mother of Thanksgiving,” tells about a woman who helped make Thanksgiving a national holiday.

I’m looking forward to this fascinating unit, exploring the many different types of holidays honoring people and events. Your children will enjoy discovering the history behind familiar holidays they celebrate every year.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

# Holidays and Celebrations

In this unit, we'll read and compare selections about different holidays and celebrations around the world, and think about the question "Why do we celebrate people and events?" Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about holidays and celebrations that your child is learning in school.

## Topic Connection

### Celebrations Then and Now

Have your child interview an older relative, such as a grandparent, or an older friend or neighbor about his or her favorite holiday. In preparation for the interview, help your child to come up with at least three questions to ask, such as *What's your favorite holiday? Why is it your favorite? How did you celebrate the holiday when you were a child?* After the interview, encourage your child to compare and contrast how the person celebrated the holiday as a child with how you celebrate it today.

## Vocabulary Connection

### Match Up

Your child is learning words related to holidays and celebrations. Prompt your child to select one of the holidays they read about, including **Earth Day, Independence Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Thanksgiving, or Veterans Day**. Then visit your local library to explore books about the holiday your child selected. Point out and discuss words they are learning in school that are related to that holiday, such as **speeches, civil rights, American Revolution, enslaved, equal, holidays, honor, president, veterans, believed, helped, lived, saved, jobs, nation, patriotic, celebrate, remember, thankful**.

## Comprehension Connection

### Solve It!

In one of the selections we'll be reading in class, students learn how Thomas Edison solved problems with his inventions. Identifying problems and solutions in a text is an important reading skill. Together with your child, brainstorm inventions that you use every day, such as refrigerator, bus, alarm clock, etc. Then discuss what problem each invention solves.

## Phonics Connections

### I Spy a Sound

In this unit, your child is reading words that have the short *i* sound, as in **win**. Play I Spy a Sound by encouraging your child to identify words he hears or sees during the day that make the short *i* sound.