

Study Guide For Teachers

The Seventh Principle In *Share the Kwanzaa Spirit*

Presented by

Young Audiences

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Kwanzaa is a holiday of African heritage and values, celebrated over seven days in late December, with each day representing a different principle for living. “Share the Kwanzaa Spirit” introduces audiences to this holiday, to its symbols and to African and African-American dance in a Kwanzaa celebration. The Seventh Principle takes its name from Kwanzaa’s seventh principle: “Imani.” The qualities of Imani – hope, courage, perseverance, and belief in self and others – are the teachings of this inspirational dance program for young people of all backgrounds.

LEARNING GOALS

- To present positive images from an African cultural and historical perspective
- To create multicultural sensitivity and awareness through African-based culture
- To encourage others to “reclaim their culture,” to love and understand themselves, and to love and understand others.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The power of “7” is present throughout Africa in astrology, numerology, mythology, and custom. The cultural holiday was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga. Dr. Karenga is Chairman of African-American Studies at California State University.

Kwanzaa is a Kiswahili word meaning “fruits of the harvest.” This celebration was created as part of a cultural base to reinforce African values and positive images in African-American culture. Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday, but a cultural event where families and communities can share ideas, feelings, and history through contemporary ritual, known as the Nguzo Saba. Karenga compiled several types of harvest rituals from various African regions to create a universal celebration of African tradition.

Kwanzaa is also more than just a holiday. Karenga created a value system, where African-Americans can reclaim the essence of the past by connecting modern day ritual to past cultural history. The holiday reminds us these principles should be practiced throughout the year, in our daily life and work.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

- Discuss the meaning of culture. Why is it important to have culture? Name three cultures outside of your own and how they have influenced you.
- Ask students to give their definitions of beauty or describe what is beautiful to them. Why is it important to have a concept of beauty in a culture? If there was one thing that they could change to make their world more beautiful, what would it be?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

- Why would some people find it important to acknowledge their ancestors through celebration?
- Discuss the “seven principles” in Maulana Karenga’s value system with students. Ask students if they think it is important to maintain a value system for themselves?
- Discuss the importance of accepting your own differences. Discuss accepting other people’s differences. Describe your own feelings of acceptance, and how you accept others.
- Have students create a dance that tells their own story.
- Masks were used in many African cultures for social and ritual purposes. Have students create a mask decorated for a special character or purpose.

VOCABULARY WORDS

Nguzo Saba, the principles of Kwanzaa, include the following system for daily living:

Umoja (unity) – to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

Kujichagulia (self-determination) – to define oneself, name oneself, create for oneself, and speak for oneself instead of being defined, named, created for, and spoken for by others.

Ujima (collective work and responsibility) – to build and maintain one’s community and to make each other’s problems community problems to solve together.

Ujamma (cooperative economics) – to build and maintain stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Nia (purpose) – to make a collective vocation the building and developing of a a community to remove elements of oppression and instill a sense of pride.

Kuumba (creativity) – to always do as much as we can, in whatever we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

Imani (faith) – to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and in the righteousness of our struggle.

ARTIST INFORMATION

The Seventh Principle is a one-of-a-kind contemporary dance company that *The Star Ledger* calls headed for success...a fresh take on African culture in a modern world.

The company’s main objective is to heighten awareness of African dance and culture through creative expression of this unique art form. In addition to their focus on African dance in contemporary culture, The Seventh Principle also addresses current themes that reflect the role of an “African in America.” The power of the number “7” is present throughout Africa in astrology, numerology, mythology and custom.

The company name comes from Kwanzaa, a celebration of African heritage and values that includes seven principles as a system for daily living.