



*Revised 4/20/20
Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge*

Prairie Celebrations

4th Grade

60 Minutes

Spring

Summary

Students have an open discussion about activities, memories, or achievements that they believe are worth celebrating. Students then learn about how an author describes “celebration” and make comparisons with their own experiences. Students then look for examples of celebration in the prairie. Students reflect with a partner on the meaning of celebration and think of ways to find daily reasons to celebrate.

Iowa Core Standards

Literacy

Reading

- **RL.4.1**
 - Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RL.4.2**
 - Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

Writing

- **W.4.1**



- Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

Speaking and Listening

- **SL.4.1**
 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.4.3**
 - Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

Materials and Resources

- *I'm in Charge of Celebrations* by Byrd Baylor
- White board
- Dry erase marker
- Blank paper or nature journals
- Pencils
- Colored pencils
- Clip boards

Presentation

Byrd Baylor grew up in Tucson and fell in love with the desert. She eventually left the city and moved to a quiet corner of her beloved desert. Today, in her late 90s, she lives in a solar-powered home and writes children's books. She has more than 25 to her credit, and nearly all are filled with evocative images of birds, coyotes and cacti, written for a young audience.

In her book, *I'm in Charge of Celebrations*, Byrd highlights the moments of desert



beauty to be celebrated: dust devils, rainbows, coyotes and clouds. A young girl wanders through the desert and shows you things worthy of your notice. This book makes you stop and look around you for your own celebrations.

- **Comparing Personal Experience:** Imagine yourself in a natural area nearby. Someone asks you what you could celebrate. What would be on your list of celebrations?
- **Vocabulary, Gathering Data:** List the celebration days that the narrator in the book lists. Find out as much as you can about the things that cause these events. Does anything like that happen in your area? Why not?
- **Senses:** Some of the events in the book the narrator sees, others she feels, smells or hears. Go back through the events and, if the narrator doesn't list the use of one of the senses for that event, think of something for which she could use one of the senses. (carolhurst.com Book Review)

In this creative writing lesson, students will listen to Bryd Baylor's story and discover what qualifies an event as a "celebration". They will then observe and create their own prairie celebrations outdoors. Additionally, they share their celebrations with classmates and explain why they choose them.

Directions

1. Explain to students that today they are going to be learning about "Celebrations." To gauge students' background knowledge, ask students what do they already know about celebrations? What types of things do they celebrate?
2. On the white board, set-up a T-chart with 3 columns. Label the first column "Celebrations." List the students' answers under this column. Common celebrations given by students may be birthdays, championships, weddings, or holidays like Christmas and Easter. Ask students to think of any celebrations they have heard of that are celebrated in other parts of the world.



3. In Korea, they celebrate “Gui Hee Hwang” which is their Full Moon Celebration. The first full moon of the year marks the new year in January.
4. Ramadan is an Islamic month of fasting. Muslims refrain from eating and drinking during daylight hours and is a celebration of patience, spirituality and
5. humility.
6. Day of the Dead is a Mexican holiday on November 1st and 2nd, where Mexicans gather with friends and family to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died.
7. Introduce students to Byrd Baylor. Byrd Baylor is a naturalist and author who lives and writes in Arizona. She currently lives in an abode house without electricity but with 3 manual typewriters. Tell students that Byrd Baylor has written a book about celebrations called *I’m in Charge of Celebrations*.
8. In the second column of the T-chart, write the words, “Byrd Baylor’s Celebrations”. Explain to the students that you are going to read Byrd Baylor’s book to them and by the end of it, they should be able to give you examples of Byrd Baylor’s celebrations. They should also pay attention to what makes something worth celebrating for Byrd Baylor. How would she define celebration?
9. Read about 3 examples of celebrations from the book. The Dust Devil Day, The Rainbow Celebration Day, and the New Year Celebration are recommended.
10. After reading, have students share examples of Byrd Baylor’s celebrations. Ask them to define “celebration” according to Byrd Baylor. Record their answers under the “Byrd Baylor’s celebrations” column on the T-chart. Explain that Byrd Baylor believes that celebrations should make their heart pound, leave them feeling amazed, and catch their breath.



- 11.**Next, explain that they will have to come up with their own prairie celebrations, just like Byrd Baylor has done. By exploring outside, they will need to find something that makes their heart pound, or leaves them amazed or catches their breath.
- 12.**Have students copy down the list of the three qualifications for a celebration in their journals, leaving lots of room to journal and draw about their own new celebrations. Be sure they include the date, time, weather conditions, and location in the heading of their journals. Have students line up at the door and remind them of what it means to be a naturalist- calm and quiet, asking questions, having fun, sharing discoveries, being happy outside.
- 13.**Once outside, have students work independently and journal and search for celebrations. Students may draw and/or write about their celebrations.
- 14.**After about 10 minutes of searching for celebrations, call the students back inside or make a circle in the grass outside if weather permits
- 15.**Have students raise their hand to share their celebrations with the class. If inside, record them under the column on the board labeled “Prairie Celebrations.”
- 16.**After some students have shared their celebrations, end with a rhetorical question, “Could you find a celebration outside every day?”



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Resources

Whiteboard

CELEBRATIONS!		
My Celebrations	Byrd Baylor's Celebrations	Prairie Celebrations



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Journal Prompt

NSNWR	Name	
Weather	Date	Time
Temp	<u>Prairie Celebrations</u>	