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FUN FOR KIDS

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF THE SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS AND THE EDUCATORS' ROUNDTABLE, PUBLISHED MONTHLY TO PROMOTE LEARNING AMONG YOUNG READERS IN NATURAL SCIENCE, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY, AND ART

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This Month's Theme: Celebrations in Santa Barbara

Holidays

Holidays are days when you spend time with family and friends celebrating something special. It can be a day to celebrate our culture, special event in our community, or a religious holiday.

Holidays bring people together. There are many fun and interesting things you can do to celebrate. Your family may have a good time making special foods. There may be celebrations at special religious services or with games, dances, exhibitions or parades. Families often try to come and visit with one another. Maybe you do all these things in your favorite celebrations!

In Santa Barbara, there are many holiday traditions all year round. We celebrate Fourth of July with fireworks and parades. We celebrate mid-summer with a Solstice parade. We celebrate community roots with a Fiesta in August. There

are also lots of winter holidays. December 21st is the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of sunlight in the year. This makes people think about the beauty and warmth of light. Some of the celebrations in our community that feature lights are the Chumash Kakunupmawa Winter Solstice celebration, Chanukah, Christmas, and the Scandinavian Santa Lucia Day just to name a few. The importance and beauty of light is often shown with candles, decorative lights or natural lights such as stars, sun, and moon.

Each of you may have a favorite celebration. Think about what you like most about your favorite holiday.

Answer the questions below.
Think about which holiday is your favorite, what it's about, and what it is that you like best. Ask your family to tell you about their favorite holiday traditions too. Is it the special foods? Is it having lots of family around? Is it songs or dances or parades? Is it special stories? Is it colorful decorations? **Draw a picture of your favorite holiday.**



Una Noche de las Posadas

Judy Pierce

Una Pastorela

Una Pastorela, sometimes called *Los Pastoreles*, is a traditional Christmas play surrounding the shepherds who came to witness the birth of Jesus. It is a folk art form that has been performed in Europe since the Middle Ages. Generally passed from generation to generation orally, this play was transcribed by the prominent 18th-century Santa Barbara resident Pablo de la Guerra; this is the version produced in Santa Barbara this year. At its core, the play is the fight between good and evil, with the Devil tempting the shepherds as they search for Jesus, and angels trying to stop him and keep the shepherds from being corrupted. The ferocity of the Devil mixed with the sweetness of the shepherds makes for a production that is full of drama and comedy, tenderness and wit in the holiday season.



Una Pastorela

Wm. B. Dewey

Las Posadas

Las Posadas (The Inns) is a tradition that goes back over 400 years. It is a charming custom that recalls Joseph and Mary's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of shelter. The event traditionally takes place over nine days, and involves much of the community during this special time of feasting and merrymaking. Children portray the main characters. Usually accompanied by an angel, a delightful donkey, and community members, they gather for a procession through the neighborhood, singing Christmas songs. They are refused lodging at several houses, until finally a host house lets them in. The procession enters, everybody sings more songs, and they break for food, festivities and a piñata for children.

Celebrating Christmas in Santa Barbara

There are two important ways that Santa Barbara celebrates Christmas that date back to Spanish and Mexican California – the shepherd's play, *Una Pastorela*, and the reenactment of the holy family's search for lodging, *Las Posadas*. Both events are still presented today in Santa Barbara during the holiday season.

Chumash Winter Solstice and Holidays at the Mission

Since our city's early history, the Mission has been used for many town events and cultural celebrations. In the winter many people still come to see the life size nativity scene on the lawn. The original baby is from a very old mission nativity scene that is still in the Mission museum today. Back in the early 1800s, Christmas was not the only winter celebration at the Mission. In the old days, the Chumash held many traditional ceremonies and dances

on the Mission steps.

The Chumash also had a special way of celebrating the *Winter Solstice*, the day of the shortest sunlight of the year. Before the Spanish came, the Chumash had caves with paintings lit by sunlight only at dawn on the Solstice. So when they helped build Mission Santa Barbara, they put a window over the door perfectly lined up with the sunrise location on the Solstice. On that day only, the dawn sunlight would stream through the window and light up the church altar and the box (Tabernacle) they had made. The Chumash artists had decorated the tabernacle on the altar with Christian symbols as well as mirrors and shiny abalone shell to reflect light. On the Solstice it would glow with the morning sunlight.

After the 1925 earthquake, the window was covered over. People forgot the window was a special part of the Chumash Solstice celebration. But the tabernacle the Chumash made is still there. It is such a famous cross-cultural art work (something from two cultures not just one) that Mexico's College of San Ildefonso is putting it in an art exhibit traveling for two years in Mexico and the United States. After many people see it here in Santa Barbara, the Chumash tabernacle will go on tour and end its journey at the Los Angeles' Autry Museum before returning to Santa Barbara. You can see it at the Mission for about ten more weeks.

1789 Chumash Tabernacle at Mission Santa Barbara



Kristina Foss, Santa Barbara Mission

Holiday Events Word Search

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| CHANUKAH | LAS POSADAS | STARS |
| CHRISTMAS | MARY | UNA PASTORELA |
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Page by Kristina Foss, Santa Barbara Mission, Karen Schultz Anderson and Jeff Krisko, Santa Barbara Historic Trust For Preservation, and Robin Roe, Santa Barbara Historical Museum.

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