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The First Chinese Dragons

This activity is based on a particular book, but if that book is not readily available, you may use the same activities with similar Dragon Stories.

Goals

Introduce other cultures and learn respect for differences.

Discuss societal structure in simple terms, like families, tribes, and communities.

Review ways to choose alternatives to fighting (war).

Foster imagination.

Basis

Use the book *Legend of the Chinese Dragon*, by Sellier, or another that addresses similar legends.

Alternatively, numerous stories about the origins of Chinese dragons are available online. You might find what you're looking for at:

{www.chinaculture.org}

{www.mythicalrealm.com}

{www.helium.com}

{dragonsinn.net}

Important: NWDragons.com does not endorse any other web sites or sources, and reminds readers that web sites change frequently. If the links above are not useful, search using terms like “origins of Asian dragons” for plenty of creative source material.

Begin the lesson by asking students what they know about Asian countries or traditions. Encourage responses that focus on culture. Expect a great disparity of awareness; focus on central concepts such as different language, different foods, same humans, etc. Then introduce the story as a way to discover what a valuable gift the dragon was to China and why it is so highly revered today. Remind students to be imagining their own dragon as they listen. Read and share the story, encouraging discussion along the way.

Crafts/Activities

If you're working with a larger group, the group could create a dragon together. Construction paper or sections of a cardboard tube could be decorated, and linked together with yarn. Head and tail can be shaped separately, perhaps prior to the lesson, with paper-maché or construction paper. If you're working with one or two children the construction of a dragon could extend over a few days.



Include the dragon in your own New Year's Day parade, or use it as a centerpiece on a table while trying out new Asian foods. Chopsticks might be a novel experience for some students and would reinforce the "differences are good" aspect of the lesson.

