Every February, schools and other organizations plan special activities around the themes of African-American history and the value of cultural diversity. Use the ideas below to make this year’s Black History Month celebration even more memorable and meaningful.

1. Have students create posters about key black history events. Mount them in chronological order and leave them up for the entire month.

2. Research important, but not as well-known African Americans, such as heart surgery pioneer Vivien Thomas and laundress/philanthropist Oseola McCarty. Tell their stories during morning announcements or through short presentations.

3. Focus your reading efforts on black history. Have weekly reading assignments featuring works by black authors and host a public reading by a local African-American writer.

4. Conclude the month with a student march through the halls to celebrate civil rights. Have students create posters about the civil rights movement using quotes and slogans.

5. Read a short biography of a selected musician and then play a sample of the artist’s music each morning during announcements. Feature the ragtime of Scott Joplin, Louis Armstrong’s jazz, and pioneers of hip hop.


7. Have children create a black history scrapbook. Divide them into groups to develop pages on civil rights, sports, inventors, and writers. Then, use the scrapbook as an educational tool in the years to come.

8. Invite family members to become part of your Black History Month celebration. Encourage them to read books, show art pieces or artifacts, talk about personal experiences involving culture, or bring in homemade food items.

9. Hold a birthday party to celebrate those who were born in February and are important to black history. Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and Rosa Parks were born that month. Also, the NAACP was founded in February.

10. Turn your building into a black history museum. Ask church members, staff, or parents of students to bring in pictures, posters, newspaper clippings, and authentic African items. Write short explanations of each artifact on index cards.

11. Hold a Black History Bee. Provide children with study materials and create a list of questions from the materials. Have children take turns answering questions.

12. Provide inspiration during Black History Month with a quote of the day or week from leading African Americans past and present. Share the quotes during morning announcements or Sunday service.

13. Have youngsters “Follow the Steps to Freedom” by cutting out large footprints and writing on each one an important date in civil rights history, along with related information. Mount footprints in the main hallway.

14. Hold a door-decorating contest. Choose from a variety of themes such as civil rights heroes, African-American writers and books, or African-American “firsts.”

15. Teach the songs that buoyed the spirits of black Americans during the 1950s and 60s, such as This Little Light of Mine, We Shall Overcome, and Go Tell It On The Mountain. Then, organize a concert to share them.

16. Have an essay contest with the theme, “Why Black History Month Is Important.” Recruit the editors from a local newspaper to serve as contest judges. Ask that the paper publish the winning entry.

17. Recruit a local African dance instructor to lead students in a workout. Or have him/her offer regular classes during February that would culminate in a dance recital at the end of the month.

18. Help children design costumes and create presentations about key figures in black history. Hold an assembly during which each child dresses as and presents the accomplishments of the person he/she chose.

19. Schedule a day of service to honor the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. Have a food drive for a local food bank, volunteer at a homeless shelter, or organize a coat or book drive.

20. Celebrate cultural diversity with a Diversity Fair. Participants can put together a display featuring pictures of their ancestral countries and information about traditions.

21. Have your library organize Black History Book Clubs. Each club could choose its own black history-related text from the library’s shelves.

22. Create an interactive black history exhibit. Write questions about black history on the outside of manila folders. Print the answers on the inside. Mount them on the wall so people can flip open the folder to see the answer.

23. Invite local African-American community leaders to share their journeys to success. Be sure to ask them to talk about their African-American role models.

24. Use “I Have A Dream” as a theme to get children to think about their goals. Have them use fabric paint to write or draw their dreams for the future on pillowcases.

25. Host a Black History Month bingo night. Create bingo cards with each square having either a quote by a famous African American or a fact about black history, in addition to a number.