

MULTICULTURAL LESSON PLAN

POLISH CHRISTMAS

MAREK AND ALICE'S CHRISTMAS

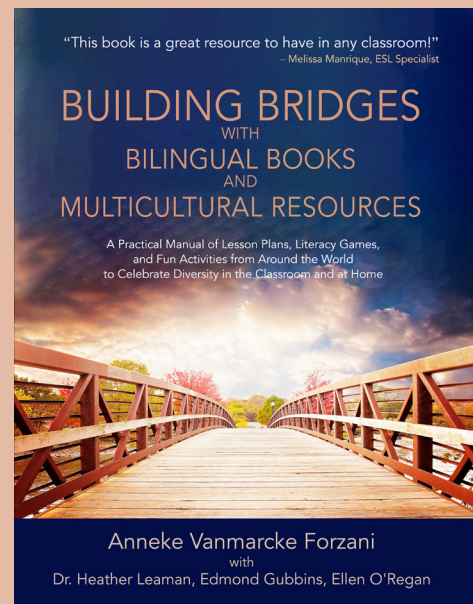
The following lesson plan is from
Building Bridges with Bilingual Books and Multicultural Resources:
*A Practical Manual of Lesson Plans, Literacy Games, and
Fun Activities from Around the World to Celebrate Diversity in the
Classroom and at Home*

Building Bridges helps educators and homeschoolers incorporate cultural diversity in their teaching. It provides the tools to:

- ✿ Build culturally responsive classrooms
- ✿ Create positive connections with dual language students & families
- ✿ Teach children about other languages & cultures
- ✿ Support literacy development among English language learners
- ✿ Foster a welcoming and inclusive learning environment

Building Bridges includes numerous multicultural lesson plans that use bilingual books and diversity activities to support literacy development and build culturally inclusive classrooms. The lessons meet Common Core State Standards and include detailed procedures, assessments, cross-curricular extension activities, and vocabulary-building flashcards. Each lesson incorporates optional ESL activities, accommodations for language learners, and suggestions for involving dual language families.

Also included in the book are games, foods, and crafts from around the world; diverse language profiles; handouts to build community in the classroom; unique multicultural holidays and events to celebrate diversity; and useful links and resources.

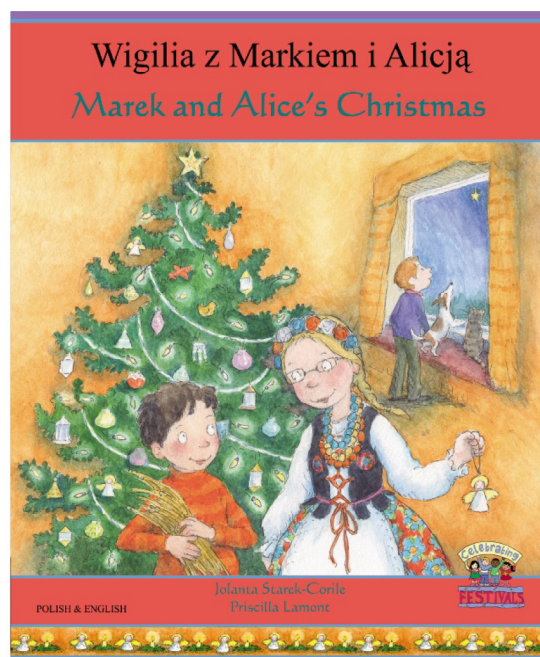


Building Bridges with Bilingual Books and Multicultural Resources is available now at www.LanguageLizard.com/Bridges, bookstores, and ebook distributors worldwide.

Theme 3: Holidays and Festivals

Topic D: Polish Christmas - *Marek and Alice’s Christmas*

Goal: Provide children with opportunities to learn about and appreciate a range of holidays and festivals celebrated around the world.



Book Used in Lesson: *Marek and Alice’s Christmas*

Written by Jolanta Starek-Corile. Illustrated by Priscilla Lamont.

Available in English with: Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, French, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, and Welsh.

Snapshot of Lesson:

- Children make **predictions** about the story based on observations.
- Children “**travel to Poland**” during the story to observe Christmas traditions in Poland.
- Children prepare for their journey by unpacking a suitcase of **key vocabulary words**.
- Children listen to a **reading of the story** of *Marek and Alice’s Christmas*.
- Children **respond to the text** by answering literal, inferential, and evaluative questions.
- In pairs or small groups, children **retell the story** of *Marek and Alice’s Christmas*.
- Children **listen and respond** to Christmas Carol *Cicha Noc* (Silent Night in Polish)
- Children **respond to the text** by asking Alice or Marek questions about Christmas in Poland (Facilitator in Role/Character Hot Seating).

Background Information for Facilitator

Christmas in Poland:

Christmas has been celebrated in Poland since the late 10th century when Christianity began in Poland. Many people in Poland follow Christmas customs recognized in other countries as well. The Polish Christmas traditions include:

1. Attending Mass every day (or week) during Advent. Advent is a period of preparation leading up to Christmas. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. Christmas Eve concludes with Midnight Mass.
2. Celebrating Christmas Eve by fasting after breakfast until sighting the first star in the night sky.
3. Sighting the first star marks the beginning of the Christmas Eve meal *Wigilia*.

4. Receiving some gifts on St. Nicolas’ Day (December 6th) and some gifts from Star Man (symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem) after Christmas Eve dinner.
5. Christmas Eve meal traditions include:
 - Serving at least twelve dishes as part of the Christmas Eve meal. This symbolizes the Twelve Apostles.
 - Setting an extra place at the table for an unexpected guest, symbolizing Mary and Joseph’s quest to find shelter.
 - Not eating meat at the Christmas Eve meal (an old Catholic tradition). Other foods eaten include carp (fish), makowiec (baked poppy seed bread), and kutia (poppy seed and wheat pasta with honey, raisons, almonds, and spices).

Sources Cited:

- Country Reports. (n.d.). *Poland Christmas Tradition*. Retrieved from <http://www.countryreports.org/country/Poland/christmastraditions.htm>
- Cooper, J. (2014). *Christmas in Poland*. Retrieved from <https://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/poland.shtml>

Lesson Plan: *Marek and Alice’s Christmas*

Grade Level: 3-5 (Note: The activities in this lesson plan can be tailored to suit the needs of the specific group that is being taught, at the discretion of the facilitator.)

Time Frame: 2 x (45 minute - 1 hour) sessions.

Objectives:

Knowledge:

- Learn new vocabulary based on the topic of Christmas.
- Learn about Christmas traditions in Poland.

Skills:

- Make predictions based on observations of illustrations.
- Use language to explain and describe.
- Use language to answer and formulate questions.
- Listen and respond to *Cicha Noc* (Silent Night in Polish).

Attitudes:

- Appreciate that people in other countries celebrate Christmas.
- Appreciate the Christmas traditions in Poland.
- Value and respect diversity and lifestyles of others.
- Enjoy listening to the story being read in English and in the other language of the dual language book if possible. The story could be read in a second language with the help of a bilingual parent, child, or teacher, or using the PENpal Audio Recorder Pen.
- Appreciate different languages and scripts around the world.

Essential Questions:

- How is Christmas celebrated in Poland?
- What Christmas customs followed by Marek and Alice are similar/different to customs celebrated in your home?
- For those children who do not celebrate Christmas, how are some traditions of Polish Christmas similar/different to holidays they celebrate in the winter? What traditions do they have around meal times, gift giving, and singing?

Materials and Resources:

- *Marek and Alice’s Christmas* by Jolanta Starek-Corile.
- Flashcards of key vocabulary words.
- Suitcase (for vocabulary words activity – optional).
- *Cicha Noc* (Silent Night in Polish): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UUcVWNrAQ8>
- Piece of clothing (e.g., hat or scarf) for Facilitator in Role/Character Hot Seating activity.
- PENpal Audio Recorder Pen (optional).

Linkage and Integration across subject areas:

Language Arts: Vocabulary development, reading, using language to explain and describe, using language to formulate and answer questions.

Music: *Cicha Noc* (Silent Night in Polish).

Drama: Role Play (traveling to Poland), Facilitator in Role/Character Hot Seating activity.

Vocabulary to be Developed in Lesson:

Key Vocabulary		Story specific vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas • Christmas decorations • Christmas tree • prayer • present • star • sing • supper • chips (fries) • extra plate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doorbell • hay • Jesus • stable • quad bike • carols • wrapping presents • unpack • welcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pine tree • carp (fish) • Star of Bethlehem • blessed bread • recorder (instrument) • Silent Night (Christmas carol) • St. Nicolas’ Day • Midnight Mass • offer wishes • greeted • fast (fasting)
<p>Expressions He beamed with joy. The more dishes you try, the more rich and plentiful your life will be.</p>		
<p>Names and Pronunciations of Characters in <i>Marek and Alice’s Christmas</i> Alice, Marek, Mum, Dad, dziadek (grandfather: <i>jah-Dek</i>), babcia (grandmother: <i>bob-cha/bop-cha</i>), prababcia (great grandmother: <i>pra-bob-cha/pra-bop-cha</i>), Uncle Waldek, Olek, and Borys (the family’s pet dog).</p>		

Procedure:

Introduction:

1. Begin the lesson by presenting the cover of the book to the children and elicit what time of year they think it is in the picture. Ask the children to explain their responses.
2. Ask the children to identify customs and/or traditional items associated with Christmas. Inform the children that Christmas is celebrated all over the world but it is celebrated in different ways. Using clues on the cover of the book, ask the children what country they think the story is set in and to explain their reasoning. The facilitator may need to draw children’s attention to Alice’s dress and inform the children that this is a traditional Polish dress.
3. Draw children’s attention to the star on the cover in the book. Ask the children to predict what they think is the significance of the star to the book. Encourage the children to use their observations to predict the content of the story.

4. Inform the group that they are boarding a plane/train “to travel to Poland” to see how people in another country celebrate Christmas.

Vocabulary Development:

5. Inform the group that they have a suitcase filled with the important words that they will need to learn before their trip.
6. Using the list of words noted above or any additional words, elicit known vocabulary (familiar/less familiar vocabulary) on the topic of Christmas. This activity can be supported by the use of flashcards and/or pictures.
7. Present new vocabulary (key vocabulary /story specific vocabulary) to the children. Using flashcards and/or pictures, invite the children to say/read each word. Ask the children if they know the meanings of the words and encourage them to provide explanations of the words if possible. The facilitator may need to elaborate or provide additional explanations of some words and say the words in sentences so the students can hear the words in context. The facilitator may ask the children to create their own sentences containing the words, encouraging the children to make personal connections with the words. If there are bilingual children in the group, it may be possible to ask them to say the words in their language(s).

Reading:

8. Read the book *Marek and Alice’s Christmas* with the children. The facilitator may choose to read the book aloud to the children, engage in choral reading (facilitator and children read the story together in unison), or see-saw reading (facilitator reads one sentence, children read the following sentence and continue alternating reading after each sentence). It is important to read with appropriate tone, pace, inflection, and expression to engage the children as much as possible. If there are children who speak the language of the dual language book, here would be a nice opportunity to ask them to read/translate a section of the story if they would like. Moreover, if the facilitator has a PENpal Audio Recorder Pen, the children could listen to a reading of the story in English or the other language of the dual language book.
9. Throughout the story, explicitly draw children’s attention to the illustrations to promote comprehension of the text.
10. During reading, encourage children to make connections (orally, using mime, in writing). Connections may be *text-to-self* (what does the child notice from the book in relation to his/her own lived experiences), *text-to-text* (what does the child notice from one book/story to another book/story), or *text-to-wider-world* (what does the child notice from the book in relation to real world historical or current contexts).

Discussion to Encourage Reflection and Response:

11. Facilitate discussion with the group of children using literal, inferential, and evaluative questions. The facilitator may wish to select questions from the following list:

Literal Questions:

(Readers use information directly from the text to answer this type of question.)

- i. *What smell filled the room when the tree was brought inside?*
- ii. *What day can Polish children open their Christmas presents?*
- iii. *Who brought carp to the family?*
- iv. *How many dishes are on the table?*
- v. *When could the family start their supper?*
- vi. *What Christmas carol did Alice play on the recorder?*

Inferential Questions:

(Reader must use the information in the text to deduce the answer.)

- i. *Why does Marek have a coat in his hand?*
- ii. *Why does dziadek ask for help to bring the tree inside?*
- iii. *Why did the family set an extra space for Christmas Eve supper at the table?*

Evaluative Questions:

(Reader uses his/her own knowledge to explore answers to this type of question.)

- i. *Which customs/traditions of Polish Christmas do you like best? Why?*
- ii. *Do you think everyone was enjoying themselves when they sang Christmas carols? Why/Why not?*
- iii. *Do you think Alice heard Borys talk?*

Word Identification/Fluency Development:

12. **Revisit the story and identify key vocabulary words:** Display key vocabulary words from the story. Reread a section from the story and ask the children to raise their hands when they hear or see one of the key vocabulary words.

13. **Retell the story (in pairs or small groups):** Present key words from the story listed in order as they appear in the story. Using the words, children retell the story in small

groups or pairs. The facilitator may ask the children to retell the story orally or in writing. The facilitator may present sentences with key words for this activity to provide the children with additional support. The children could also retell the story using illustrations, mime or still images.

Independent Work/Group Work Activity:

14. **Listen to *Cicha Noc (Silent Night in Polish)*:** Before playing *Cicha Noc* to the children, inform the group that you will play a piece of music to them and that you would like them to listen carefully. Tell the children that you would like them to try to identify the instruments they hear playing. Ask the children if they have heard this Christmas carol before. What is similar or different to the version that they heard? Ask the children to identify the language that they think the Christmas carol *Cicha Noc* is being sung in.

15. **Facilitator in Role & Hot Seating Drama Activity:**

- A piece of clothing (e.g., hat or scarf) will be needed for this activity in order to signify that the facilitator will assume the role of Marek or Alice from the story.
- **Preparation for Facilitator in Role:** Ask the children to consider what they would ask Marek or Alice about the Christmas traditions celebrated in Poland if they could meet the characters from the story. A “Think/Pair/Share” activity may be useful to help the children formulate questions to ask the characters.
- **Facilitator in Role:** After the children have shared their questions with the whole group, inform the children that when the facilitator is wearing the piece of clothing (i.e., hat or scarf), he/she will assume the role of Marek or Alice.
- **Character Hot Seating:** Wearing the piece of clothing, thank the children for coming to visit their family in Poland. Next, invite the children to ask questions about the Christmas traditions celebrated by Marek and Alice and their family.
- At the end of this activity, the facilitator will remove the piece of clothing used to signify that he/she has returned from the role of Marek or Alice.

Conclusion:

Facilitate a discussion with the group. Ask the children to explain what they learned about Christmas traditions in Poland. At this point, the facilitator may want to revisit essential questions to determine whether the children have understood the main ideas of the lesson:

- *How is Christmas celebrated in Poland?*
- *What Christmas customs followed by Marek and Alice are similar/different to customs celebrated in your home?*
- *For those children who do not celebrate Christmas, how are some traditions of Polish Christmas similar/different to holidays they celebrate in the winter? What traditions do they have around meal times, gift giving, and singing?*

As a concluding activity, invite the children to discuss these questions with the whole group, in smaller groups, in pairs, or as a written reflection. An activity such as “Two Stars and a Wish” may be a nice conclusion to the lesson. In this activity, children identify two things they have learned and one thing they would like to learn about Christmas in Poland.

Assessment:

Facilitator Observation: Children’s engagement and interaction with the lesson, engagement in discussions, and engagement with facilitator designed tasks.

Facilitator Questioning: Higher and lower order questioning (i.e., literal, inferential, and evaluative questions).

Facilitator Designed Tasks: Making predictions, vocabulary games, reading fluency activities, listening and responding to music, drama activity (character hot-seating).

Self-Assessment: “Two Stars and a Wish”

Accommodations/Differentiation:

Differential modes of Representation:

Photos, pictures, flashcards, physical materials (e.g., suitcase), *Cicha Noc* (Silent Night in Polish).

Differential Questioning:

Use of higher and lower order questioning (i.e., literal, inferential, and evaluative questions).

Differential Product/Response:

Written responses, oral responses, music responses to *Cicha Noc* (Silent Night in Polish), drama responses.

In a classroom setting, it may be helpful for the English language learners (ELLs) to take the dual language book home either before or after the lesson. The ELL student may read the book at home in the language spoken by his/her family. This will increase the child’s confidence when talking about the book in school. If possible, ask the child’s parent/guardian to read and record the book in the language that he/she speaks at home. The recording could then be played in the classroom, enabling children to hear other languages spoken by their peers at home.

Extension Activities:

Travel Journal Entry (English - Independent Writing Exercise):

The facilitator may wish to extend children’s engagement with *Marek and Alice’s Christmas* through descriptive writing exercises. If the children “traveled to Poland,” encourage them to record the Christmas traditions that they “saw” on their visit. The facilitator may wish to encourage the children to write about similarities and/or differences to the holidays celebrated by their families. Alternatively, children could write Marek or Alice’s diary entry. They may focus on a key moment from the story such as Christmas Eve dinner or singing Christmas Carols.

Character Sketch (English – Writing):

Through questioning and discussion, elicit from the children what they know about Marek and Alice, the main characters in the story (e.g., appearance, role in the story, dealing with other characters). Inform the children that they will create a character profile of either Marek or Alice. To assist children to generate ideas for this activity, the facilitator may ask the children to close their eyes and visualize either Marek or Alice. Next, ask each child to draw a sketch of his/her chosen character. Finally, encourage the children to write adjectives or vocabulary words to describe their character.

Drawing ‘Photographs’ Taken on Journey to Poland (Visual Arts):

Engage in a discussion with the children, asking them to describe what they saw on their “visit” to Poland. Elicit the Christmas traditions the children observed Marek and Alice’s family celebrating (e.g., decorating the Christmas tree, looking for the Star of Bethlehem, eating Christmas Eve dinner, singing Christmas carols). Inform the children that they will each create a photograph to illustrate a key moment they observed from their “visit.” Ask the children to engage in a Think/Pair/Share activity to discuss possible ideas to draw in their photographs. Moreover, children who do not celebrate Christmas may draw a “photograph” to illustrate customs and traditions associated with a holiday that they celebrate.

Provide the children with coloring materials to carry out the activity. The facilitator may wish to provide children with a simple template (e.g., a rectangular outline bordering a page to indicate that the child’s drawing is a photograph). While the children draw the photographs, the facilitator may circulate around the room, offering assistance, providing descriptive feedback, and making suggestions to the children. When the children have finished creating their photographs, ask them to present their completed artworks to the group. Encourage each child to explain which Christmas tradition he/she chose to draw and why he/she drew that particular custom or tradition.

Project Work on Poland (Geography):

Develop the children’s map reading skills by locating Poland on a map. Using a large poster/chart, a digital map, or an atlas, ask the children questions to encourage them to examine the physical features of the country. For example, what continent is Poland in? What countries border Poland? Is Poland a landlocked country? What sea borders Poland? Ask the children to name and locate main cities, rivers and mountains in Poland.

Additionally, children could conduct independent research on Poland. Areas of focus for this project work may include:

- **General Information:** Population, capital city, government, language(s), predominant religion, currency, national symbol.
- **Map of Poland:** Indicate physical features such as capital city, bordering seas, islands, mountain ranges, rivers, and lakes. Note interesting facts about the country’s geography (e.g., longest river, highest mountain, largest island).
- **Flag of Poland:** Picture/sketch of the flag and information about the flag.
- **Language & Culture:** Identify the language(s) spoken in the country with examples of every day phrases. Identify some of the country’s art and culture, customs and traditions, traditional dances and sports.
- **Traditional Food:** Identify examples of traditional dishes, briefly explaining the ingredients.
- **Attractions:** Identify interesting places to visit, tourist attractions, briefly describe the places.
- **Interesting Facts:** Create a “Did you know?” page with some interesting facts learned about the country (e.g., identify a famous person who was born in Poland).
- **Craft:** Make a craft/item to represent something from the country’s culture. For example, make a traditional dish or construct a famous landmark.
- **Similarities and Differences:** Children identify similarities and differences between Poland and where they live or their countries of birth.

Vocabulary Flashcards for *Marek and Alice’s Christmas*:

pine tree	carp	Star of Bethlehem
Blessed bread	recorder	Silent Night
St. Nicolas’ Day	Midnight Mass	offer wishes
greeted	fast	doorbell
hay	Jesus	stable
quad bike	carols	wrapping presents
unpack	welcome	Christmas tree
Christmas decorations	prayer	present
star	sing	supper
chips	extra plate	

