



2018 Diversity Holidays

The FPA Diversity and Inclusion Initiative strives for a focus on diversity every day. Through our members' work as financial planning professionals, we believe that in order to serve the greatest portion of the American population possible, that we must have as diverse a professional base as possible to meet the varying needs of the public.

The world is rich with diversity, and sometimes it is easier to bring a focus on diversity through observances and events celebrated by its various cultures and populations. Knowledge of the following diversity holidays and celebrations can enhance your diversity and inclusion efforts, which is why we're providing the following list for 2018.

Feel free to use these dates and monthly recognitions as opportunities to introduce and celebrate diversity, and to engage members in a different way.

Getting Started:

Take the time to involve yourself and others in learning about cultures and religions that are not part of your daily life. Involve your clients, children, family, friends and neighbors; so that we may all gain a better understanding of our global family. Talk about, show examples of and become involved in celebrating diversity today and every day. There are endless possibilities of how you can do this, but here are a few examples if you need a bit of inspiration:

- Host a pot luck meal where participants bring in dishes that represent their ethnicity or their favorite ethnic foods.
- Plan an event that brings together different ethnic groups to celebrate.
- Bring together different religious groups to learn about each other.
- Explore different cultures through art forms, poetry, music, crafts, traditional costumes, language, etc. Have an art show featuring local, diverse artists, or a poetry reading, or a concert.
- Show or create a group event to attend movies that deal with diverse topics.
- Have a display or flag ceremony of different nations' flags.
- Read about a religion you have heard of but don't know much, if anything, about.

Sources:

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January

January 2-4: Mahayana New Year, a holiday celebrated by the Mahayana Buddhist branch, on the first full-moon day in January.

January 5: Guru Gobind Singh Ji's birthday, the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs who initiated the Sikhs as the Khalsa (the pure ones), and is known as the Father of the Khalsa.

January 6: Epiphany, a holiday observed by Eastern and Western Christians, that recognizes the visit of the three wise men to the baby Jesus 12 days after his birth.

January 6: Christmas, recognized on this day by Armenian Orthodox Christians, who celebrate the birth of Jesus on Epiphany. (Armenians living in Israel celebrate Christmas on January 19.)

January 7: Christmas, recognized on this day by Eastern Orthodox Christians, who celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches, because they follow the Julian rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar.

January 14: Makar Sankranti, a major harvest festival celebrated in various parts of India.

January 15: Martin Luther King Day commemorates the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr., the recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize and an activist for non-violent social change until his assassination in 1968.

January 18-25: The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, during which Christians pray for unity between all churches of the Christian faith.

January 21: World Religion Day, observed by those of the Baha'i faith to promote interfaith harmony and understanding. World Religion Day starts sundown of January 17.

January 26: Republic Day of India recognizes the date the Constitution of India came into law in 1950, replacing the Government of India Act of 1935. This day also coincides with India's 1930 declaration of independence.

January 27: The International Day of Commemoration to remember the victims of the Holocaust. The anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945 and UN Holocaust Memorial Day.

January 30-31: Tu B'shevat, a Jewish holiday recognizing "The New Year of the Trees." It is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of Shevat. In Israel, the flowering of the almond tree usually coincides with this holiday, which is observed by planting trees and eating dried fruits and nuts.

January 31: The birthday of Guru Har Rai, the seventh Sikh guru.

February

February is Black History Month in the United States and Canada. Since 1976, the month has been designated to remember the contributions of people of the African Diaspora.

February 1: National Freedom Day, which celebrates the signing of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in 1865.

February 13: Maha Shivaratri, a Hindu holiday that honors Shiva, one of the Hindu deities.

February 13: Mardi Gras, the last day for Catholics to indulge before Ash Wednesday starts the sober weeks of fasting that come with Lent.

February 14: Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent in the Christian faith. As a display of atonement, ashes are marked on worshippers. Lent, which is observed during the seven weeks prior to Easter, is a time of reflection and preparation for the Holy Week and is observed by fasting, charitable giving, and worshipping.

February 15: Nirvana Day, the commemoration of Buddha's death at the age of 80, when he reached the zenith of Nirvana. February 8 is an alternative date of observance.

February 16: Lunar New Year, one of the most sacred of all traditional Chinese holidays, a time of family reunion and celebration. Lunar New Year is also celebrated at this time in Japan, Korea, Vietnam and Mongolia.

February 16-18: Losar, the Tibetan Buddhist New Year, a time of renewal through sacred and secular practices.

February 19: President's Day, a federally recognized celebration in the United States of George Washington's birthday, as well as every president proceeding after Washington.

February 24-March 1: Intercalary Days, celebrated by people of the Baha'i faith. At this time, days are added to the Baha'i calendar to maintain their solar calendar. Intercalary days are observed with gift giving, special acts of charity, and preparation for the fasting that precedes the New Year.

February 28-March 1: Purim, a Jewish celebration that marks the time when the Jewish community living in Persia was saved from genocide. According to the Book of Esther, King Ahasuerus's political advisor planned to have all the Jews killed; however, his plot was foiled when Esther, one of the king's wives, revealed her Jewish identity. On Purim, Jewish people offer charity and share food with friends.

March

March is Women's History Month. Started in 1987, Women's History Month recognizes all women for their valuable contributions to history and society.

March is also National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, which was established to increase awareness and understanding of issues affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

March is National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month. It was established to raise public awareness of the autoimmune disease that affects the brain and spinal cord and assist those with multiple sclerosis in making informed decisions about their health care.

March 1/2-19/20: Nineteen-Day Fast, for members of the Baha'i Faith, this time is meant to reinvigorate the soul and bring one closer to God. This fast takes place immediately before the beginning of the Bahá'í New Year.

March 2: Holi, a Hindu and Sikh spring religious festival observed in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, along with other countries that have large Hindu and Sikh populations. People celebrate Holi by throwing colored powder and water at each other. Bonfires are lit the day before in the memory of the miraculous escape that young Prahlad accomplished when Demoness Holika carried him into the fire.

March 2: Lantern Festival, the first significant feast after Chinese New Year, so called because the most important activity during the night of the event is watching Chinese lanterns illuminate the night sky.

March 8: International Women's Day. First observed in 1911 in Germany, it has now become a major global celebration honoring women's economic, political, and social achievements.

March 12: Magha Puja Day, a Buddhist holiday that marks an event early in the Buddha's teaching life when a group of 1,250 enlightened saints, ordained by the Buddha, gathered to pay their respect to him.

March 13 – April 15: Deaf History Month. This observance celebrates key events in deaf history, including the founding of Gallaudet University and the American School for the Deaf.

March 17: St. Patrick's Day, a holiday started in Ireland to recognize St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who brought Christianity to the country in the early days of the faith.

March 20: Ostara/ Eostre, a celebration of the spring equinox commemorated by Pagans and Wiccans. It is observed as a time to mark the coming of spring and the fertility of the land.

March 20-21: Naw-Rúz, the Bahá'í New Year is a holiday celebrated on the vernal equinox. It is one of the nine Bahá'í holy days on which work is suspended.

March 21: Nowruz/Norooz, Persian New Year, a day of joy, celebration and renewal.

March 25: Ram Navani, a Hindu day of worship and celebration of the seventh avatar of Vishnu (Lord Rama). Devotees typically wear red and place extravagant flowers on the shrine of the God.

March 25: Palm Sunday, a Christian holiday commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is the last Sunday of Lent and the beginning of the Holy Week.

March 29: Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday), the Christian holiday commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion. It is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter.

March 30: Good Friday, a day celebrated by Christians to commemorate the execution of Jesus by crucifixion, and is recognized on the Friday before Easter.

March 30-April 7: Passover, an eight-day Jewish holiday and festival in commemoration of the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt.

April

April is Celebrate Diversity Month, started in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all. By celebrating differences and similarities during this month, organizers hope that people will get a deeper understanding of each other.

April is Autism Awareness Month, established to raise awareness about the developmental disorder that affects children's normal development of social and communication skills.

April 1: Easter, a holiday celebrated by Christians to recognize Jesus's return from death after the crucifixion.

April 2: World Autism Awareness Day, created to raise awareness of the developmental disorder around the globe.

April 13: Lailat-al-Miraj, a Muslim holiday that commemorates the Prophet Muhammad's night time journey from Mecca to the 'Farthest Mosque' in Jerusalem where he ascended to heaven, was purified, and given the instruction for Muslims to pray five times daily. Note that in the Muslim calendar, a holiday begins on the sunset of the previous day, so observing Muslims will celebrate Lailat al Miraj on the sunset of Saturday, the 22nd of April.

April 14: Vaisakhi (also spelled Baisakhi), the celebration the founding of the Sikh community as the Khalsa (community of the initiated) and the birth of the Khalsa.

April 20-May 2: The Festival of Ridvan, a holiday celebrated by those of the Baha'i Faith, commemorating the 12 days when Baha'u'llah, the prophet-founder, resided in a garden called Ridvan (Paradise) and publicly proclaimed His mission as God's messenger for this age.

April 22: Earth Day promotes peace and sustainability of planet Earth. Events are held globally to show support of environmental protection of the earth.

April 23 (Evening) - April 24 (Evening): Holocaust Remembrance Day, a time to "mourn the loss of lives, celebrate those who saved them, honor those who survived, and contemplate the obligations of the living"- former President Barack Obama.

April 24: Armenian Martyrs' Day recognizes the genocide of approximately 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923 in Turkey.

April 27: The Day of Silence, during which students take a daylong vow of silence to protest the actual silencing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students and their straight allies due to bias and harassment.

May

May is Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in the United States. The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks on the project were Chinese immigrants.

May is also Older Americans Month, established in 1963 to honor the legacies and contributions of older Americans and to support them as they enter their next stage of life.

In addition, May is Jewish American Heritage Month, which recognizes the diverse contributions of the Jewish people to American culture.

May 1: Lailat al Bara'a, also known as Barat, or Night of Forgiveness, an Islamic holiday during which practitioners of the faith seek forgiveness for sins.

May 5: Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican holiday commemorating the Mexican army's 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War (1861-1867). This day celebrates Mexican culture and heritage, including parades and mariachi music performances.

May 15 (sunset)-June 15: Ramadan, an Islamic holiday marked by fasting, praise, prayer and devotion to Islam.

May 17: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, a global celebration of sexual-orientation and gender diversities.

May 20: Pentecost, the celebration of the giving of the 10 Commandments by God at Mount Sinai.

May 21: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, a day set aside by the United Nations as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together better.

May 28: Memorial Day in the United States, a federal holiday established to honor military veterans who died in wars fought by American forces.

May 29: Buddha Day (Vesak or Visakha Puja), a Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It falls on the day of the full moon in May and it is a gazetted holiday in India.

June

June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, established to recognize the impact that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals have had on the world. LGBT groups celebrate this special time with pride parades, picnics, parties, memorials for those lost to hate crimes and HIV/AIDS, and other group gatherings. The last Sunday in June is Gay Pride Day.

June 10: Lailat-al-Qadir, the holiest night of the year for Muslims traditionally celebrated on the 27th day of Ramadan. It is known as the “Night of Power,” and commemorates the night that the Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

June 14: Flag Day in the United States, observed to celebrate the history and symbolism of the American flag.

June 15: Eid-al-Fitr, the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal, marking the end of Ramadan. Many Muslims attend communal prayers, listen to a khutba (sermon) and give zakat al-fitr (charity in the form of food) during Eid al-Fitr.

June 15: Native American Citizenship Day, commemorating the day in 1924 when the United States Congress passed legislation recognizing the citizenship of Native Americans.

June 16: The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, observed by members of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev was the fifth Sikh guru and the first Sikh martyr.

June 19: Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day. It is observed as a public holiday in 14 U.S. states. This celebration honors the day in 1865 when slaves in Texas and Louisiana finally heard they were free, two months after the end of the Civil War. June 19, therefore, became the day of emancipation for thousands of Black Americans.

June 24: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Pride Day in the United States. It celebrates the Stonewall Riots on June 28, 1969.

July

July 1: Canada Day or Fête du Canada is a Canadian federal holiday that celebrates the 1867 enactment of the Constitution Act, which established the three former British colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, as a united nation called Canada.

July 4th: Independence Day (also known as the Fourth of July), a United States federal holiday that celebrates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The original thirteen American colonies declared independence from Britain, and established themselves as a new nation known as the United States of America.

July 9: The Martyrdom of the Bab, Baha'is observe the anniversary of the Bab's execution in Tabriz, Iran, in 1850.

July 11: World Population Day, an observance established in 1989 by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme. The annual event is designed to raise awareness of global population issues.

July 14th: Bastille Day, a French federal holiday that commemorates the Storming of the Bastille, a fortress-prison in Paris which held political prisoners who had displeased the French nobility. The Storming of the Bastille, which took place on July 14, 1789, was regarded as a turning point of the French Revolution. Celebrations are held throughout France.

July 18: Nelson Mandela International Day, launched in recognition of Nelson Mandela's birthday on July 18, 2009 via unanimous decision of the UN General Assembly. It was inspired by a call Nelson Mandela made a year earlier, for the next generation to take on the burden of leadership in addressing the world's social injustices when he said, "It is in your hands now". It is more than a celebration of "Madiba's" life and legacy. It is a global movement to honor his life's work and act to change the world for the better.

July 21-22: Tisha B'Av, a fast in commemoration of the destruction of two very holy and sacred temples of Judaism destroyed by the Babylonians (in 586 B.C.E) and Romans (in 70 E.C). At the of Tisha B'Av, after very select passages from the Torah are read and understood, netilat yadayim, or the washing of the hands, is performed.

July 23: The birthday of Haile Selassie I, the former Emperor of Ethiopia, who the Rastafarians consider to be their Savior.

July 24: Pioneer Day, observed by the Mormons to commemorate the arrival in 1847 of the first Latter Day Saints pioneer in Salt Lake Valley.

July 26: Disability Independence Day, celebrating the anniversary of the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

July 28: Asalha Puja Day or Dharma Day is a celebration of Buddha's first teachings.

July 30: International Day of Friendship, proclaimed in 2011 by the UN General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.

August

August 6: Transfiguration, a holiday recognized by Orthodox Christians to celebrate when Jesus communed with Moses and Elijah on Mount Tabor. To celebrate, adherents have a feast.

August 17: Marcus Garvey Day, which celebrates the birthday of the Jamaican politician and activist who is revered by Rastafarians. Garvey is credited with starting the Back to Africa movement, which encouraged those of African descent to return to the land of their ancestors during and after slavery in North America.

August 21-25: Eid Al-Adha an Islamic festival to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim (also known as Abraham) to follow Allah's (God's) command to sacrifice his son Ishmael. Muslims around the world observe this event.

August 23: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and the anniversary of the uprising in Santo Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic) that initiated the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean.

August 25: Hungry Ghost Festival, a Chinese holiday where street, market, and temple ceremonies take place to honor dead ancestors and appease other spirits.

August 25: Raksha Bandhan, a Hindu holiday commemorating the loving kinship between a brother and a sister. Raksha means protection in Hindi, and symbolizes the longing a sister has to be protected by her brother. During the celebration, a sister ties a string around her brother's (or brother-figure's) wrist, and asks him to protect her. The brother usually gives the sister a gift and agrees to protect her for life.

August 26: Women's Equality Day, which commemorates the August 26, 1920 certification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution that gave women the right to vote. Congresswoman Bella Abzug first introduced a proclamation for Women's Equality Day in 1971. Since that time, every president has published a proclamation recognizing August 26 as Women's Equality Day.

September

From September 15th to October 15th is Hispanic Heritage Month. This month corresponds with Mexican Independence Day, which is celebrated on September 16, and recognizes the revolution in 1810 that ended Spanish dictatorship.

September 2: Krishna Janmashtami, a Hindu celebration of Lord Vishnu's most powerful human incarnations, Krishna, the god of love and compassion. Celebrations include praying and fasting.

September 3: Labor Day in the United States. Labor Day honors the contribution that laborers have made to the country and is observed on the first Monday of September.

September 6 (Sunrise): Paryushana Parva, a Jain festival lasting about 8-10 days, and is observed through meditation and fasting. Its main focus is spiritual upliftment, pursuit of salvation and gaining a deeper understanding of the religion.

September 9-11: Rosh-Hashanah, the Jewish New Year celebration, marking the creation of the world.

September 11: The Ethiopian New Year. Rastafarians celebrate the New Year on this date and believe that Ethiopia is their spiritual home.

September 12: Celebration of Ganesha, a Hindu holiday lasting around 10 days, where the elephant-headed Hindu God is praised and given offerings.

September 15 – October 15: Hispanic Heritage Month. This month corresponds with Mexican Independence Day, which is celebrated on September 16, and recognizes the revolution in 1810 that ended Spanish dictatorship.

September 18-19: Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, a day of atonement marked by fasting and ceremonial repentance.

September 20-21: Ashura, an Islamic holiday commemorating the day Noah left the ark and the day Allah saved Moses from the Egyptians.

September 23-30: Sukkot, a seven-day Jewish festival giving thanks for the fall harvest.

September 28: Teacher's Day in Taiwan. This day is used to honor teachers' contributions to their students and to society in general. People often express their gratitude to their teachers by paying them a visit or sending them a card. This date was chosen to commemorate the birth of Confucius, the model master educator in ancient China.

September 30-October 2: Shemini Atzeret, a Jewish holiday also known as "The Eighth (Day) of Assembly" takes place the day after the Sukkot festival, where gratitude for the fall harvest is deeply internalized.

October

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This observance was launched in 1945 when Congress declared the first week in October as “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” In 1998, the week was extended to a month and renamed. The annual event draws attention to employment barriers that still need to be addressed.

October is also LGBT History Month, a U.S. observance started in 1994 to recognize lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history and the history of the gay rights movement.

October 2: Simchat Torah, a Jewish holiday, marks the end of the weekly readings of the Torah. The holy book is read from chapter one of Genesis, to Deuteronomy 34, then back to chapter one again, in acknowledgement of the words of the Torah being a circle; a never-ending cycle.

October 8: Canadian Thanksgiving, a chance for people to give thanks for a good harvest and other fortunes in the past year.

October 8: National Indigenous People’s Day, an alternative celebration to Columbus Day, gives recognition to the indigenous populations affected by colonization.

October 11: National Coming Out Day. For those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, this day celebrates coming out and the recognition of the 1987 march on Washington for gay and lesbian equality.

October 19: Dussehra (Dasera), the beginning of a ten-day festival celebrated by Hindus to recognize Rama’s victory over evil.

October 20: The day Sikhs celebrate Sri Guru Granth Sahib who is their spiritual guide.

November

November is National Native American Heritage Month, which celebrates the history and contributions of Native Americans.

November 1: All Saints Day, a Christian holiday commemorating all known and unknown Christian saints. (In Eastern Christianity, the day is observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost.)

November 2: All Souls Day, a Christian holiday commemorating all faithful Christians who are now dead. In the Mexican tradition, the holiday is celebrated as Dia de los Muertos (October 31 and November 2), which is a time of remembrance for dead ancestors and a celebration of the continuity of life.

November 7: Diwali, the Hindu, Jain and Sikh five-day festival of lights celebrates new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil and lightness over darkness.

November 9: The Birth of the Bab, a holiday celebrated by the Baha'i recognizing the birth of the founder of the Baha'i faith.

November 11: Veterans Day, a U.S. federal holiday honoring military veterans. The date is also celebrated as Armistice Day or Remembrance Day in other parts of the world and commemorates the ending of the first World War in 1918.

November 12: The Birth of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i religion.

November 20: Transgender Day of Remembrance, established in 1998 to memorialize those who have been killed as a result of transphobia, and to raise awareness of the continued violence endured by the transgender community.

November 22: Thanksgiving in the United States.

November 21: Eid Milad Un Nabi, the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. Parades, communal feasts in mosques, night-long prayers, and many other celebrations take place and is mainly celebrated by Muslims in India

November 25: Feast of Christ the King, a Catholic holiday established in thanking God for the gift of time, and re-dedication to the Christian faith.

December

December 1: World AIDS Day, commemorating those who have died of AIDS, and to acknowledge the need for a continued commitment to all those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

December 2-10: Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday that is celebrated around the world for eight days and nights. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees or Israelites over the Greek-Syrian ruler, Antiochus about 2200 years ago.

December 2 - 24: Advent, a Christian season of celebration leading up to the birth of Christ.

December 3: International Day of Disabled Persons, designed to raise awareness regarding persons with disabilities to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.

December 8: Bodhi Day, a holiday observed by Buddhists to commemorate Gautama's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, India.

December 10: International Human Rights Day, established by the United Nations in 1948 to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

December 12: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a religious holiday in Mexico commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531.

December 12: Eid Milad Un Nabi, an Islamic holiday commemorating the birthday of the prophet Muhammad. During this celebration, homes and mosques are decorated, large parades take place, and those observing the holiday participate in charity events.

December 13: St. Lucia's Day, a religious festival of light in Scandinavia and Italy commemorating the martyrdom of St Lucia, a young Christian girl who was killed for her faith, in 304 AD. She secretly brought food to persecuted Christians in Rome while wearing a wreath of candles on her head so both her hands would be free.

December 16-24: Las Posadas, a nine-day celebration in Mexico commemorating the trials Mary and Joseph endured during their journey to Bethlehem.

December 21: The Winter Solstice/ Yule, celebrated by Pagans and Wiccans, the shortest day of the year represents a celebration focusing on rebirth, renewal, and new beginnings as the sun makes way back to the earth. A solstice is an astronomical event that happens twice each year when the Sun reaches its highest position in the sky.

December 25: Christmas, the day that many Christians associate with Jesus's birth.

December 26: Boxing Day, a secular holiday celebrated in the UK, Canada Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and South Africa. Also, the day of the Feast of Saint Stephen, who is the patron saint of horses.

December 26 – January 1: Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday started by Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate universal African-American heritage.