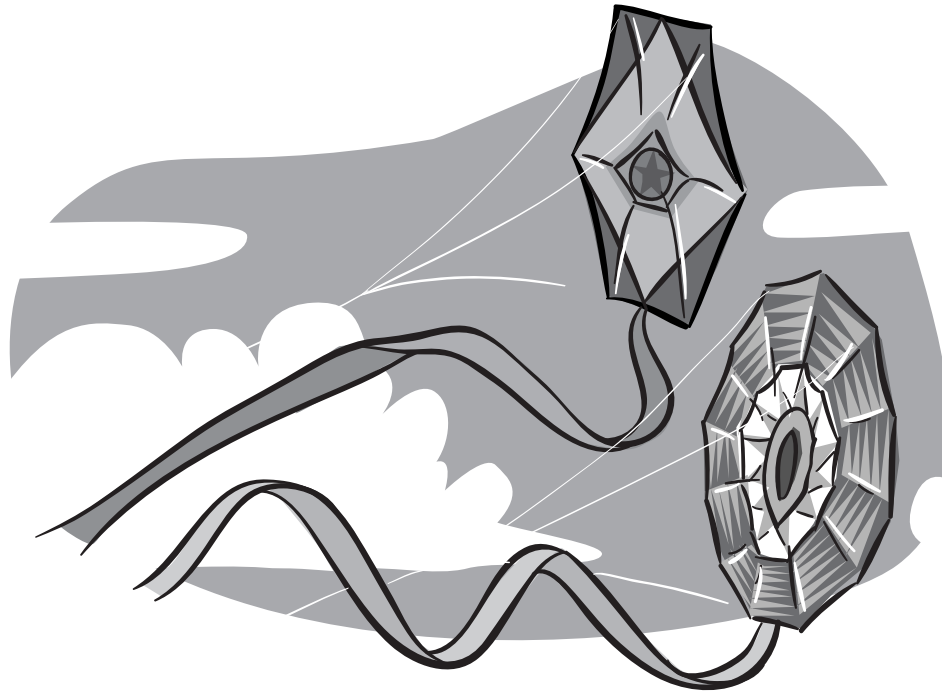


ARTS OF CELEBRATION



learning objectives

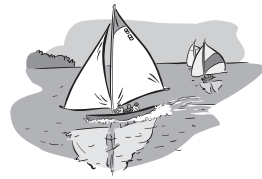
By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- identify rituals and related traditions people use to mark transitions in their life such as a 16th birthday and getting married;
- understand how traditions are taught and passed on;
- understand how holidays can help people express ideas about family, community, and a national identity;
- understand how traditions change;
- understand how traditions are maintained;
- list the characteristics of traditional Bermudian kites; and
- make a traditional Bermudian kite.

CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

In this chapter, in addition to social studies curriculum links, there are readings, discussion questions, and activities that fit well with language arts, design and technology, visual and fine arts, music, science, business studies, and family studies.

In this chapter, students will explore the traditions and rituals used to mark transitions in one's life and to celebrate religious, national, and historic holidays and other occasions. They will analyse what it means to get a motorised bike at age 16, and look at the roots of various wedding rituals. Stories about kite making and flying illuminate how traditions are learned and passed on. Examples from the celebrations of Portuguese *festas* illustrate how traditions are changed and maintained outside their country of origin. Examples of floats made for Bermuda Day will encourage students to ponder the origins of artistic ideas and the deeper meaning traditions related to this day hold as expressions of identity. Cup Match stories will engage students in thinking about how holidays and celebrations serve as family and community gatherings and about the different roles men and women play in maintaining family traditions.



Left: Scoreboard at Somerset Cricket Club at Cup Match. Courtesy Department of Communication and Information. **Right: Hassan Madyun makes a kite at the 2002 Bermuda Homecoming Festival.** Photograph by Lisa Falk.

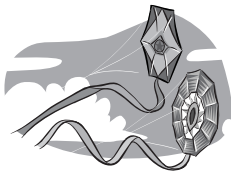
Let Us Celebrate!

Virtually every culture in the world has some special traditions and rituals that mark transitions in one's life and others that celebrate religious, national, and historic holidays. In Bermuda, getting a motorised bike at age 16 signals the beginning of adulthood and independence. Weddings celebrate another important life change. As Bermudian couples start on their newly joined path, they may plant a cedar tree or step through a moongate hoping to ensure a long and faithful marriage.

In Bermuda, religious holidays are celebrated with a mix of **sacred** and **secular** traditions. What would a Bermudian Easter be without kite flying, codfish cakes, and hot cross buns? The Portuguese-Bermudian community's cultural and religious links to the Azores are refreshed through annual *festas* (festivals). Traditions associated with these have been creatively adapted for practice in Bermuda.

Civic holidays often combine a mixture of government pomp and circumstance with history and community **nostalgia**. Some of these celebrations have endured for decades adapting their details to a society constantly changing in social attitudes and in the make up of the population. May 24th, Bermuda Day, is tied to Queen Victoria's birthday, but over time has become a celebration of being Bermudian. One highlight of this day's annual parade is the floats made by different community groups. In these you can see a reflection of the increasing **diversity** of Bermuda. This day also marks the traditional beginning of the ocean swimming season. Cup Match, a national holiday timed to the celebration of emancipation from slavery in Bermuda, brings together people of all backgrounds. The cricket match on which the holiday is based grew out of social circumstances related to segregation and, in the midst of celebration and rigorous sports competition, offers a time to think about race relations and Bermuda's history.

Within a national culture and within **ethnic** groups, families have their own unique traditions that are practised and passed on from one generation to the next. These traditions—often associated with food, dress, and expected behaviour—help to hold families together. Think about what celebrations your family holds. What special rituals do you take part in to mark birthdays, marriages, and holidays? How are your traditions the same or different from your neighbours? What about them are distinctively Bermudian?



Turning 16 — Step on the Pedal and Go

In most cultures, as one moves through the cycle of life, there is often a special time and ritual that marks the point when a boy becomes a man; a girl, a woman. In contemporary society, getting your driver's licence marks a similar transition. In Bermuda, turning 16 is often punctuated by getting a motorised bike. Paul Wilson, of Hamilton Parish, like many teenagers, dreamed of the bike he wanted to get upon turning 16. He remembers,

When I was 12 or 13 I started planning. I started planning [how] to convince my mom to give me a bike when I reached 16. I knew she wouldn't take kindly to her son being on the road because there are so many accidents; so I had to start years in advance persuading her to let me have a bike . . . I spent two summers working for my bike and I saved up every cent.

Paul's mother, Heather Whalen, agreed to let him get a motorised bike when he turned 16, but said he had to pay for a third of it. So Paul got a job at Grotto Bay and saved his earnings. The bike he chose cost nearly \$3,000, yet Paul was able to pay for nearly all of it himself.

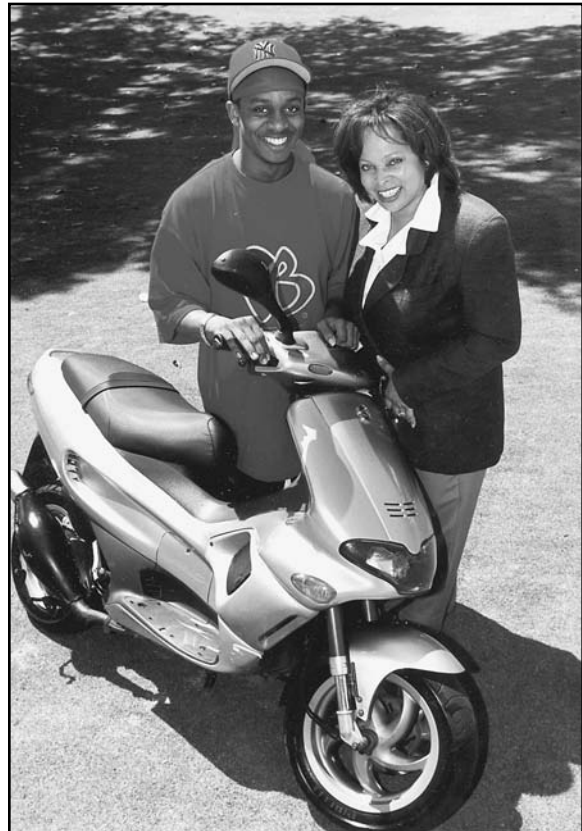
Having a bike means you've grown up. To the teenager, it means freedom and independence. It means being accepted by the crowd. To the parent it is the beginning of the pulling away from childhood dependence to adult independence. So having a bike actually represents a tough social time within the family unit, and not having a bike might mean you have a tough social time with your peers.

Mrs Whalen explained the new struggle the bike created between her and her son:

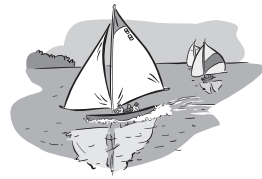
With the bike came this new-found freedom and almost immediately this change of attitude. [He would say] "I have to explain where I am going now?" Even before the bike, came the rules . . . I was told in no uncertain terms that I was the most old-fashioned mom [because of the curfew rules]. . . . But I had to stick with it [enforcing the rules] for my sanity's sake and for his safety.

Paul saw all the rules as a kind of ritual associated with the bike and growing up. He said,

I didn't want a [birthday] party. I just wanted the bike. I picked it up after school and my mom took a couple of pictures. She gave one final lecture, you know. It's like you just have to sit through it or she'd say, "You don't want to listen then you can't have the bike." You have to sit through it. You have to endure all the lectures. Then you have your freedom. Yes, there is a ritual—all the lecturing, the constant badgering about speeding and curfews. If you can go through that then you're okay. You are responsible.



Heather Whalen with son, Paul Wilson, and his new motorbike. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.

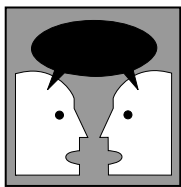


Paul explains how having your own bike makes you part of the in-crowd:

A lot of the lunch time conversations are about bikes and if they don't have a bike, they can't really join in. Even if nobody ends up racing at the end of the day, they still don't have any experience to talk about. They can't say, "I did this, this and this with my bike." They might ride somebody else's bike sometimes, but it's not the same as having their own to talk about.

Girls are like — "Oh, you've got a bike. You can come and pick me up and take me here." Before they are your friends, but after you get a bike they become closer friends. It's like what can I get out of this. Not all girls are like that, though. Some girls just say, "Hey it's nice to see you have a bike." Then the girls who have a bike say, "Hey, where do you want to go?" It's like, I have a bike and you have a bike. Let's both go.

Kids who don't have one are at a disadvantage socially. Because like when all my friends had bikes and they'd say, "Hey, let's go to Ice Queen," and I'd be left sitting on the wall or waiting for the bus.



Discussion Questions

1. Do you dream of getting a motorised bike when you are 16 (or did you dream about it before becoming 16)? Why or why not?
2. Do you think it is important to pay for part of the bike yourself? Why or why not?
3. What would having a bike mean to you?
4. How might having a bike change your relationship with your parents? With your friends?

The Right Bike

Choosing the right bike is important. Different bikes send different messages about their owner. Some are considered more masculine; some more feminine. Some are more daring than others. Choosing the colour and adding your own unique touch to your bike is also important. The bike becomes an expression of your identity.

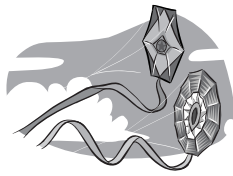
Paul tells how he chose his bike,

I liked the way it looked at the time, and I liked how it felt. It was fast. I knew I could live with it. It was a big bike. I like big bikes. It felt nice and comfortable. It wasn't too slow or too fast. It was a Runner. The Runner is a masculine bike.

When I got my bike, there was already a silver one at school, so I didn't want to get silver. I was going to get black. Then my cousin, who stays in the same neighbourhood as I do, said, "Why are you going to get black? Mine is black. Now there are going to be two black bikes close together." He didn't want me to get a black one because he had a black one, so I ended up getting a silver one.



Courtesy Stacey Madeiros Cooke.



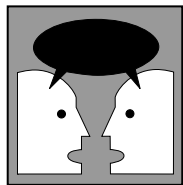
Since the bikes only come in three colours and in only so many makes, it is hard to have a totally unique one. In some way or another, each bike owner tries to make his or her bike different. Paul talks about what he did to put his mark on his bike:

I changed the side stand. All Runners have side stands but they don't lean far over. I kind of adjusted mine so that it would lean further when you stood it up or parked it. No other Runner has a lean like that. That was unique . . .

You might see some people with nice looking bikes. They might have their bikes fixed up just how they want them. You know what you do is you kind of display your bike. You park it in a certain way when you go to school so that it is noticed. The parking bays go straight but I would park horizontally so that when people came up they would see the whole bike and not have just a rear-end view.



Teens work to make their bikes unique. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.



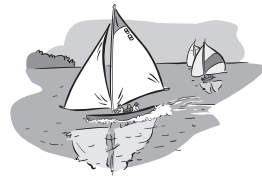
Discussion Questions

1. What kind of bike did Paul want? Why?
2. What kind of bike would you want? Why?
3. Identify the different ways that you have seen people change their bikes to be unique.
4. What ideas do you have for making a bike different?
5. Do you think your bike says anything about who you are? Is your bike a symbol of your identity? How or how not?

Know Your Bike

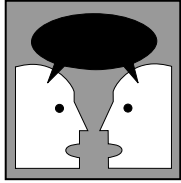
Owning a bike isn't only about riding it. It is also about being responsible for it and knowing how to fix it. Paul describes the importance of fiddling with your bike and of knowing how it handles:

A lot about owning a bike is just fiddling with it. I clean my bike a lot. You clean it and you fiddle with it. You examine the engine, the clutch, you adjust the wheels and you fiddle with the frame. I can't do a lot of stuff myself but sometimes I go round to HWP (Holmes, Williams and Purvey) and ask the mechanics to help me. I think everyone should have a bike and just study it. A guy that owns a bike and doesn't fiddle with it and toy with it he doesn't really like his bike. That's part of it, toying with it. That helps you to understand the bike.



One thing [my dad] told me was “Paul, make sure you know the bike. Before you start riding, just make sure you know that bike.” That’s the same advice I give to my little cousin now that he’s about to get a bike.

It’s true. You’ve got to know your bike. You see people going up the street on a bike leaning forward or dipping in and out of traffic. It’s silly to do that. You have to know how your bike is going to react at that speed and how you are going to correct a mistake. You have to stay calm.



Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important to “know your bike?”
2. Why does Paul think that someone who doesn’t fiddle with his bike doesn’t really like his bike? Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. Do you teach things to someone younger than you? What types of things? Do you find that you pass on knowledge that someone once shared with you? How does that make you feel?



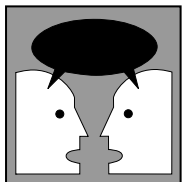
Courtesy Stacey Madeiros Cooke.

An Important Rite of Passage

Getting a bike is an important rite of passage for teenagers. The ritual starts with the dreaming, scheming, and coming up with the money, then progresses to picking it out, learning how it works, fiddling with it, and using it for social advantage and gaining adult freedoms. Finally comes the time when you move on. At 18 you can drive a car, and soon after, many teens leave the island to go away to school.

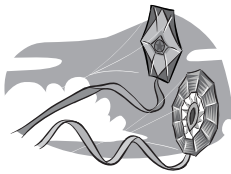
Ms. Whalen describes how it was with Paul:

From the time they are 14 and a half to 15, that’s all they focus on. Work is secondary; homework is secondary. It’s the bike and what they’ll do with the bike and to the bike and the colour of the bike and all that . . . He became obsessed with this bike. Next to basketball was the bike, and at one point, I think, the bike was more important than basketball—and he loves basketball . . . They worship the bike and the helmet and all the paraphernalia that goes with it. They like to exchange bikes as much as they worship their bike . . . He actually admitted to me toward the end of the summer, “This bike is getting boring now, you know.” That bike is like a rite of passage.



Discussion Questions

1. What does “rite of passage” mean?
2. Why is having a bike considered to be a teenage rite of passage?



Activities

That Special Bike

1. Interview different people about their dreams for having a bike. Then interview people who have a bike and see if they have found that the experience matched their dreams.
2. Interview adults about their experiences when they had a bike. What did they do with their bike? What adventures did they have? Did they decorate their bike or change its look in any way? How? Why or why not?
3. Design a special symbol to put on your bike that will make it look unique and express your identity.
4. Find out about how people race their bikes. Why do they race? When? What are the rules? What are the dangers?
5. Create a book, website, or poster of stories about your experiences (and the experiences of people that you have interviewed) about getting, owning, decorating, fixing up, riding and racing their first bike. You may want to include photographs or illustrations.
6. Write a short story in which a motorised bike plays an important part.

'Til Death Do Us Part

The Bermuda wedding is a great tradition and is one of the island's largest, most stylish, expensive, beautiful and carefully choreographed rituals. Susanne Notman, in an article about Bermuda weddings in a 1989 issue of *The Bermudian*, says, "Bermudians today are putting together marvellous weddings, incorporating traditional rites into a modern, individualistic way of doing things—and they are doing it all in great style!" Notman says this sense of style comes from having respect for and appreciation of one's heritage and background, as diverse as it may be. "It is this diversity," she says, "which makes each Bermuda wedding so unique, yet they are all held together by such common traditions as the horse and carriage, the wedding cake, the loving cup, the moon gate and the cedar tree planting ceremony."¹

As a Cedar Tree Grows

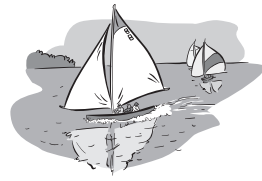
Ruth Thomas, of Southampton, has researched Bermuda wedding traditions. She explains why people plant cedar trees as part of their wedding ceremony:

According to tradition, a cedar sapling is planted by newlyweds at their wedding



Mr and Mrs Manders plant a cedar sapling during their wedding reception. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.

¹ Paragraph from report by Ruth Thomas on Bermuda Weddings.



reception especially when that reception takes place at the home of the bride's parents. The **ritual** underlines the hope that the marriage will be as strong, beautiful, and fertile as the cedar tree and that it will grow as the sapling grows.

For the same reason, cedar saplings or sprigs are also placed on top of the bride's cake. William Zuill, of Smith's, describes this tradition:

At the top of the bride's cake, there's usually a tiny cedar tree seedling and that's supposed to be planted during the reception if it's held at the bride's house. Then as it grows up, it's supposed to show if the marriage is prospering. Or [it's supposed] to wither if the marriage is not.

Moonlight Romance

While the cedar tree planting tradition is old, a more recent addition is the ritual of stepping through a moongate. During the 1920s, in a bid to make Bermuda a destination for honeymooners, tourism industry advertisements showed couples kissing in moonlight under coral stone moongates and billed this act as "an **omen** of well-being."² The moongate idea was brought to Bermuda in the late 19th or early 20th century via clipper ships from Asia. Interestingly, the stonecutters in Bermuda who mastered building moongates were primarily from the Azores. Miss Thomas comments on this more recent and quite popular tradition:

According to folklore, if you step through a moongate with the one you love the partnership will be blessed with longevity and fidelity. Hence, many a bride and groom at their wedding reception step through a moongate and are photographed in a moongate with the hope that the myth will come true for them. Very often, if the reception site has no moongate, a temporary one is set in place in order to give the newlyweds the opportunity to step into eternal bliss.

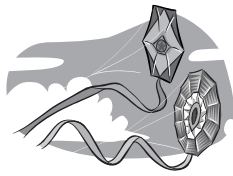


Mr and Mrs Manders walk through a moongate as part of their wedding ceremony. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.

Jump Over a Broom

Another tradition that is more recently incorporated into weddings is jumping over a broom. This ritual recalls traditions derived from the time of plantation slavery in the United States when marriages of enslaved Africans were not formally acknowledged by the larger society. It is most likely imported from African American culture in the United States.

² McDowell, Duncan, *Another World: Bermuda and the Rise of Modern Tourism*, London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1999, pp 93-94.



A Golden Cake

Weddings in Bermuda are celebrated with two cakes, a bride's and a groom's. These cakes are full of **symbolism**. They represent wishes for prosperity (both in finances and children) and purity. Miss Thomas describes the cakes and traditions associated with them:

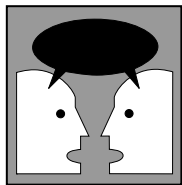
The bride's cake, which is a tiered fruitcake, symbolises fruitfulness. It is covered with icing and silver leaf. It is not only a beautiful object but also a symbol of purity.

The groom's cake, which is a single layer, is a plain cake or pound cake. It is covered with icing. The preferred icing for both this and the bride's cake is royal icing mainly because of its ability to survive Bermuda's brutal humidity and because it is very versatile for fine detailing. This cake is traditionally covered with gold leaf. The gold symbolises plenty and envisions that the newlyweds will never be in need.

Traditionally, the bottom layer [of the bride's cake] is cut up and served to guests at the wedding reception while the second layer is often reserved for the first anniversary. In years gone by the top tier was always reserved for the christening of the couple's first child. Sometimes the newlyweds simply make a ceremonial cut with a knife decorated with ribbon. The guests are then served separately prepared fruit and plain cake. This is what the old-timers used to call "cut-up cake."

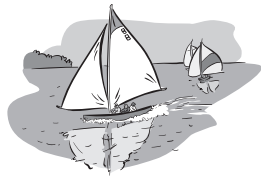


Wedding cakes covered in gold and silver leaf, topped with cedar seedlings. Courtesy Department of Communication and Information.



Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever seen a bride and groom plant a cedar tree as part of their wedding? Why do you think they did that?
2. Have you ever seen a bride and groom step through a moongate as part of their wedding? Why do you think they did that?
3. Have you ever seen a bride and groom jump over a broom as part of their wedding? Why do you think they did that?
4. What other traditions are part of weddings? Think about activities before the wedding, the roles people play in the ceremony, clothes, rings, transport, and the reception after the ceremony.
5. Why would you want things to symbolise purity and prosperity at a wedding?
6. What special traditions does your family incorporate into wedding ceremonies?
7. How are rituals created? What makes them accepted as part of a culture's traditions?



Activities

Getting Married

1. Interview your parents or other relatives about their wedding. Ask them what special rituals they included in the ceremony and at other events related to the wedding. Find out why they chose to include those traditions. Ask them how they felt doing those traditions.
2. As a class, try to interview people from as many different ethnic backgrounds as possible about traditions associated with getting married. What special rituals do they do and why?
3. Interview people who planted a cedar tree at their wedding. Find out if its growth seemed to mirror the couple's union—did it prosper or wither in relation to the marriage's ups and downs?
4. Describe what traditions you want at your wedding. Be sure to explain why you chose to include each special ritual.
5. Create a new ritual for your wedding. What will it represent? Write a description of it.
6. Post these descriptions so everyone can read them. Choose three that you like best and write about why they appeal to you.
7. Invite a wedding cake baker to your class to demonstrate how silver and gold leaf are applied. Ask them what kinds of decorations couples are putting on their cakes. Also ask them how they learned to bake and decorate cakes. Is that something you would like to know how to do?

Easter Time — Go Fly a Kite!

Easter in Bermuda, as in many places, is celebrated with church services, egg hunts, and festive meals. What makes Bermuda's Easter observation unique is the tradition of kite flying on Good Friday. Many families choose to pass the day together setting aloft brightly coloured kites. The sky is transformed into a dancing mosaic of brilliant and beautiful shapes, colours, and sounds. The business of kite flying is only interrupted by the temptation of codfish cakes and warm hot cross buns. Those who make kites spend months preparing for this holiday.

No one is certain how the tradition started, but one story often repeated is that it began with a Sunday school teacher's creative lesson on Jesus Christ's ascension to heaven. It is said that the teacher made a cross kite, took it to a hilltop, and set it flying, then cut the string and the students watched it sail upward towards heaven. However the tradition started, kite flying on Good Friday is now an avidly awaited ritual in Bermuda.

Al Seymour Jr, of Somerset, who has been making kites since he was 11 years old, recalls how as a youngster he thought of Good Friday as a joyful day of kite flying:

Good Friday was like Christmas morning. It was like having Christmas twice. A lot of people my age and older would get up at 6.00 am and go outside to see whose kite was up first and making the most noise. Kites would be up all day. We made them and flew them. Most of the guys would have around eight or nine kites in the living room. You take your ugliest one out first. That was your tester.



Kite flying on Good Friday, Horseshoe Bay. Courtesy Department of Communication and Information.

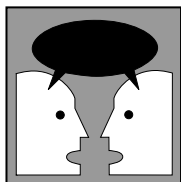
Bermudian kites are carefully crafted from colourful tissue paper and clear white pine wood, with rattan or cane (bamboo) for the headstick bender. Great care is taken to ensure that the colours blend perfectly. Originally kites were made out of newspapers, brown paper, a page from a notebook, fennel sticks, and flour mixed with a little water served as the glue. In the past many Bermudians made their own kites. Unfortunately today's busy lifestyle leaves little time for kite making. While some folks still make or purchase traditional kites of paper, imported plastic kites are becoming popular because of their convenience and lower price.

Each Bermudian kite is unique with different shapes and colours creating its style. Mr Seymour stated that the Bermuda headstick kite is the best known design. He says,

Its four-stick design goes back to the 1800s. The kite is admired in the kite world because it is both sturdy in framework and delicate in its covering and patterns. They have been made as small as one inch and as large as 20 feet in length. This standard four stick design is supplemented to produce round styles. The roundie style uses five sticks so the kite will have eight sides, an octagon shape. The moonie has a rounder shape because it uses six sticks, so it's a hexagon shape.

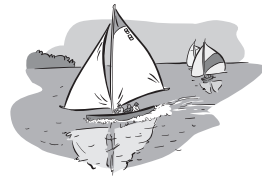
Video Links

- View the *Bermuda Connections* video segment where Ethan documents kite flying on Good Friday and talks with Mr Vincent Tuzo.



Discussion Questions

1. Do you fly a kite on Good Friday? If so, do you fly a traditional Bermudian kite or a plastic one? Do you make your own or purchase it?
2. How and of what materials are traditional Bermudian kites made? What are the various shapes and colours of Bermudian kites?



Activities

Four, Five, Six, or How Many Sticks?

1. Make a series of designs for kites. Start with three sticks and go up to 10 sticks. See how many different shapes you can create.
2. Try building kites from your various designs and see which fly better.

The Sound of a Kite

Rather than for their shapes and colours, Somerset kites are famous for the sound caused by their hummers. Mr Seymour states,

The hummers add the icing on the cake. They transform a silent Good Friday sky into a pleasant multi-pitched drone heard from one end of the Island to the other.

Kite maker Antoine “Sow Wow” Simons, of Somerset, explains why Somerset kites, called buzzards, are considered the loudest and wildest of all Bermuda kites.



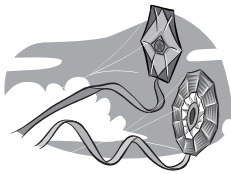
“Sow Wow” with kites he made. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.

It’s more or less built for sound. They do have some colours in the lines, but the main object of that kite is for the flying technique and the sound. It makes an extra loud sound.

What gives it its sound is the tightness of the hummer line. The tighter the line, the more noise the kite will make. And the structure of the kite balances out along with the lines and the amount of breeze that’s blowing that particular day. If you wanted to make a kite to fly today, you would more or less build a kite according to the wind today. If you have some already made, you would know which one to fly today because of how much wind is blowing. Some are a little wider than others, or narrower. So it’s more or less built on the width of the kite and the tightness of the hummer line.

That’s why most kites in Somerset are made with wire rather than bamboo, because the bamboo would bend up when you tighten the hummer line unless you reconstruct the kite with some type of reinforcement behind it to keep the bamboo from bending. We usually use the bamboo only if we’re going in a kite competition. For the prettiest kite and stuff. But when it comes to flying the kite, we never use them because we are looking for the sound.

Sometimes I’ll have one particular kite in one year that makes [such an] outstanding sound that it will never lose me. I’ll have that kite in my memory for a very long time. Out of all those kites, there’s one sound that will really stand out amongst the rest, and [it] will stay with you for a very long time until you can make another kite that will end up



having a very loud sound as well. But you don't get that very high, high pitch every time you make a kite. It's just something that comes now and then, just like an athlete who could only run his best speed once in 10 years, and it would stay with him for the rest of his life. So, it's a similar thing with making kites.

How exactly is a hummer made? Mr Seymour explains:

String is strung along the back and up on both sides of the headstick to form a triangle. Tissue paper is cut, folded in half and glued on the string. This combination creates a sound when both vibrate in the wind. The pitch can vary according to how tight the string is and how wide/narrow the tissue paper is cut. Wide paper and less taut string will produce a lower hum and does not need a high wind to create the sound. Somerset kites have a unique sound as the string is so taut it creates a reed effect like a clarinet and requires higher wind speed.

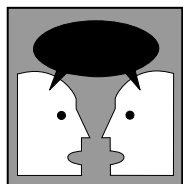
HUMMERS

INTERVIEWER:

So what makes "hummers" very special? Is it because of that noise?

CHILD WITH KITE:

Exactly. That's what makes a kite king!



Discussion Questions

1. "Sow Wow" Simons and Al Seymour, Jr. say that the Somerset kites are special because of the sound they make. How do they make this sound?
2. What causes the humming sound to be low or high in pitch?
3. Do you know of distinguishing traits of other Bermudian kites?
4. What materials do you think are the best for making a kite that flies well? That has a good sound? That looks pretty?
5. "Sow Wow" describes how a particular sound of one kite may stay with him for a long time as something special. He also said this may be true of an athlete when he hits his best speed. Have you done or created anything that stands out that way in your memory? If so, what was it and why?

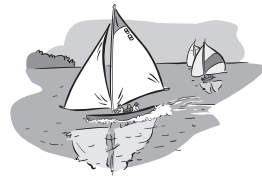
Continuing the Tradition

Not as many people make their own kites any more. "Sow Wow" talks about this:

A lot of guys have come to me and say, "Look Sow, I need a couple of kites this year, and I say to them, "Man, you know how to make kites, why don't you just make your little daughters a couple of kites?" "Look man, I don't have any time, man". So I say "All right." And sometimes I end up disappointing them because I have so many orders, and I can't keep them all up, because I'm the only one making the kites. I can get over a hundred orders for kites [in a year]. But I turn down so many, because I know I'm not going to make a hundred anymore.



Al Seymour Jr shows visitors one of his kites at the 2001 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.

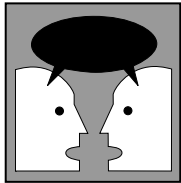


Kite making takes talent, but it is a skill that can be learned. Al Seymour Jr recounts how he got his start in kite making:

I remember when I was young, we used to make kites out of anything. I used to make a kite out of the front of my exercise book. I would tear the cover off, get two sticks and some string and put a little tail on her, and let her go. I would fly a kite home from school every day. I don't think any of my exercise books had covers on them!

Mr Seymour stated, "When I was growing up, it was taboo not to know how to make a kite." Today, youth have many other activities and only a few show interest in learning how to make traditional Bermudian kites. In order for traditional art forms to continue, young artists need to learn the craft. Traditionally, a young person will learn from a knowledgeable elder. "Sow Wow" tells how he taught a young girl to make a kite.

About two years ago, I had these neighbours who used to stay next to me . . . They came up my house and watched me make kites, and one of the girls said, "Let me try," so I taught her the basics and then I left her on her own. And she went along, and fixed this kite. I ended up selling the kite for \$25. I never thought the kite would come out that good. So there are some people out there that have that talent but just haven't used it. They don't know they've really got it until they try it. I told the girl, "Hey, you've got it! You've got it like that there." . . . There are a lot of people out there that can probably do that, but they just need somebody to guide them, to get them going.



Discussion Questions

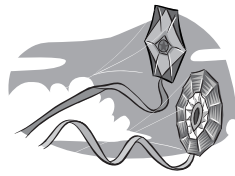
1. Why aren't as many people making kites today?
2. Do you think it is important for people to learn to make a kite? Why or why not?
3. Would you like to learn to make a kite?
4. If you want to learn to make a kite, how would you go about learning?



Activities

Kite Making

1. Interview your parents about kites they have flown. If your parents have never flown a kite, find a neighbour who has and interview them instead. Ask your interviewee if he made the kites, when he flew them and why, what designs the kites had and why, and what it felt like to fly a kite.
2. Find someone who makes kites and ask him or her to show you how to make one. You could invite the kite maker to come to school and demonstrate for your class.
3. Make your own traditional kite. Think carefully about materials and the colours and design you use.
4. Sponsor a kite-making and flying competition day at school. What judging categories will you have? Who will serve as the judges? Will the competition be among students at your school or will you open it up as a challenge to another school? Invite the community to attend. Think about having a traditional kite maker demonstrate and lead a kite making workshop as part of the kite day.
5. Mount an exhibit of the kites after the competition and put it on display at the local library or another community gathering place. Along with the kites, include a picture of the person who made the kite and a caption in which the maker describes how he made the kite and why he used the design and colours he did.



Portuguese Festas

Portuguese festivals, or *festas*, bring age-old traditions alive in modern Bermuda. While Azorean villages celebrate dozens of these colourful Catholic events honouring various saints and the Holy Trinity all year long, Portuguese-Bermudians mark two grand occasions. On the fifth Sunday after Easter, hundreds gather at St Theresa's Cathedral for the procession of *Santo Cristo*, a solemn march that seeks miracles for the sick and needy. The Bishop and church elders walk on an intricate carpet of flowers as the Christ image, wearing a crown and cape, is carried through the streets. In June, the community celebrates the *Festa do Espírito Santo* (Festival of the Holy Spirit) in King's Square, St George's. Its origins lie in the **legendary** charity of Queen Isabel, said to have hidden pieces of bread to give to beggars. The pageant includes a public feast. A long table is prepared with bowls of a simple *sopa*, or soup, served with sweet bread (*pão doce*) and a glass of red wine. This meal is offered to the hundreds who walk in the procession.³

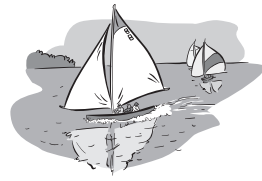
Creating Flower Carpets

Often traditions survive because they change. Sometimes a tradition would die if those practising it felt it had to remain exactly as it has always been. In Bermuda, the Portuguese community has found it hard to make carpets of flowers for the *Santo Cristo* celebration. The fresh flowers are very expensive on the island and permission to close the street is only for the duration of the procession, so there is not ample time to create fresh flower carpets in the street. Instead of losing the tradition, the women adapted it. Frequently today the carpet of flowers is made ahead of time, and instead of real flowers, tissue paper flowers are made and used. Mary Reis, who lives in Hamilton Parish, explains the making of the flower carpets:

³ Paragraph from label in *The Azores and Bermuda* exhibit at Commissioner's House, Bermuda Maritime Museum, courtesy of Bermuda Maritime Museum. For more on the Portuguese community, visit the Bermuda Maritime Museum.



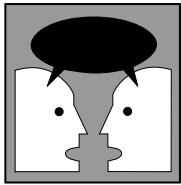
Carpet of real flowers for *Santo Cristo Festa*. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.



The reason why we do the carpets in the tissue paper is because flowers are becoming extremely expensive and tissue is not as expensive as the flowers. But we would rather have the fresh flowers, and we usually try to maintain that. It also gives a different look. The reason why we did it is that we did not have the fresh flowers to do it.

There are a group of women who get together [to make the flower carpet]—this is the joy I love about being Portuguese: everybody gets together. . . We get together and we talk. We get together in unity.

I selected the hibiscus because it is the flower from Bermuda, but people do different designs. We trace this on the board and fill it with different colours of the tissue paper. We had a group of 12 or 13 women who got together and completed 42 strips of carpet. They are going to use these on the 5th of May for the Santo Cristo Festa. It's a joy.



Discussion Questions

1. Why do the Portuguese women make carpets from tissue paper flowers instead of real flowers?
2. Do you think it is a good thing to change a tradition? Why or why not?

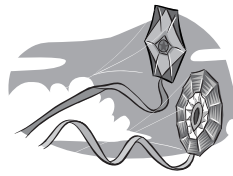
3. Do you know of any traditions from your culture or family that have been changed over time in order to continue their practise?
4. Ms. Reis said she chose to create a hibiscus flower. Why? What flower would you put in a carpet?
5. Making the carpet for the Portuguese women is a joyful social time. Are there things that you create as a member of a group? How do you feel about working with others?



Changing Traditions

1. Interview your parents or other relatives about family traditions and find out if any practices have been adapted to fit different times, locations, or circumstances.
2. Invite the Portuguese women who make tissue paper flowers to your classroom. Ask them to demonstrate and teach you how to make the flowers.
3. Make your own carpet of flowers. Think about what flowers and what colours you will put in your carpet.





24th of May — Bermuda Day

They must not be Bermudian if they go swimming before 24 May! No self-respecting Bermudian would go for a dip in the ocean or stop wearing an undervest before that day. May 24th is the official traditional opening of the swimming season and of the Bermuda fitted dinghy racing season. It is also Queen Victoria's birthday, which is how the day began as a holiday in Bermuda. But today, rather than honouring the former Queen, the 24th of May holiday is a celebration of Bermuda's heritage and being Bermudian.

Dr Gary Burgess, of Smith's, whose responsibilities in the Department of Cultural Affairs include organising the day's activities, describes Bermuda Day, as being "a celebration of heritage, a celebration of freedom, almost, and a celebration of uniting . . . It is a day for Bermudians to feel they are Bermudians. They feel their heritage and feel free in what they can do."

The day is marked by a variety of sports competitions including skating, the Heritage Day Classic cycle race, Half-Marathon Derby during which participants run from Somerset to Hamilton, and Bermuda fitted dinghy races in St George's harbour. In addition to these activities, everyone looks forward to the large parade that goes through the streets of Hamilton. The parade was established in 1979 by the government as a way to promote racial harmony after two decades of civil unrest related to the abolishment of segregation and challenging of racial discrimination. Each year the Heritage Advisory Committee determines a different theme for the parade.

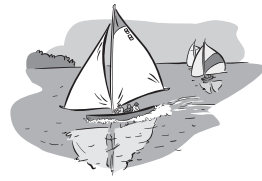


Bermuda Day parade, Indian community float, 2002. Department of Communication and Information.

It features decorated floats, gombey crowds, marching bands, and majorette dancers. Many groups create elaborate floats for it and compete to win the various awards. Some say the float tradition began as a way to use up all the flowers left over and unused from the now defunct Easter Floral Pageant.

Lowdru Robinson, former director of the Department of Community Services, was the original organiser of the first Bermuda Day celebrations. He explains why sports and heritage activities are offered together:

The marathon was in the morning and the parade was in the afternoon. The idea was to have a central place where a number of activities could take place—activities that would bring people together . . . As a result of that, you would have a full day of activities where people from across the community (who perhaps may not have met under any other



circumstances) would meet in an atmosphere of fun and entertainment. [They would] be able to enjoy themselves and see the value of each other's groups.

Fulfilling the original intent of the organisers, people from all different backgrounds participate in the parade. Mr Robinson proudly comments on this:

What we mainly did was to go out to groups in the community and encourage them to do something that showed their heritage . . . Today we have a mixture of floral floats and costumes and so on and I would say every ethnic group participates. The last parade that I saw featured some of the new people to Bermuda, people who are working here: Chinese

people, Filipinos, and... certainly a huge Portuguese group. So I think it has worked in that you see a huge representation of the various groups of people here. It may even be a bit startling to some people here to see that there are Chinese people, Indian people, Filipino people and so on, but the reality is that these people are here in our community. They live in our community. They can contribute to the wealth and benefit of our community. I think they are doing so, but there is still a little bit of surprise as to how multicultural the community has become.

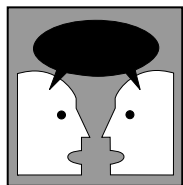


Talbot Brothers, Bermuda Day Parade float. Courtesy Department of Communication and Information.

For Mary Reis, of Portuguese descent, the parade makes her feel a

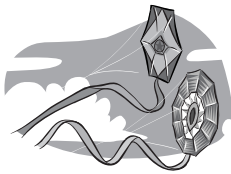
part of Bermuda and offers her an opportunity to share her culture with others. She says:

It's like [living] a double culture. We integrate into our culture the English [with] the Portuguese. I think we balance [the two cultures] because we love people, we love each other. When we integrate different cultures it's good because it brings unity of everyone. Everyone should respect each other. In Bermuda we have such a variety of cultures. We have about 20 different nationalities here. I think if you live in this country, you should share what you have and be a neighbour to each other. That's why May 24th means a lot to me because it brings a lot of us together.



Discussion Questions

1. What does Bermuda Day mean to you?
2. How do you celebrate Bermuda Day? Do you participate in or watch a sports activity or the parade?
3. Do you think Bermuda Day helps bring people of various cultural backgrounds together and increase understanding of the different groups? Why or why not?



The Meaning of Bermuda Day

1. Interview different people about what Bermuda Day means to them. Does it mean they can start swimming in the ocean? Do they feel it is important as a time to share their culture?
2. Ask people what they like best about the parade. How do they participate—as viewers or by creating floats or marching or dancing in the parade?

An Imaginative Design

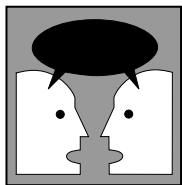
Float makers use their vast imaginations to come up with original interpretations of each year's parade theme. Sometimes their ideas are influenced by thinking about who their sponsor is. When the theme was transport and the sponsor of the float was a funeral home, instead of creating a float with a boat, train, bus, or car on it, Godfrey Smith created one using the metaphor of birth and death to represent the first and last transport a person will experience. He explains:

I made them a mother, pregnant, babe in her hands, husband going under the grave. Minister is saying, "ashes to ashes." I wrote on my paper the first transportation is when the mother is carrying, the last transportation is when you are put in a coffin and carried to your grave. They have to carry you in your coffin. So I got first prize. Everybody else made trains, boats. I tried to go as deep as possible with the theme and put more into it.

Anytime I'm competing in any parade, I like to go to the library and go back to whatever the theme is and see what would be nice for the people, what would inspire them the most, and then I start to build. Everything I build has a story behind it.

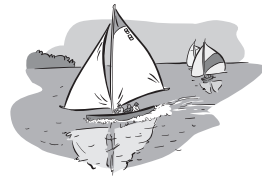
In addition to designing his floats to tell stories, Mr Smith tries to make them technically unique. He was one of the first float makers to incorporate moving parts in his design. Now kinetic floats are very popular. He reveals his secret for how to make the parts move:

[People] they dig the mechanical moves. Well, I could tell you the secret to that. What I use . . . [is] the windshield wiper in the back [of a car. I get it at a junkyard.] . . . You take the motor that goes with it and you move the motor. The motor has two types of gears; it goes fast and slow. You apply little weights in between to slow it down. Then you put your piece on . . . It'll go all round in a circle or whatever you want it to do.



Discussion Questions

1. From where does Mr Smith get his ideas for his floats?
2. Why do you think he has often won first place for his floats?



Activities

Floats

1. Working with a partner, design a float that depicts “Being Bermudian.” What is the overall design? What symbols will you use? What materials do you need to build it? Will it have moveable parts?
2. Present the designs to your classmates. Decide on one, or create a new design which incorporates parts of the different design ideas that can represent your class’s idea of “Being Bermudian.”
3. Contact the Department of Cultural Affairs and find out what this year’s parade theme is. Can you modify your float design to work with that theme or do you need to come up with a new design?
4. Apply to have your float included in the May 24th parade.
5. Find a sponsor for your float and build your float. Before you start the building process, you may want to take a visit to a float maker’s workshop to learn how he builds a float. Be sure to document the whole process.

ETHNIC CLUBS

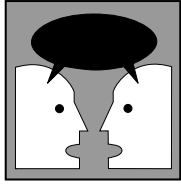
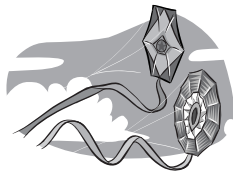
- Alliance Français
- Bengali Cultural Association
- Caledonian Society
- Filipino Association
- Indian Association
- Portuguese Cultural Association
- Vasco da Gama Club
- West Indian Association

Cup Match

Reporter Jonathan Kent described Cup Match as “a celebration of this island and its history, a celebration of hard-fought freedoms, of family and community, and of sporting excellence.” The two-day government holiday of Cup Match combines Somers’ Day and Emancipation Day and is celebrated with a fiercely competitive game of cricket between the St George’s and Somerset cricket clubs. The first day of Cup Match **commemorates** and celebrates the emancipation of Bermudians of African descent from slavery in 1834. The second day commemorates the discovery of Bermuda by Sir George Somers, captain of the *Sea Venture*. The holiday of Cup Match has become the largest community celebration in Bermuda.

The complexity of the island’s history and society is reflected in Cup Match. Like many public activities in Bermuda before desegregation in the 1960s and the challenge and changing of racist laws and practices in the 1970s, cricket was segregated. Black Bermudians could not play cricket in the games sponsored by the white British clubs. To counter this, the black Grand United Order lodges created and sponsored the black Somerset and St George’s cricket teams—named after parishes at opposite ends of Bermuda. The teams eventually generated their own social clubs that remain active today.

The first match between the two black cricket clubs was in 1902. The late Cup Match historian Percival Ratteray, of Somerset, explained that “the agreement [between the St George’s and Somerset teams] was that the winner would hold the Cup and play on their home field until the challengers won.” Since then Cup Match has embodied a friendly rivalry between the east and west ends of Bermuda. Supporters of the St George’s team wear light blue and navy blue; Somerset supporters sport red and blue. The choice of colours originated in the regalia and symbolism of the lodges that first sponsored the games.



Discussion Questions

1. What does the “Cup” refer to in Cup Match? What advantages does the holder of the Cup have?
2. What types of outfits and other expressions of team support have you seen?
3. How and why did Cup Match get started?
4. Why and how does Cup Match commemorate emancipation?
5. How did Bermuda’s civil rights movement affect Cup Match?

A Family and Community Gathering

Today, Cup Match is the largest community celebration in Bermuda. Cup Match has many traditions associated with it—dress, verbal expressions, family “camps,” and food. Percival Ratteray, Jr., of Somerset, says “Everything is all about Bermudian culture; the Crown and Anchor, the fish chowder, fish stew, and cricket. It creates a bond amongst the whole community.” Ben Swan says that Cup Match is a social time: “A typical day is just teasing one another about your teams, and who is going to win, who is going to make the runs. You might make some bets as to who is going to make the most runs . . . Everybody sort of mingles . . . and whatever team wins at the end of the day, we are still friends . . . It’s just a sit down relaxing and talking day.”

Warrington “Soup” Zuill, of St George’s, has been actively involved in the administration of the St George’s Cricket Club for many years. He characterises Cup Match as being about “inspiration, winning and losing, enjoying the game, and seeing friends.” Regardless of which team you support, Cup Match is a time of picnics and family reunions, a space where all of Bermuda comes together and connects.⁴

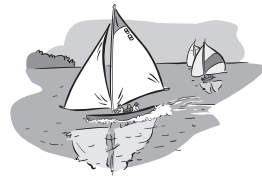


Cup Match historian Warrington “Soup” Zuill (on left).



Fans enjoying the Cup Match game. Courtesy Warrington Zuill.

⁴ All quotes from *RG Magazine*, August/September 2002, pp 11-21.



For the Zuill family, Cup Match serves to connect them to each other and to their past. “Soup” Zuill explains:

Cup Match is a part of my life. I’ve been brought up around it since my early days when my mother used to take me to the present time. I have a daughter and she’s never missed a Cup Match. My children, my grandchildren, even my great grandchildren come to Cup Match. It’s a part of Bermuda culture—introducing the family.

You see, in Cup Match, the preparation is very high. The men know what they have to do. Their responsibility is preparing the spot, getting the surroundings ready. So when the women come on Thursday morning they are comfortable. The man’s job is to take care of the liquid refreshments . . . We provide the tables and the coolers . . . The women’s responsibility is all the solid refreshments . . . Each lady in the camp knows, she’s responsible for the salad, she’s responsible for the macaroni and cheese, she’s responsible for the meats . . . We make sure when they get there the camp is set up, everything is in its place. Then we start to entertain each other.

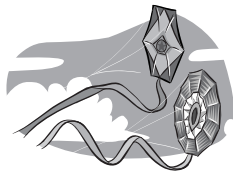
Ten or 15 minutes before lunch break, the women will be getting ready to prepare lunch . . . They will commence, they will open the table set up. Don’t forget now, fancy tablecloths, fancy napkins there. And some of us will take our household silver along with the plastic utensils.

The menu hasn’t changed [over time] because it is a family tradition. And you may get some of your family members or your friends who haven’t been in a number of years. He’s coming to the Cup Match to eat that peas and rice, to have his macaroni and cheese, to have that baked chicken and that cassava pie. ’Cause he’s saying, I could go down to granny’s stand and get macaroni and cheese my granny fixed when I was small. Or I can go to cousin Harold’s camp and get some fish chowder. So the preps [are] there for the Bermudians as well as the visitors. And when you invite visitors to join you, you’re gonna give ’em your homemade preps in particular, your peas and rice, your macaroni and cheese.

[We] invite family members and friends. Your friends know where your [camp is] and they will come to you. People come there and participate. They stay for a period, participate and leave there and go to another one.



Yola “Didi” Smith, a supporter of St George’s team, Cup Match 2000, Somerset. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.



Building a Cup Match Camp

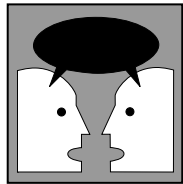
“Soup” Zuill says that the tradition of building wooden structures as people’s camps during Cup Match started in 1980 in St George’s. Before then people simply used big beach or small rain umbrellas and blankets on the ground.

Some friends of hers and some friends mine [got together]. And we decided, hey, let’s see if we can throw something together and put a top and make a shack. On Wednesday night we all went St George’s, and we didn’t have any material at all. And we looked around the Wellington Oval to see what we could find.

We found some old pallets, some wood that was left behind from other people building their Cup Match stalls. We combined that together and we built an upstairs and downstairs. We actually built an up and down stall or spot as we would call it . . . People came and they saw what we had there and they said, that’s an idea, and they took it from there.



Preparing the camp at Cup Match. Courtesy Departments of Community and Cultural Affairs.

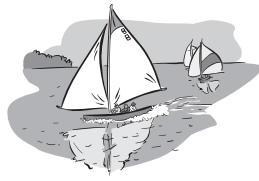


Discussion Questions

1. Do you and your family participate in Cup Match? If so, explain how.
2. Does your family or anyone you know have a Cup Match camp? What does it look like? Do men and women in your family or your friends’ families have different responsibilities relating to setting up the camp? How is the camp used during Cup Match?
3. Do the supporters of the two teams mingle at Cup Match or stay in separate sections? Do they visit each other’s camps?
4. How do the traditions associated with Cup Match reflect the values of Bermudian culture?

THE MEANING OF CUP MATCH TO WARRINGTON “SOUP” ZUILL

Cup Match means to me . . . family togetherness of the celebration of emancipation and family members getting together. You may not see your family [from] Cup Match to Cup Match. It gives you a time for your immediate family to be together as well as the other parts of your family to get together. And it gives you a chance to display your food preps, and it gives a chance for family members to taste your food preps.



Activities

Cup Match Traditions

1. Interview your family members or neighbours about memories they have of going to Cup Match. Ask them what they did to make the holiday special. Did they have a camp? Did they dress in a particular way? Did they eat certain foods? Who did they go to the game with?
2. Document the ways people dress to show their support of their team. Talk to friends and neighbours and find out how they dress. Ask if they have photographs of themselves in their Cup Match attire. Copy these. If there is no photograph, make drawings of what is described to you.
3. Ask people about the “camps” they set up. Who is invited into their “camp?” How is it set up? What roles do men and women and children have in preparing the camp?
4. Go to Cup Match and document the different camps and ways people are dressing to show their support of a particular team. Take photographs and ask the subjects to explain their dress and camp decorations/layout.
5. Design a camp for your family. How big does it need to be? What supplies do you need? How will you decorate it?
6. Are there songs or chants that are sung by the fans? Record these and write them down. Try making up one of your own.
7. Make a recipe book of dishes that people traditionally eat during Cup Match.
8. Use your photographs or drawings to create a poster that expresses the spirit of Cup Match.
9. Write a play that explains to a newcomer to Bermuda the multiple meanings of Cup Match. Act it out for your classmates.

Links

- See the Arts of Play chapter for more on cricket.
- For a good introduction to Bermuda’s holidays and related food traditions, see *Bermuda: Traditions and Tastes* by Judith Wadson (Rhode Island: Onion Skin Press, 1997).

Now It Is Your Turn

Look around Bermuda! Check out the stories and traditions of births, christenings, funerals, Easter, Christmas, Boxing Day, New Year’s, and other holidays and family celebrations . . .

LINKS

ARTS OF CELEBRATION

Links to Social Studies Curriculum Goals and Subgoals

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- identify rituals and related traditions people use to mark transitions in their life such as a 16th birthday or getting married
(SS Goal 1, subgoal 1.1, 1.2, 1.4; SS Goal 2, subgoal 2.1; SS Goal 4, subgoal 4.1; SS Goal 5, subgoal 5.1, 5.2);
- understand how traditions are taught and passed on
(SS Goal 1, subgoal 1.1, 1.2, 1.4; SS Goal 2, subgoal 2.1; SS Goal 3, subgoal 3.4; SS Goal 4, subgoal 4.1, 4.3; SS Goal 5, subgoal 5.1, 5.2, 5.3);
- understand how holidays can help people express ideas about family, community, and a national identity
(SS Goal 1, subgoal 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5; SS Goal 2, subgoal 2.1; SS Goal 3, subgoal 3.4; SS Goal 4, subgoal 4.1, 4.3; SS Goal 5, subgoal 5.1, 5.2, 5.3);
- understand how traditions change
(SS Goal 1, subgoal 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5; SS Goal 2, subgoal 2.1; SS Goal 3, subgoal 3.4; SS Goal 4, subgoal 4.1, 4.3; SS Goal 5, subgoal 5.1, 5.2, 5.3);
- understand how traditions are maintained
(SS Goal 1, subgoal 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5; SS Goal 2, subgoal 2.1; SS Goal 3, subgoal 3.4; SS Goal 4, subgoal 4.1, 4.3; SS Goal 5, subgoal 5.1, 5.2, 5.3);
- list the characteristics of traditional Bermudian kites
(SS Goal 1); and
- make a traditional Bermudian kite
(SS Goal 1, subgoal 1.1, 1.2).

