

AFFIRMING CULTURE & GOD'S CREATION

KWANZAA



LIVING THE PRINCIPLES
DECEMBER 26 - JANUARY 1

HISTORY

Created in 1966 by the child of a minister who went on to become a professor of Africana, Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African holiday that celebrates history, values, family, community, and culture. The ideas and concepts of Kwanzaa are expressed in the Swahili language, one of the most widely spoken languages in Africa. The seven principles were drawn from communitarian values found throughout the African continent.

The principles of Kwanzaa are called the Nguzo Saba. They help us to continue building and maintaining unified and empowered communities. Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of the principles. It is an intentional time of learning, family, and celebration.

During the week of Kwanzaa, families, and communities come together to share in a healthy feast, honor the ancestors, affirm bonds, and to celebrate African American culture. Each day, a candle is lit to highlight the principle of that day. Meaning is brought to the principles through various activities, such as reciting sayings of great Black thinkers, reciting original poetry, African drumming, and dressing the table with Kwanzaa symbols.

Source: National Museum of African American History and Culture

SYMBOLS

The table (as seen on the cover) is decorated with the essential symbols of Kwanzaa:

Kinara: candle holder (three red candles, one black, and three green)

Mkeka: the mat underneath the kinara

Muhindi: corn that represents children

Mazao: fruit that represents harvest

Zawadi: meaningful gifts

Colors: red (for the struggle), black (for the people), green (for the future)

Source: National Museum of African American History and Culture

LITURGY

Kwanzaa in Psalm 100

(The black candle is lit first and then light from left to right each day)

Call to Worship: Know that the Lord is God. It is God that has made us all. We are the sheep of God's pasture.

People: We follow a God who generously pours out their Holy Spirit in Creation through people, culture, and wisdom.

Leader: Kwanzaa gives us the opportunity to enter this day with thanks and praise for the Spirit at work in the lives of African American people and ancestors.

People: The Lord is good. God's love has endured and been faithful across 20 generations of survival and perseverance by African descendants in this nation.

Leader: We celebrate Kwanzaa and light this candle in solidarity with God's community. Let us pray...Amen.

NGUZU SABA **(SEVEN PRINCIPLES)**

UMOJA (OO-MO-JAH) - **UNITY**

To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and people

KUJICHAGULIA (KOO-JEE-CHAH-GOO-LEE-AH) - **SELF-DETERMINATION**

To define and name ourselves, as well as to create and speak for ourselves

UJIMA (OO-JEE-MAH) - **COLLECTIVE WORK & RESPONSIBILITY**

To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.

UJAMAA (OO-JAH-MAH) - **COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS**

To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.

NIA (NEE-AH) - **PURPOSE**

To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

KUUMBA (KOO-OOM-BAH) - **CREATIVITY**

To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited.

IMANI (EE-MAH-NEE) - **FAITH**

To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

UMOJA

DAY ONE

(Unity)

Ancestral Wisdom:

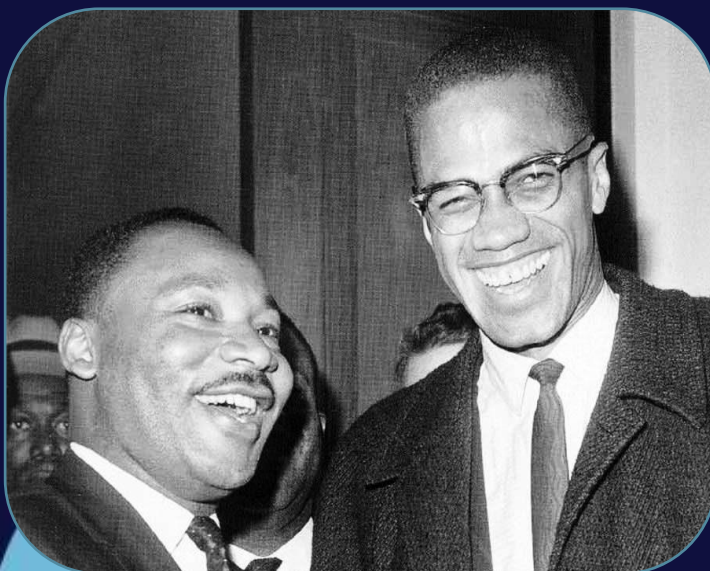
“Yearning for participation in the administration and implementation of their own affairs, Preston Taylor, W.H. Dickson, and Henry L. Herod joined in giving a call for the brothers and sisters to come to Nashville, TN for the first National Christian Missionary Convention (NCMC) in September 1917.”¹

Legacy Exercise:

Create a call list of 10 relatives or friends you have not spoken to in three months or more. Remind them of how important they are to you and the community.

Song of Celebration: “Lift Every Voice and Sing”²

Inspiring Image: What do you see represented here?



¹ Brenda Caldwell and William Fox, Sr., *Journey Toward Wholeness* (USA: National Convocation of the Christian Church, 1990), 21.

² Kirk Franklin, “Lift Every Voice and Sing Anthem.” Kirk Franklin, *Singing vs Sangin*, July 4, 2020, YouTube video, 2:38, <https://youtu.be/cYrxT3As2AM>.

KUJICHAGULIA

DAY TWO

(SELF-DETERMINATION)

Ancestral Wisdom:

“The NCMC Social Action Committee was formed during the 1952 Annual Convention Session in Los Angeles, California. This marked the beginning of sophistication by the NCMC in initiating social change within the major structures and systems of both church and society.”³

Legacy Exercise:

There is power in naming. Choose a name for yourself. It can be a characteristic, a shero/hero, a biblical character, or African royalty. Say, “I call myself _____ because I am _____.”

Song of Celebration: “My Name is Victory”⁴

Inspiring Image: Do you know a Sojourner Truth?



An excerpt from Sojourner Truth's most famous speech,

Ain't I A Woman?

Where did your Christ come from?
From God and a woman!
Man had nothing to do with him!
If the first woman God ever made
was strong enough to turn the world
upside down, all alone
together women ought to be able to turn it
rightside up again.
And now they are asking to do it,
and the men better let 'em.”

³ Caldwell and Fox, 77.

⁴ Jonathan Nelson, “My Name is Victory,” BMI, December 5, 2012, YouTube video, 6:39, <https://youtu.be/07fuozZCihQ>.

UJIMA

DAY THREE

(COLLECTIVE WORK & RESPONSIBILITY)

Ancestral Wisdom:

“At the National Convention of 1962 in Brooklyn, NY, the great Jackie Robinson said to African American Disciples, “No Negro has ‘made it’ until the most underprivileged Negro in the country has made it.”⁵

Legacy Exercise:

Identify a need in your family, circle of friends, or community that with the help of two others, you can fulfill.

Song of Celebration: “Stand By Me”⁶

Inspiring Image: Mary McLeod Bethune was a pioneering educator. Who has lifted you? Who do you uplift?



⁵ Caldwell and Fox, 97.

⁶ Ben E. King, “Stand By Me,” Rhino Atlantic, May 9, 2017, YouTube video, 2:54, <https://youtu.be/eJ4i-QbXG54>.

UJAMAA

DAY FOUR

(COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS)

Ancestral Wisdom:

At the fourth National Convention of the NCMC in 1920, Dean of Jarvis Christian Institute, C.W. Smith stated, "I believe that the time has come when our churches and schools must establish businesses in connection with them for their maintenance."⁷

Legacy Exercise:

Create a list of seven black-owned businesses in your city or town. Map out a one day a week, over the next seven weeks, to support each one. Repeat the practice with friends.

Song of Celebration: "His Eye is On the Sparrow"⁸

Inspiring Image: On January 16, 1904, Rev. Preston Taylor and others established the One-Cent Bank and Trust for Black people in Nashville, TN.



⁷Caldwell and Fox, 44.

⁸ Mississippi Children's Choir, "His Eye is On the Sparrow," The Malaco Music Group, December 5, 2017, YouTube video, 8:20, https://youtu.be/Q_8pUqXADTE.

NIA

DAY FIVE

(PURPOSE)

Ancestral Wisdom:

“The Black church has a specific mission in providing meaningful and viable educational experiences for a people who have had, and are still having, what is called the “Black Experience.” The experience of being rejected, alienated, suppressed, and mistreated in so many subtle ways simply because they are Black...there have never been developed guidelines to do education from the Black perspective dealing with these injustices.”⁹

~Lorenzo Evans, First Director of Christian Education,
Merger Staff

Legacy Exercise:

Name a dream or vision you have. Name what it will take to be realized. Name who has accomplished the dream before. Identify people who can help you accomplish your dream.

Song of Celebration: “Young, Gifted, and Black”¹⁰

Inspiring Image: What do you see embodied?



⁹ Caldwell and Fox, 135.

¹⁰ Nina Simone, “To Be Young, Gifted, and Black (Audio),” SME, February 5, 2013, YouTube video, 2:51, <https://youtu.be/RTGikYqk0gY>.

KUUMBA

DAY SIX

(CREATIVITY)

Ancestral Wisdom:

“In July 1975, the National Convocation collaborated with Robert Nelson and the Department of Africa in sending the Convocation executive on a visitation of church work in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania of East Africa, Ghana, Liberia, and Dakar of West Africa. Valuable relationships were developed between African churches, and the National Convocation.”¹¹

Legacy Exercise:

Celebrate beauty in all its forms. Notice it around you. Create it in your own way with a photo, dish, song, or poem.

Song of Celebration: “Amazing”¹²

Inspiring Image: Indecipherable greatness.



¹¹ Caldwell and Fox, 166.

¹² Ricky Dillard and New G, “Amazing (Full Version) HQ,” TuneCore, April 6, 2015, YouTube video, 7:50, <https://youtu.be/D24fo1glaXw>.

IMANI

DAY SEVEN

(FAITH)

Ancestral Wisdom:

“We begin with our feelings about the present state of the church and nation. Within the church some gains have been made, and for these we are grateful. But there is much to be done.”¹³

-Preamble to General Assembly Resolution No. 47 “Concerning Church, Nation and Black Disciples,” 1971

Legacy Prayer:

God of Our Ancestors and God of Our Offspring, you are always with us. There is evidence of your hand in our journey from shore to shore. We petition you for restoration of our best selves. For every magnificent achievement in the face of evil, we offer praise. For every leader and contributor, we offer praise. For every resister and praying spirit, we offer praise. Your love remains our Sustainer and Redeemer. It reminds us “greater works” still lie ahead. We avail ourselves to your transforming power. In Christ’s name, Amen.

Songs of Celebration: “We Gon’ Be Alright”¹⁴
“For the Good of Them”¹⁵

Inspiring Image:

YOU

¹³ Caldwell and Fox., 124.

¹⁴ Tye Tribbett, “We Gon’ Be Alright (Home Edition),” UMG, May 15, 2020, YouTube video, 3:37, <https://youtu.be/Vp-Jm56VqS0>.

¹⁵ The Thompson Community Singers, “For the Good of Them,” Curb Records, March 1, 2018, YouTube video, 6:43, <https://youtu.be/26fyLXPA45A>.

WHY DO WE GIVE THIS ATTENTION?

As a church committed to anti-racism, it is imperative we make visible and celebrate the diverse cultural representations of our members as often as we claim an open table. Disciples are students of Jesus, and of what Jesus loves. To be a Christian is to be a learner. We hope you enjoy.

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