

**TODAY'S TOPIC:
Lunar New Year**

You are welcome to use this lesson to inspire spiritual conversation in your family or youth classroom. It is written for elementary age, but could be adjusted as needed.



THINKING JOB: Ask a “thinking job question” to get everyone thinking about something pertinent to the lesson. This could be asked moments or hours before your conversation.

What are some holiday traditions we have in our family?

Lesson

Materials	Things to Prepare	Today's Goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A • Optional Red envelopes and Chinese coins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	Know about Chinese New Year which includes many traditions to create good in the next year. We can also create good for ourselves anytime by paying attention to our thoughts.

ASK: Do you think our thoughts are powerful?

ASK: Is it good to take time to look at old thoughts and energy that are not helpful and focusing on good thoughts and energy that help us be thankful and create the good we want in our life?

ASK: Did you know there is holiday that does a lot for creating good, especially for the next year? It is Chinese New Year's which started on February 1 this year and lasts for 15 days. Chinese New Year is also called the Spring Festival and is a time to remove the bad and old energy and thoughts and welcome the good and new energy and thoughts. Chinese New Year can be celebrated by people that live in China, people who are Chinese, or people who have an interest or special connection to Chinese culture.

TELL STORY: There are many inspirations for Chinese New Year – honoring our ancestors, worshiping gods, getting rid of evil spirits, and praying for a good harvest. But there is also a story that inspired this holiday.

According to tales and legends, Chinese New Year started with a mythical beast called the Nian (a beast that lives under the sea or in the mountains) during the annual Spring Festival. The Nian would attack the villagers in the middle of the night. One year, all the villagers decided to hide from the beast. An older man

appeared before the villagers went into hiding and said that he would stay the night and would get revenge on the Nian. The old man put red papers up and set off firecrackers. The day after, the villagers came back to their town and saw that nothing had been destroyed. They assumed that the old man was a god who came to save them. The villagers then understood that the Nian was afraid of the color red and loud noises. Then the tradition grew when New Year was approaching, and the villagers would wear red clothes, hang red lanterns, and red spring scrolls on windows and doors and used firecrackers and drums to frighten away the Nian. From then on, Nian never came to the village again.

SAY: Today, many of the ways people celebrate are tied to the story.

1. People put up red decorations especially on windows and doors
2. They buy new clothes and shoes that are red (red underwear locks in good luck!)
3. They set off firecrackers and fireworks.
4. There are special meals (dumplings) and parades with lots of drums (the dragon dance and the lion dance and lantern festival) and gifts.

ASK: What other holiday traditions do we have in our family? Are there holidays you celebrate that have new clothes, special food, parades, or giving gifts?

SAY: All of the Chinese New Year traditions are about creating luck, prosperity, and good in the new year. Do you have any traditions that help create luck and good for you?

SAY: Here are some other beliefs about Chinese New Year:

1. You do not clean during the celebrations in case you throw away your good luck with the trash.
2. You do not use sharp objects in case you cut your upcoming success.
3. You do not cry or fight to smooth your path in the new year.
4. You eat dumplings to increase your wealth and prosperity.
5. Red envelopes with money inside are given to people, especially children, as a sign of luck, protection, and prosperity for the next year. (show example)

AFFIRMATION – God is everywhere, God is inside of me. repeat 4X

Note: Printable affirmations and coloring sheets for this lesson are available at <https://www.milehichurch.org/youth-family/> . A video to support this lesson is available on our MHC Y+F Positive Family Spirituality YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUc3XHIHB9TF4FENneYoO> . An audio conversation of this lesson appropriate for children can be found at <https://insighttimer.com/milehichurch>.

