



Horten Kommune

Barnehagene

***Why and how marks kindergartens
various religious and cultural
holidays and traditions?***



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INTRODUCTION

The kindergartens has an important role as the arena for development of cultural identity.

There are children in the kindergartens with backgrounds from several different cultures, religions and denominations. It is important that all children feel included and receive confirmation of their identity in the kindergarten. At the same time, the kindergarten shall contribute to children developing tolerance and respect for one another.

In the *"Framework plan for the content and tasks of the kindergarten"*, it stated amongst other things:

"Children's encounters with different cultures and traditions form the basis for respectful interaction between different ethnic groups. Awareness of their own cultural inheritance and participation in other people's cultures shall help children to see others' points of view."

The framework for the content and tasks of the kindergarten paves the way for the use of marking of festivals as one of several methods of working in the work with the professional area Ethics, Religion and Philosophy. Throughout the kindergarten year, we have several traditions and markings which reflect Norwegian culture, and other cultures and religions that are represented in the groups of children. In addition, we mark days which are regarded

as being important in a global context, such as UN Day.

This brochure is about that part of the educational work which deals with marking of festivals, and is intended both as a work tool for staff at the kindergartens, and as information to parents and other interested parties. It says something about laws and guidelines, why we mark different festivals, methods and a little on the background for some of the festivals kindergartens in Horten have marked or are marking. The brochure therefore contains only a small part of the educational work concerning communication of culture and multi-cultural work in the kindergartens. The individual kindergarten and staff must learn about the religions and traditions the children in the kindergarten represent, and develop their own marking in co-operation with the individual family.

The purpose of this brochure is to communicate how we can mark different festivals and traditions. We hope the brochure will invite increased dialogue with parents and guardians about the content of the markings. Our wish is that it will contribute to understanding that the task of the kindergartens is not to proclaim, but to create mutual respect and understanding by giving knowledge.

PART 1: FOUNDATION IN ACTS AND REGULATIONS, THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY REGARDING KINDERGARTENS AND THE FRAMEWORK PLAN FOR THE CONTENT AND TASKS FOR THE WORK WITH CULTURE AND RELIGION?

The Act relating to kindergartens and the framework plan states what objectives and content the educational work in the kindergartens shall be.

The kindergartens' social mandate is to offer children under the age of mandatory education a care and learning environment which benefit the children. The kindergartens shall be both an educational activity and a welfare offer for the parents of small children.

Both the Act relating to kindergartens and the framework plan for the content and tasks of the kindergartens say something about how we shall act in relation to multi-culture. In the social mandate it is stated amongst other things: *"The kindergarten has a social task in early prevention of discrimination and bullying."*

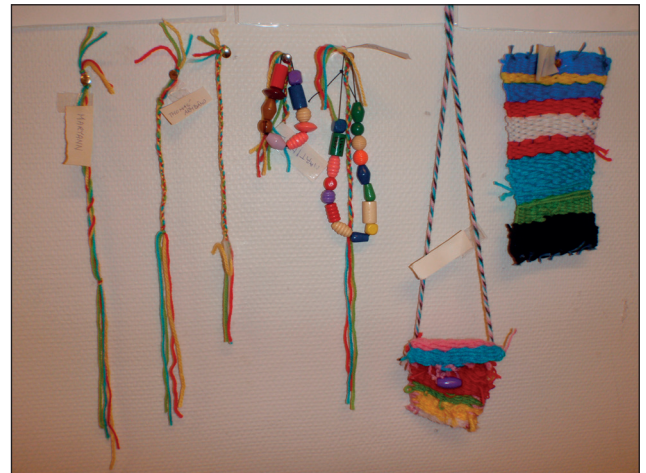
It is emphasised that Norwegian society is diverse and that there are many ways to be Norwegian. The children have different backgrounds and experiences when they come to the kindergarten, and the kindergarten's task is to support all the children *"based on their own cultural and individual*

assumptions." (Content and tasks of the Framework Plan, 2011).

Amongst other things, it is stated in the purpose of the kindergartens that:

"The kindergarten shall build on fundamental values in the Christian and humanistic inheritance and tradition, such as respect for human value and nature, intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values which are expressed in different religions and life philosophies, and which are founded on human rights.

The kindergarten shall promote democracy and equality and counteract all forms of discrimination"



The Act relating to kindergartens also emphasises the special responsibility of the kindergartens to support the development of Sami children in their language and culture. The Framework Plan goes into detail that Sami children require support to retain and develop their language independent of where they live in the country. Sami children and parents are entitled to expect that kindergarten staff have knowledge of and emphasise that the Sami culture is a part of the kindergartens' content.

The professional area Local Environment and Society, says something about how the kindergartens shall contribute to children meeting the world outside the family with confidence and curiosity, and that the children shall develop knowledge about different traditions and mode of living. Personnel shall ensure that children expand their understanding of cultural similarities and differences, and work towards an environment which counteracts bullying and racism. In this professional area, it is also an objective that the children learn about Sami culture and everyday life.

The professional area Ethics, Religion and Philosophy says more about the concrete content in the kindergartens. *"Ethics, religions and philosophy contribute to forming ways of perceiving the world and people, and influence values and attitudes.*

Religion and philosophy lay the basis for ethical standards. The Christian faith and tradition, together with humanistic values, have influenced Norwegian and European culture throughout the centuries. Today Norway is a multi-religious and multi-cultural society. The kindergarten shall reflect and respect the diversity which is represented in the group of children, at the same time as it shall include values in the Christian and humanistic inheritance and tradition. The ethical evaluation the kindergarten gives children, must take into consideration the assumptions of the child and the individual home's cultural and religious attachment or attachment to values."



Through the work with ethics, religion and philosophy, the kindergarten shall help the children to

- experience that fundamental questions are essential, in that they provide an opportunity and quiet for thinking, conversations and stories
- acquire the society's fundamental standards and values
- develop tolerance and respect for each other's backgrounds, regardless of cultural and religious or philosophical belonging
- obtain an insight into fundamental values in the Christian and humanistic inheritance and tradition and their place in the culture
- acquire knowledge of Christian festivals and traditions associated with festivals in religions and philosophy which are represented in the group of children
- get to know religion, ethics and philosophy as a part of culture and society

In order to work towards these objectives, personnel must

- meet the children's beliefs, questions and wonder with seriousness and respect
- create room for experiences, wonder and reflection and good conversations
- create interest for and contribute to understanding and tolerance for different cultures and different modes of living
- be aware of the significance the personnel have as examples and behave so that the children can receive support

in their own identity and respect for each other

- let the Christian cultural inheritance be expressed by marking festivals and marking other religious, philosophical and cultural traditions which are represented in the kindergarten.

CITY COUNCIL DECISION

The Church of Norway issues an invitation to a Christmas Walk and an Easter Walk for children aged 3 and upwards, and a Church service at Whitsun for school starters. The kindergartens have their own registration routines that they follow. The City Council in Horten made a decision dated 27.2.2012 in which is emphasised that when municipal kindergartens participate in events organised by religious congregations or philosophical organisations, the children's participation shall be on the background of active registration by the parents. The children who do not participate in the events shall be given an adequate offer.

THE CONCEPTS CELEBRATION / MARKING

The book *"Marking of festivals in the kindergarten"*, discusses the difference between the concepts celebration and marking.

"International rules and Norwegian legislation provide protection against religious and cultural discrimination. Children shall not be challenged to make a decision regarding religious opinions or directions. The kindergarten must ensure that the children do not get into a loyalty conflict between the home and the kindergarten. In order to avoid such unfortunate results, it is useful to differentiate between celebration and marking. Celebration of a festival means preaching and rituals which may be organised by a family or a religious community. It is out of place in Norwegian kindergartens or schools.

On the other hand, marking of a festival entails that there is a gathering to mark that someone – not necessarily oneself – celebrates a festival." (Winje, 2010:27)

When the kindergarten marks a festival, we can gather children with different backgrounds without offending anyone. The kindergarten does not undertake preaching or religious rituals, but communicates knowledge about important elements in the religion or festival in question. The kindergarten can also arrange

for educationally justified activities which are not experienced as exercising of religion, but which nevertheless communicate something which is central in the culture or festival.

This is in line with the Framework Plan, which states the following: *"The kindergarten shall teach children about values rooted in Christian and humanistic inheritance and tradition. Teaching of religious faith is the responsibility of the home."*

We communicate different ways of to think and do things.

Our task is to do it so respectfully that most of the children can participate in most of it, without anyone being offended. In that way we contribute to all the children participating in markings, even though their families do not celebrate the day /festival in question.

We have conversations with the children based on that there are several different perceptions, and that we believe differently. We do not have a set answer regarding right or wrong beliefs.

PART 2: TRADITIONS AND FESTIVALS IN HORTEN'S KINDERGARTENS

CO-OPERATION WITH PARENTS

What we communicate regarding a culture or religion shall be in line with what the parents experience as important and right. It is therefore necessary that the personnel hold a dialogue with the individual family regarding what they are interested in regarding the marking.

The individual child alone cannot be held responsible for his or her culture, and we therefore try to focus as much as we can on the general as well as the individual.

METHODS

In the kindergartens we have many approaches when we shall communicate something from a culture or religion. We can use pictures, stories, songs, music, dancing, food, objects, films on the Internet, art activities etc. We emphasise that children's wondering and questions shall be expressed, in addition to facts and traditions which are communicated. Children who themselves have a background from the culture or religion, will have an opportunity to contribute with their experiences, including in co-operation with their parents. When we plan to thematise religion through marking of festivals, we will also have a greater focus on religious questions among the children. We want conversations characterised by confidence, warmth and respect. With that we hope that it will be as Winje expresses it: *"The marking of festivals in the kindergarten is thereby not*

mainly about children's religiousness, but sooner about empathy and developing respect and equality." (Winje, 2010:23)

During the kindergarten year we have several markings about which we will describe the background. The list is not exhaustive, but is an overview of some festivals the kindergartens in Horten will mark, or have marked. The individual kindergarten has its fixed, annual traditions, and markings which will change somewhat from year to year, according to which children and cultures one has represented in the group of children. Since it is an assumption that the parents shall experience that the contents are relevant for their traditions, the content must necessarily be able to be changed from year to year, even though the main features are the same. You will be given further information on how the individual festival or tradition is marked in the individual kindergarten's annual plan and monthly / periodic plans.

The starting point for what is celebrated in the individual culture is usually different. Nevertheless, there are some common features which often appear again and again: One washes and makes the home nice, gifts are given, best clothes are worn and good food is eaten together with the family and friends.

OVERVIEW OF SOME FESTIVALS AND TRADITIONS

BIRTHDAYS

It is a great event for most children when they have a birthday, and the day is also marked in the kindergarten. Each kindergarten has developed its own traditions for how they mark birthdays.

EID AL FITR AND ID UL- ADHA

Ramadan is the name of the month when muslims fast while it is daylight. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and the time for Ramadan changes from year to year in relation to the Gregorian calendar.

The festival that marks that Ramadan is over is called Eid al-Fitr(Id). Then the house is cleared and washed, there are visits from family and friends, good food is eaten and gifts are given to each other.

The Greater Feast Id ul-Adha is held two months and 10 days after the Lesser Feast.

In the kindergarten we have a marking after Eid al- Fitr.



Eid al fitr and id ul-adha

UN DAY



UN - day

The UN was officially established on 24 October 1945, to stop wars and form a platform for dialogue. At present there are 193 member countries in the organisation. The organisation's aim is to work towards international peace and security and to develop friendly relations (Wikipedia). The kindergartens have different traditions in connection with UN Day, and usually focus on friendship, conflict resolving and sharing with one another. Some collect money in different ways, which is sent to children in need.

DIVALI

This is one of the most important festivals within Hinduism, and is common to most Hindus. It is celebrated in October / November and is a festival of New Year and lights, which celebrates the victory of good over evil. Some also pray to the goddess Lakshmi.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

The greatest festival in Norwegian culture, Christmas, has the whole of the month of December dedicated to it. The children make gifts, bake, learn Christmas carols and listen to different Christmas stories. In olden, heathen times, Christmas was celebrated as a mid-winter day. It has subsequently become a Christian festival as a reminder that Jesus, Son of God, was born. In Norway, many dress the Christmas tree inside, eat their own Christmas food and give each other gifts. Christmas Eve is celebrated on 24 December, But Christmas is also an important festival for those who do not profess the Christian faith. Christmas, such as it is celebrated in Norway today, contains



Advent and Christmas

elements from several denominations. Symbols such as stars, hearts, angels, Advent candles, elves, Christmas tree have their origination in Norse Christmas, the Christian mass, the Jewish hannukka and several more.

Lucia Day

Lucia Day was originally kept in the memory of the Saint Lucia who suffered a martyr's death on the 13th of December in the year 300. The kindergartens arrange a Lucia procession where the children are dressed in white and hold stars or candles in their hands while they sing the Lucia song. Afterwards, we eat saffron buns, which are made of yeast dough.

WINTER DAY

On this day it is outside activities in the snow that are in focus. Open air life and outside activities are a central part of the Norwegian culture, and values which we wish to communicate further. We want the outside activities to communicate pleasure about being outside.



Winter Day

CRIB WALK

Children from the age of three and upwards are invited to the Church to hear the story of when Jesus was born. Finally, the children are allowed to play the shepherds who looked for the Baby Jesus. In a room there is a stall made, with real hay and full-size dolls representing Joseph, Mary and the Baby Jesus. The children can also see the gifts the Kings gave to Jesus: Gold, Incense and Myrrh.



VIETNAMESE AND CHINESE NEW YEAR

Both the Vietnamese and Chinese New Year are celebrated on the same day at the end of January or the beginning of February. Many of the figures in connection with the New Year celebrations in the two countries are similar, but some are also peculiar to their particular country. Common to both is that the house is washed, new clothes

are bought and special New Year food is made. The house is decorated with flowers, usually yellow, and the children receive gifts of money in red envelopes from their parents. Yellow, red and gold are colours which are used for the New Year feasts.

THE SAMI NATIONAL DAY, 6 FEBRUARY

The Sami National Day is a relatively new National Day, and it was decided by the Sami conference in 1992. This day is common to all Sami people in Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia, and a public flag day in Norway. In Norwegian kindergartens and schools, Sami themes or projects are usually carried out in the period round about the Sami National Day, and it has become more and more usual to mark the National Day itself.



Sami People's Day

CARNIVAL

The carnival has its original association with Easter and fasting time, and is celebrated in the traditional way only in countries that have introduced Christianity. The carnival tradition is strong in the Roman Catholic sphere, but is also celebrated in Orthodox and Protestant areas. It is a popular feast which is not found in any liturgic calendars or Church Year liturgies. The carnival is made up of different activities during the period before the beginning of the fasting time, 40 days before Easter Day. There may be processions, masquerades, balls, music and parties, both indoors and outdoors. Even though it is done differently from country to country, the carnival always contains elements of dressing up and dancing.



Carnival

NEWROZ/ NOUROZ 21 MARS



Newroz / Nouroz

This is the Kurds' New Year's Day, when they welcome the spring. Newroz is celebrated by the population in Iran, Aserbajdsjan, Afghanistan, Kaukasus, Tadsjikistan, Kurdistan, Northern India and also by the bahá'ier. The celebration has its roots several thousand years ago and is written on UNESCO's list of Masterpieces.

An important part of newroz is that relatives and friends visit one another and eat good food together. In Kurdistan, newroz begins on 21 March, and the celebrations last for thirteen days. On the last day of newroz, families usually go on picnics in parks and nature areas and celebrate the spring and that newroz is over.

EASTER



Sowing seeds for Easter

The Christian message at Easter is that Jesus died on the Cross, but rose again. No special attention is paid to this in the kindergarten, but the Church invites to an Easter Walk (see the paragraph about the Easter Walk). In the kindergarten we focus most on spring and new life. We make some Easter decorations in the Easter colours yellow and green, such as Easter chickens. Some people sow cress or other seeds which they see germinate.

Easter Walk

The Church invites 4- and 5-year-olds to get an insight into some of what Jesus did as a grown man, and what happened at Easter. That Jesus died on the Cross is toned down, and most of the focus is directed towards that he rose again. The message is communicated with the aid of slides and



Easter Walk

flannelgraph. In addition, the personnel in the Church show how Jesus washed the feet of the disciples when they took the Last Supper together. Finally, we go down to the room where the Crib was at Christmas, and this time we see how the empty grave of Jesus could have looked. The children are shown a model of the cave in the mountain side with the stone that was rolled away, and a mannequin dressed as an angel.

Easter breakfast

The child's family is invited to eat breakfast at the kindergarten, with eggs and other yellow sandwich spread.

MEAL OF REMEMBRANCE

In connection with Easter, Jehovahs Witnesses have a meal of remembrance which is similar to holy communion, since Jesus established holy communion at Easter. There are children of Jehovahs Witnesses in the children's groups, and it can be good to say a little about the meal of remembrance and in that way obtain an insight into their faith.

KINDERGARTEN PROCESSION

On the last kindergarten day before the 17th of May, all the kindergartens are invited to join the kindergarten procession through Horten city centre to mark Norway's National Day.



Children's parade

KINDERGARTEN CHURCH SERVICE AT WHITSUN

School starters are invited to a church service at Horten Church at Whitsun. The most important message is that Whitsun is the Church's birthday, and there is a lot of singing at the church service. The children make doves or flowers in the kindergarten, which they use to decorate the Church with.

SUMMER PARTY

The families of the children are invited to a kindergarten end -of-year party in the afternoon. The children entertain, and we enjoy ourselves with food and drink in the outside areas of the kindergarten.

SOURCES:

Act relating to kindergartens, 2006

Ministry of Education and Research: Framework Plan for the content and tasks of kindergartens, 2011

Winje, Geir: Marking of Festivals in the kindergarten, Høyskoleforlaget, 2010

Wikipedia

