

Columbus Day

Columbus Day, or Discovery Day, honors the discovery of the American continent by Christopher Columbus in 1492. It was first celebrated in the United States in 1792, when President Benjamin Harrison declared October 12 as the holiday. Today it is a federal legal holiday held on the second Monday in October.

Christopher Columbus, an Italian explorer, left Spain on August 3, 1492, seeking to reach India by sailing west. He had three ships: the Pinta, Nina and Santa Maria. They sailed for 72 days and finally touched land at San Salvador on October 12, 1492. Columbus thought he had reached the East Indies, but he had really discovered two entirely new continents. It is generally believed that the Vikings landed in America 500 years earlier. It was Columbus' discovery, however, which awakened interest in the Western Hemisphere.

Concepts To Be Taught:

1. Columbus Day celebrates the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus.
2. Columbus was a courageous explorer with vision, imagination, and determination.
3. The world is round instead of flat, as was the common thinking of the people in Columbus' time.

Extended Activities:

Build a Ship! Use half of a walnut shell for the ship. Place play dough in the bottom of the ship. Glue a triangular shaped sail to a toothpick. Stick the toothpick into the play dough. Sail the ship in a pan of water. Try to navigate the ship by blowing on the sail.

