



5 Activities to Celebrate Presidents' Day at School



Honor the highest office in the land by marking Presidents' Day at school. Here are some ideas to get started.

by Sharron Kahn Luttrell

1. **Dress up like a president.** This is a fun and easy way to introduce students to some of the 44 men who have led our country since it won independence from Great Britain. Designate a day in February as "Dress Up Like a President" day. To avoid a building filled with tiny Georges and Abes, encourage children to spend some time with their parents researching past presidents, then choose one who appeals to them. Hopefully the costumes will spark discussion in school about the country's presidents and what they stood for as individuals and as leaders.
2. **Read a book with Abe.** Abraham Lincoln was known as an avid reader. Share that love of books with your students by inviting them to a story time with "Abe" (or someone dressed as him). Ask your librarian to recommend books about Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and other U.S. presidents to read aloud to the children. Pretend you're reading by firelight by setting the lights low and using battery-operated or electric lanterns and candlesticks.
3. **Hold a presidential trivia contest.** Arrange to use the school auditorium or lunchroom for a couple of hours in February for a presidential trivia contest. Sign up contestants ahead of time to answer questions about the leaders of our country and the office of the president. Make it easy for the younger kids with questions like "Where does the president live? What is the name of the airplane the president flies on? Who was the first president of the United States? Who is our president now?" Work with teachers to come up with more difficult questions for the older kids. Award presidential-theme prizes to the winners.
4. **If I were president....** Encourage the students in your school to think big. Hold a contest where you challenge students to imagine how they would work to improve the nation if they were the president of the United States. Select one winner from each grade. If your school holds morning announcements, work with your school principal to feature one winner a day reading their essay over the public address system.
5. **Give a "State of the School" address.** Invite parents to a special "State of the School" address modeled after the president's annual State of the Union address. Get in the spirit with red, white, and blue bunting, or use your school colors. If you have a school band, invite them to play "Hail to the Chief" before and after the address. (But make sure parents know this is all in fun and not a show of self-importance.) You might even invoke John F. Kennedy's call to service ("Ask not what your school can do for you; ask what you can do for your school"). Whatever you do, have fun with it.

Need more ideas? Here are some school-wide activities that you can use to honor Presidents Day:

- Have a **bulletin board** contest
- Create a **mural** or **art display**
- Conduct **mock interviews** with different presidents
- Ask classes to create and perform **presidential skits**
- Organize a **school parade** to honor the presidents
- Invite a local politician as a **guest speaker**
- Have each room create a **timeline** for a different president
- Read **presidential quotes** over the loud speaker throughout the day