

# Discovery Theater

## Presents Kodomo no Hi Children's Day



A REPRODUCIBLE LEARNING GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

This guide is designed to help you and your students prepare for, enjoy, and discuss programs by *Kodomo no Hi*. It contains background information, discussion questions and activities. Appropriate for all ages.

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*See our website for tickets, location, directions, resources for teachers, and much more!*

# Welcome to *Kodomo no Hi* – Children’s Day

Before 1948, Japanese families held a celebration for boys on **May 5th**, a counterpart of a Doll Festival held for girls on March 3rd. In 1948, however, May 5th was named a national holiday in honor of all children. In Japanese, this "**Children’s Day**" is called ***Kodomo no Hi*** (pronounced *Koh-doh-noh-moh-hee*). It is a time to stress respect for children and to promote their health and happiness. It is also the day for children to express gratitude to parents for their love and care.

On Children’s Day, many families still observe the traditions of the boys’ festival. **Special treats** are served, including rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves (*chimaki*) or rice cakes filled with sweet bean paste and wrapped in oak leaves (*kashiwamochi*). Samurai **warrior dolls**, complete with swords, armor, helmets, and banners, are displayed inside the house, and kids fold colored paper into **samurai helmets** to wear.



## Flying Carp!

Outside the house, **koinobori**, which are streamers made of paper or cloth are flown like flags, each one made to look like a **carp (goldfish)**. In stories, the carp is said to have the strength and determination to fight its way up swift-running streams, cascades, and waterfalls. The carp’s drive to overcome such obstacles makes it a symbol of the strength and will-power a boy needs to succeed against life’s difficulties as he becomes a man. When the wind catches the carp streamers, they appear to swim in the air like real fish. To make your own koinobori, follow this link:

<http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/do/koinobori.html>

## About the Shizumi Kodomo Dance Troupe

Through her children's dance company, Kodomo Dance Troupe, Washington-area choreographer, dancer, and theater artist Shizumi Manale gives children ages 5 to 15 the opportunity to learn Asian and modern dance and to perform at such major venues as the Kennedy Center. The troupe has twice been named as a finalist for the Metro D.C. Dance Award for Outstanding Youth Performance.

Born in Japan, Shizumi distills her performances and workshops from ancient Noh and Kyogen theater traditions, poetry, Japanese fans, samurai swordsmanship, calligraphy, the art of the kimono, and elements of traditional tea ceremony. Her audiences explore the grace, strength, and humor of traditional and modern Japanese theater and learn about the cultural connections between Japan and China, Korea, and India. Over half a million students and adults have experienced her seminar *Exploring the Arts of Japan*.

Shizumi’s recent commissions include producing and directing a children's dance performance for the White House Millennium Celebration, and writing, choreographing, and directing the multimedia event *Waltz with the Moon*, featuring Japanese poetry from the 3rd century B.C. to the 20th century A.D. Her video production for Time-Warner Cable Television, *Shizumi Dance Theatre*, won the cable television ACE award for excellence in dance and drama; and her video *Artist in Loneliness* was selected in the dance category for the Van Gogh Centennial by the Van Gogh Foundation of the Netherlands. Gallaudet University commissioned her to write, direct, and choreograph the dance/theater piece *Kakurenbo* for its Japan tour focusing on deaf culture. To learn more about Shizumi, see [www.shizumidance.com](http://www.shizumidance.com).

## Fold It Yourself!

**Origami** is the ancient Japanese art of folding a single square of paper into a shape or object. Today, *origami* continues to be popular and is even used to teach geometry concepts to schoolchildren.

On Children's Day, kids make and decorate origami *kabuto*, or samurai helmets. Find out how at

[www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/origami/Samuraihat](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/origami/Samuraihat)

or

[exhibits.denverartmuseum.org/asianart/kids/make\\_stuff/origami\\_helmet.html](http://exhibits.denverartmuseum.org/asianart/kids/make_stuff/origami_helmet.html).

The *tsuru* or crane, a symbol of long life and good luck in Japan, is one of the most popular origami shapes. Want to fold one yourself? Many books and websites contain instructions; try

[www.monkey.org/~aidan/origami/crane](http://www.monkey.org/~aidan/origami/crane)

or

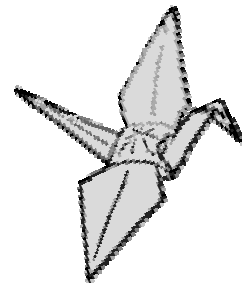
[www.sadako.org/foldingcranes.htm](http://www.sadako.org/foldingcranes.htm).



## Teacher Resources on the Web

Part of the Embassy of Japan, the **Japanese Information and Culture Center (JICC)** exists to share information about Japan and Japanese culture. For a list of educational programs and resources, see [www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/services.htm](http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/services.htm), or download a teacher's guide at [www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/Teacher%20Information.pdf](http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/Teacher%20Information.pdf).

**The Freer and Sackler Galleries** offer group tours, teacher events, online guides, materials to order, volunteer opportunities, and more! Check out the goodies at their website, [www.asia.si.edu/education/teachers.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/teachers.htm).



## About Discovery Theater

DISCOVERY THEATER ([www.DiscoveryTheater.org](http://www.DiscoveryTheater.org)), the Smithsonian Institution's theater for children, is dedicated to offering the best in live educational performing arts for young people. Each year, more than 50,000 children and their adults visit Discovery Theater on the National Mall to explore American history and cultures, folk tales from around the world, and exciting, accessible science and math programs. Discovery Theater performances unite ideologies, enact themes that reflect the diversity of its audiences, open avenues of self-reflection, and offer an enjoyable means for parents and teachers to demonstrate life's lessons.

Discovery Theater's new specially-designed performance space is located next to the Smithsonian Castle, in the S. Dillon Ripley Center—the Smithsonian's underground learning center with classrooms, lecture halls, artists' studios and more. Favorite DT programs also tour schools and museums, which means that DT's special brand of educational entertainment for kids is more widely available than ever before. For details, call 202-633-8700 or see [www.DiscoveryTheater.org](http://www.DiscoveryTheater.org).

