



## FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

**Subject Category (circle one):** Iranian Religion Celebration History Prayer  
Gathas Comparative Religion Shahnameh

**Age Group (circle one):** PreK-k Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 Grades 6-8 **Grades 9-12**

**Lesson # (if applicable):**

**Subject of the Lesson:** Nowruz

**Background Knowledge for the Teacher:**

### Description:

Nowruz literally means new day. It is the Iranian New Year. It is also celebrated in other countries (those of Greater Iran) such as Afghanistan, India, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Nowruz is the start of Spring and is always on the day of the Spring Equinox, which usually falls on March 21<sup>st</sup>. It is about starting new, rekindling lost friendships, renewing love, and trust between friends, paying homage to, and celebrating the new year with the elders. It's about installing hope after the lethargy of the dark winter and embracing the warm light of Spring.

### Chaharshanbe Suri:

Chaharshanbe Suri is an old tradition among Iranians, and no one knows for sure how it was celebrated by our ancestors. For example, today some of the Kurds celebrate it by carrying bonfires ten days before Nowruz to the top of a mountain and wait for the sun to rise to welcome the New Year. In mountain-less areas, people would take the fire to the rooftops. Today, Iranians celebrate Chaharshanbe Suri on the last Tuesday of the year. At twilight people get together in the streets and alleys to make bonfires and jump over them while singing the traditional song:

**Zardiyeh man az tō  
Sôrkhiyeh tō az man**

(This means I give my yellow color (sickness and sadness) to the fire, and I receive the red color (health and happiness) of fire.

(See the clip at: <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/nowruz-rebirth-and-regrowth>)

Ghāshogh Zani: Traditionally on last Tuesday evening of the year (Chaharshanbe Suri), many children wrap themselves in cloaks, going door to door and banging



spoons on pots and pans, asking for treats “Ajileh Chaharshanbeh Suri” (sweet trail mix) from the neighbors.

It is believed that the louder the children bang their spoons, the more they are beating out the last bad luck of the previous year, entering a more prosperous New Year.

#### Getting prepared before Nowurz:

- Khaneh takani (cleaning the house)
- buying new clothes
- sabzeh sabz kardan (growing wheatgrass)
- Setting up the “Haft Seen” table: seven items that in Persian begin with the letter “S.”
  - Sabzeh (lentil or wheat sprouts that grow in a dish, symbolizing rebirth)
  - Samanu (sweet pudding made from wheat, symbolizing affluence)
  - Senjed (dried fruit of the oleaster tree, symbolizing love)
  - Seer (garlic, symbolizing good health)
  - Seeb (apple, symbolizing health and beauty)
  - Somaq (sumac berries, symbolizing the color of the sunrise)
  - Serkeh (vinegar, symbolizing age and patience)

Many people decorate eggs to be placed on the Haft Seen table for good luck and fertility. There may also be a goldfish in a bowl to represent new beginnings and a mirror, to always look at your reflection.

Zoroastrians place a “Khordeh Avesta” or the “Gathas” and a portrait of Ashu Zartosht on the Haft seen table.

More recently, some Iranians have been placing the “*Shahnameh: The Epic of Persian Kings*” at their Haft-Seen. This classic book was written over a thousand years ago by the great poet Abolqasem Ferdowsi, with over 50,000 verses of Persian history, mythological stories, and heroic kings.

It is noteworthy to mention that some believe that the 7 items place on Haft Seen table represent the 7 Divine Emanations of Ahura Mazda (Vohu Manah, Asha Vahishta, Spenta Mainyu, Spenta Armaiti, Khshathra Vairya, Hauvratat, Ameratat)  
See articles:



- <http://www.parstimes.com/library/haft-seenee-3759.pdf>
- [https://www.iranchamber.com/culture/articles/norooz\\_haftseen\\_never\\_told.php](https://www.iranchamber.com/culture/articles/norooz_haftseen_never_told.php)

### Nowruz Activities:

Visit your older family members on the first day of the festival. It's customary to go to see your family, starting with the eldest members first. Often, the older family members come and visit the younger ones later in the day.

If someone died or married in the last year, it is customary to visit that house first. During these visits people are served tea and sweets and wish one another a happy New Year by saying "Nowruz Pirouz."

### Prepare and eat your traditional New Year meal.

Families typically eat foods like mixed green herbs with white fish (sabzi polo bâ mâhi) and/or a frittata known as kuku sabzi, made with herbs like fenugreek, tarragon, dill, coriander, and parsley.

### Sizdeh Bedar:

Nowruz is celebrated for 12 days and on the thirteenth day, families gather for a picnic, usually by a river or stream. They enjoy the outdoors and set their haft seen table sabzeh to be taken away by flow of the stream water.

### Lesson for Students:

1. Ask students what they know about Nowruz. Do they know why we celebrate it?
2. Why do Zoroastrians celebrate Nowruz? Is it a religious or a cultural holiday? Why?
3. Make a PowerPoint of the lesson and share with students.

### Activities:

1. Make a Nowruz poster
2. Invite the students' families to set up a Nowruz table & celebrate.
3. Research about New Year celebration in other cultures
4. Class brainstorm: new ideas about New Year celebration.
5. Break the class into teams. Have each team make a Nowruz crossword puzzle. Then swap the puzzles and have each team solve the puzzle they received.



**Source:**

1. <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/nowruz-rebirth-and-regrowth>
2. [www.seattleglobalist.com](http://www.seattleglobalist.com)
3. [https://www.wikihow.com/Celebrate-the-Persian-New-Year-\(Nowruz\)](https://www.wikihow.com/Celebrate-the-Persian-New-Year-(Nowruz))
4. <http://www.parstimes.com/library/haft-seenee-3759.pdf>
5. [https://www.iranchamber.com/culture/articles/norooz\\_haftseen\\_never\\_told.php](https://www.iranchamber.com/culture/articles/norooz_haftseen_never_told.php)

**Prepared by:** Farzaneh Kavooosi

**Primary edits by:** Armita Dalal and Artemis Javanshir

**Final edits by:** Tanaz Karai

**Date:** 5/2022