

Columbus Day Activities for All Ages

1) “Where Are We?” Map & Globe Exploration

- **Infants:** soft ball “globe” rolling + simple words: “Land! Water!”
 - **Toddlers:** point-and-find: “Where is our classroom?” “Where is the ocean?”
 - **Preschool:** simple map hunt (find classroom door, playground, office)
 - **School-age:** compare maps (world map vs. local map), label continents/oceans
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2) Land vs. Water Sensory Bin

Materials: water table/bin, blue fabric, boats, animals, rocks, sand

- **Infants/toddlers:** splash + float/sink play
 - **Preschool:** “Can you make a path from land to land?”
 - **School-age:** build “coastlines,” talk about shorelines and islands
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3) Paper Boat or “Floating Craft” STEM

- **Infants:** watch floating objects (adult-led)
- **Toddlers:** pre-folded boats to decorate and float
- **Preschool:** fold simple boats and test
- **School-age:** design challenge: “Make a boat that holds 10 pennies”



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4) Compass Directions Game

Teach: **N, S, E, W** (or simple “left/right/forward/back”)

- **Toddlers:** “Walk forward/backward” with arrows on the floor
- **Preschool:** “Move to the North wall!” (use picture clues)
- **School-age:** mini-orienteeing around the room or playground

5) “Explore Our Community” Photo Walk

- **Infants:** stroller walk + “I spy” shapes/colors
- **Toddlers:** collect safe nature items (leaves, small sticks)
- **Preschool:** take photos of “places helpers work”
- **School-age:** make a simple “community map” after the walk

6) Cultural Learning: Many Peoples, Many Stories

Instead of centering one person, explore **different cultures and communities** respectfully:

- **All ages:** music and art from different places (rotate stations)
- **Preschool:** “Families can have different traditions.”
- **School-age:** research a culture or Indigenous nation local to your region and share facts kindly.



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7) “Kind Explorer” Social-Emotional Lesson

Talk about being a good visitor:

- ask permission
 - share space
 - use kind words
 - listen first
- All ages:** practice with role-play (“Can I join your game?”)
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8) Storytime: Exploration + Respect + Community

Choose books about:

- maps and adventures
 - helping others
 - listening and learning from new friends
- Infants/toddlers:** short board books + pointing
Older kids: discussion: “How do we show respect when learning about history?”
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9) Classroom “Museum” of Maps

Display:

- kids’ drawings of their home/classroom
 - simple treasure maps
 - flags, postcards, photos (family-safe)
- School-age:** label exhibits and create “tour guide” roles.



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10) “Discover Something New” Curiosity Stations

Stations can include:

- magnifying glasses + nature items
- puzzle maps
- building “bridges” with blocks
- matching cards (land/water/boat/compass)
Works for every age with different complexity.

Gentle Note for Providers

Some families and communities celebrate **Columbus Day**, while others observe **Indigenous Peoples’ Day**. A safe approach is focusing on **exploration, navigation, community, and respect**, and including **Indigenous voices and accurate history** in age-appropriate ways.



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