Learn about Setsubun, the Coming of Spring celebration, and make your own oni (Japanese monster) mask.

1. **Learn about Setsubun**

*Setsubun*, celebrated on February 3rd, is the Japanese ritual of driving out bad luck and evil spirits and welcoming in good luck and good health in preparation for spring. On *Setsubun*, people have bean-throwing ceremonies called *mamemaki* and eat one soybean for every year old they are, which gives them good health and long life. Although *Setsubun* is a very popular custom in Japan, it is not a national holiday.

For most children in Japan, *Setsubun* is a fun holiday. They make or buy masks and pretend to be Japanese monsters called *oni* as part of the *mamemaki* ceremony. These monsters appear in old Japanese folktales and legends. They usually have one or two horns on their foreheads, wear tiger-skin pants and hold large spiked weapons in their hands. In some stories, they are humorous and kind, but more often they are mean and evil.

**TIME:**
20 minutes

**MATERIALS:**
- *Oni* mask activity sheet—on thick paper
- Rubber bands, string or ribbon
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Hole puncher

**PRONUNCIATION GUIDE:**
*Setsubun*: seh-tsu-boo-n
*Oni*: oh-nee
*Mamemaki*: mah-may mah-key
Make Your Own *Oni* Mask

1. Color the *oni* mask.

2. Cut the mask out.

3. Cut the eyes out of the mask.

4. Punch a hole in each ear area.

5. Put a piece of string or ribbon or a rubber band through each ear hole and secure it to the mask.

6. Put the mask on!
Things to Talk about

- If you want to learn more about oni, here are some Japanese folktales and legends you might like! All titles are also available in Kamishibai Storytelling editions from www.kamishibai.com.
  - Peach Boy (Momotaro)
  - The One-Inch Boy (Issun-boshi)
  - The Oni Who Sank to the Bottom of the Sea (Umi ni Shizunda Oni)
  - The Magic Rice Paddle (Fushigina Shamoji)
Make an Oni Mask  鬼