

# The Story of Spanish

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## Why are traditions important?

Traditions create positive experiences and memories for everyone by nurturing a family's connection and giving them sense of belonging. They help children understand who they are and what is important for the family to which they belong. In Spain, Mexico, and other Latin American countries, January 6 is celebrated as *Día de los Tres Reyes Magos* (Three Kings Day). On this day, the three kings visited all of the classrooms, and the children were curious and excited to learn about the story of the Three Kings. According to the tradition, the Three Kings saw a very special *estrella* (star) in the sky. They followed this star, which guided them to *Belén* (Bethlehem) to see *el bebé* (baby) Jesus. The kings offered baby Jesus three *regalos* (gifts). The children wanted to know what these gifts were and what were the names of the kings. I explained that one gift was *oro* (gold), the second was *incienso* (frankincense), which has a pleasant smell, and the third was *mirra* (myrrh), a substance derived from a tree. We also learned how to say their names in Spanish: *Melchor* (Melchior), *Gaspar* (Caspar), and *Baltasar* (Balthazar).

## How is *Día de los Reyes Magos* celebrated?

There are many ways to celebrate Three Kings Day, including exchanging gifts and preparing traditional foods such as *rosca de reyes*. On the morning of January 6, children in Spain, Mexico, and some other Latin American countries wake up excited to find the gifts that *Los Reyes Magos* have left for them. The day typically includes a family meal featuring a special dessert called **Rosca de Reyes**, which is a traditional sweet rounded/oval bread that represents the kings *corona* (crown). It is often decorated with candied fruit on top, representing the jewels of a royal crown, and usually contains a surprise inside—a figurine of a baby.

## What happens when someone finds the baby figurine in the Rosca de Reyes?

The person who receives the slice with the baby must host a party. To illustrate this, I brought a *Rosca de Reyes* to show the children how it looks in real life. I asked them to choose a part of the *rosca*—between the chocolate, *fruta* (fruit), and the *amarillo* (yellow) sections—and every classroom took a turn to vote. I then cut the selected slice to see if it contained the baby figurine. To our surprise, we discovered that there was more than one baby inside! Several classes found the baby in their slice, and the kids were thrilled about it! In the end, we counted in Spanish how many *bebés* (babies) we found in total.

Warmly,

Señora Lopez