Celebrations: The addition of visual and performing art elements to a current literature-based curriculum at Woodcrest Christian School

Deborah Ann Blades

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CELEBRATIONS:

THE ADDITION OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ART ELEMENTS
TO A CURRENT LITERATURE-BASED CURRICULUM

AT WOODCREST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Middle Grades Option

by
Deborah Ann Blades

June 1996
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Approved by:

Irvin Howard, First Reader

Gary Soto, Principal - Southridge Middle School, Second Reader
ABSTRACT

A literature based program which is currently in existence at Woodcrest Christian Middle School broadens its focus with the addition of visual and performing art elements. This expansion of focus permits a variety of objectives to be met. It has a multicultural emphasis exposing a racially unified student body to the cultural traditions and celebrations of others. It gives opportunity for the addition and expansion of integrated exploratory arts within the framework of the existing time schedule thereby deepening the student's understanding of the piece of literature being studied. Finally, it allows all students an exposure to the arts - an exposure that might encourage them to develop their own gifts with further study. (Literature featured includes *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Sadako and the 1000 Paper Cranes* and *The Pearl*. )
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Above all, I wish to give thanks to Almighty God without whose care and love none of this would have been possible. He is the strength of my life. He alone deserves the glory and the praise.
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Chapter One: Introduction

California with its ever growing minority population has become the Ellis Island of the 1980s. By the year 2000, the state is projected to have a minority population of between 40 and 50 percent. If these figures are examined in relation to school-age populations, it is projected that in the year 2000, 52 percent of students in California will be ethnic minorities. (Banks, 1993, p. 225) The collective United States population is becoming more and more culturally diverse as well. A 1991 report conducted by the College Board and Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education indicated that diverse student populations in the United States were expected to increase dramatically by the year 1994. Specifically, Asian and Pacific Islander student populations were predicted to increase by 70 percent, Hispanic student populations by 54 percent, and African-American student populations by 13 percent. (Marshall, p. 136) It is no longer accurate for teachers to say, “My kids are not ethnic; they are white.” (Campbell, p. 31) Even those rare teachers who continue to teach homogenous classes must realize that after school their students venture beyond their classrooms, their families and their neighborhoods and associate with people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, it is increasingly important for all students to learn more about other groups’ values and their traditions. (Campbell, p. 31)

This changing diversity presents a challenge for educators. In our quest to find a way to address the needs of a wider variety of students, we need to appropriately use the resources available to us to emphasize our individual strengths and our commonalities. All of us, students and teachers combined can benefit from the opportunity to participate
in a variety of experiences that will help us understand and relate positively to those who live around us. As we work together in a search for understanding, we become partners in a common cause. In her article entitled “Enriching Adolescent Lives”, Marian White-Hood referred to partnerships as a dance relationship. She points out that dancing is pleasurable. It is fun. It assumes that both partners are moving towards a common goal and it assumes that there is a mutual respect for the ability of both partners. (White-Hood, p. 7) One of our common goals, whether as private or public school educators, is to assist our students develop an awareness of those who live in our surrounding communities and gain an appreciation for these other cultures with their uniquenesses and their common bonds.

This project is being specifically designed for a moderately homogenous middle school whose students could greatly benefit from an exposure and a developed sensitivity to the cultures around them.

Woodcrest Christian Middle School, came into existence in the fall of 1973. It was created as the logical extension of a thriving private Christian elementary school campus that was established by concerned parents in 1948. The middle school campus is currently located in a rural area of Riverside, California. The school population is drawn from a wide radius of communities around the Riverside area. From its early beginnings, Woodcrest Christian Middle School has had an emphasis on “Christ-centered academics”. The students at the school all take Bible as an academic class. In addition, Christian principles are integrated into the traditional curriculum of History, English, Math, Science and Physical Education. A “Reading” class was instituted in 1973 when
the Middle School was founded. The stated purpose behind the inclusion of this class was that the individual members of the School Board and the administrative staff felt that increased exposure to good literature was important for a student’s future academic success. This class was created in addition to the regular English class in an attempt to provide such expanded opportunities for reading.

Because Woodcrest is a continuation of an elementary campus which has high academic standards, the reading class was never designed to teach or remediate basic reading skills. This is emphasized at the lower grade levels - specifically at the elementary school campus. Most students who graduate from sixth grade within the system come to seventh grade testing at or above the 6th stanine on standardized reading comprehension tests. This translates to an average to above average reading ability. These students have been exposed to a balanced reading program since Kindergarten which includes both phonics and whole language. The program introduces root words in the lower elementary grades and continues on to prefixes and suffixes as the students progress in their studies. Skills are introduced and then reinforced throughout their elementary education with increased difficulty as well as opportunities for review at each grade level. This incremental instruction is continued at the middle school level in the English classes.

As a rule, approximately 85 percent of the graduates of the elementary campus come to the middle school. The remainder of the entering seventh graders are selected from a variety of sources. Some come from other private schools in the area. Many are friends of families who are currently part of the school system. Others are just children of
concerned parents who desire a high standard in their child’s educational environment. All students who are not in the system must pass an entrance test before entering the seventh grade. This test assesses basic skills in reading comprehension, math and grammar. The middle school test requires an average to high sixth grade reading comprehension level to pass and gain entrance to the school. Those students who do not pass the test are given information as far as what skills they are lacking, tutoring help is offered and the chance is given to retake the test.

Because of this basic skills test, the high quality of instruction and the high level of parental involvement at all age levels, the majority of our students are considered good to excellent readers coming into the program. For those few who still continue to struggle, tutoring opportunities are provided and parents are encouraged to pursue other enrichment experiences.

Currently, the seventh grade has an excellent reading program which focuses on the writings of Shakespeare and the Renaissance Period, the writings of Mark Twain and life on the Mississippi and the writings of Louis L’Amour and the Old West. All seventh graders get an opportunity to focus on each of these areas, one author per quarter, and then a final celebration day is planned for the spring. This celebration day which is called the “Language Arts Festival” gives the students an opportunity to experience first hand some of the “extras” of those particular time periods. Teachers and students work hard to prepare plays featuring excerpts from the literature. Games and songs are learned to be presented to parents as a culminating event. Costumes are made and parents are enlisted to create and bring food that is appropriate for each of the time periods. On the day itself,
the kids present their dramatic scenes, sing their songs and invite their parents to join
them in playing their games. All stop at noon for a feast and enjoy food from all three
genres. It is a highlight of the seventh grade year.

Although the seventh grade festival has been in existence for several years, it has
not been reciprocated with a similar festival or culminating activity during the eighth
grade year. The focus in the eighth grade has been mainly on covering specific literature.
It has been left up to the individual teacher to go beyond the curriculum. No concerted
effort as a team has been made to strive for common goals or a shared culminating
experience for the students. Although recognizing the existence of dedicated students
who have already demonstrated their eagerness to go beyond the traditional curriculum,
the staff has not provided opportunities for these kind of additional enrichment
experiences. The eighth grade teachers have not even shown much interest in joining with
the seventh grade teachers and turning the Language Arts Festival into a joint middle
school celebration. Part of the reason for this lack of participation or the initiation of a
separate project has had to do with the teachers that have been teaching this grade level in
the past. None of them have seemed to have a vision of something outside their
classroom environment. In addition, until last year, one of the eighth grade teachers was
also the Middle School principal. This double duty led to a general lack of planning time
and a feeling that all were overburdened and did not have the extra time to initiate a big
project on their own.

Much of this has changed in the last year. There is now a full team of teachers for
the eighth grade with a full time middle school principal. A concerted effort is being
made to hold regular grade level planning meetings. As the teachers get together and discuss different ideas about how the reading class could be improved, including discussions of how such a project could be implemented, the enthusiasm builds. Imaginations are stimulated by the interaction with each other and a vision is starting to develop. There is also great support from the families. The parents are ecstatic about the possibility of adding extra activities to the eighth grade. Each year, the excitement builds as the parents of the seventh grade experience the “Language Arts Festival”. Without fail, questions are voiced as far as what is being planned for the next year and how they can be an integral part of it.

My solution to this inequity in the reading curriculum between the two grades and the subject of my project is to expand the eighth grade reading curriculum at Woodcrest Christian Middle School. This project will take parts of the pre-existing curriculum and infuse a variety of exploratory experiences into the reading class. These activities will be specifically dealing with the visual and performing arts. It will provide a series of culminating experiences that will attempt to tie the literature to other aspects of learning. It will allow the student to experience the literature, not just read about it.

My project would start with three different multicultural pieces of literature which are already included in the curriculum. These three pieces would consist of Sadako and the 1000 Paper Cranes, The Diary of Anne Frank and The Pearl. Each of these selections highlight a particular cultural group - specifically the Japanese culture, the Jewish culture and the Mexican culture. From each of these selections, a celebration would be picked that is mentioned in that featured piece of literature or a celebration would be picked that
is important in that particular culture. The students would discover what the special celebration is all about. They would discover when this celebration was initiated and what significance it has in that culture. In preparation for experiencing elements of that celebration, the students would prepare a variety of special activities to share in on that day. Songs, games, art activities, dramatical presentations - would be taught during the course of reading the selection. A group of interested parents would be solicited to help plan three different “celebration” days throughout the year. The parents would be invited to provide the food and whatever other enrichment they could provide. The students would share the skills or activities they had learned and invite their parents to join them in the celebration day.

I anticipate an enthusiastic response from all involved. The other teachers have already discussed their excitement and offered suggestions. The administrative staff has asked to implement the project this year as quickly as possible not wait for the following year as was previously planned. The students have already demonstrated that they love to have an opportunity to explore different avenues and finally, the parents can’t wait. Several have already called and offered whatever help they can provide.

I can see a wide variety of benefits from initiating a project of this kind. First, it will encourage the students to appreciate more of the global culture than they are currently being exposed to at this time. Although the diversity of the student body at Woodcrest is becoming richer, the school is still predominately a traditional white middle class school which would greatly benefit from this type of enrichment opportunity. This project with its focus on cultural celebrations will give the students an opportunity to
experience the holidays and traditions of others and hopefully gain an appreciation for their similarities and their differences.

This type of project would allow the students to explore the richness that the arts (both visual and performing) offer in a positive non-threatening way and encourage the discovery of some of the more aesthetic aspects of the literature. Students would be able to discover areas of learning that they might enjoy that they were not aware of because they had not had the opportunity thus far to be exposed to them.

The addition of these experiences within the current curriculum would enable us to offer more of a variety of experiences within our present schedule. Currently because of the addition of Bible to the regular schedule, there just isn’t enough time in the day to add all the extras we would like such as exploratory classes and fine arts.

The current reading curriculum is disjointed. A series of literature selections are featured with no real focus. This project would bring unity of purpose and the existence of a variety of mediums would appeal to more kinds of learners and/or learning styles and enable those who are more musically, aesthetically or kinesthetically motivated to succeed and to make a deeper connection with the literature. The self-image of the students could be greatly enhanced by the opportunity to explore the literature in a different way that encourages the release of emotions and the opportunity for self-expression and creativity.

Finally, the implementation of this project would increase parental satisfaction as the parents would be able to observe a visible demonstration of the knowledge gained in the particular units. As the parents watch and even join in on the celebration days, they
would experience pride in their child’s part in the performance.

There are several difficulties that might arise when trying to implement a project of this size. First, because of the amount of extra work involved, the eighth grade teachers who would be affected might not buy into the proposed celebration days. They might feel overburdened with their own class preparations and not feel inclined to take on the extra job of coordinating such an experience. I have attempted to address this problem by initiating a preliminary response. I have already consulted with these teachers and am encouraging their input of ideas into this project. Secondly, because this is a Board-run school, there might be an opposition to the implementation of this project without extensive review and/or study. This is another area of concern which I have attempted to address by initiating communication with the administration. I continue to present ideas to them and ask for their input and advice as far as continuing or proceeding in a specific direction. I truly would like this to be a school wide project that would benefit students, teachers, staff and parents. The last difficulty that I can envision concerns the lack of resources. This has not been a problem in the past for the seventh grade, but there may come a time when the parents are not as committed to helping in their children’s education. I hope by building a history of success to eliminate this problem, as all of us, staff, students and parents, get excited about the different possibilities and endeavor to make each successive year as good if not better than the next.

Because of the nature of this project, there is a wide variety of people that will be affected. The teachers will be affected because it will mean more coordination of effort and collaboration. The reading class will by necessity become more unified and have a
centralized purpose and direction. The students will be affected as participants in a variety of different experiences. They will have the opportunity to try new things and go beyond the traditional question and answer approach to understanding literature. The parents will be involved as spectators as they watch their kids demonstrate what they have learned and also as participants as they experience some of the activities. They will also be invited to add their own contribution of food and whatever other special skills they may possess.

Altogether, I believe that this project will greatly enhance the reading program which is currently in existence at Woodcrest Christian Middle School. This program with it’s multicultural, multi-sensory, arts oriented and exploratory nature will add a depth to the curriculum that is not being explored at the current time. In addition, it will give students and staff special celebration days to look forward to throughout their eighth grade year.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

A short review of the literature shows that developing a program of this nature would address a variety of issues relevant to researchers in the field of education. It would address the issue of the importance of multicultural education, the necessity of integrated and expanded exploratory activities at the middle school level for all students and the issue of the importance of the arts in general as a vital part of the curriculum.

Multicultural Education

The reality of the world today is that we increasingly find ourselves living and working with people of other races, cultures and perspectives. (Schmid, p. 41) Recent changes in immigration patterns and birth rates have made the United States more culturally diverse than ever before. (Biehler, p. 238) Living in such changing times is a challenge.

In this world, what is the purpose of education? Is it merely amassing a collection of interrelated facts or is it a mission to develop students that will be able to use their minds well and who are able to respect and value the opinions of others. (Oddleifseon, p. 147) Is the responsibility of education in a democracy a search for all citizens to understand themselves and the diversity about them so that they can live effectively in a world of expanding experiences and constant change and is it important to have a multicultural education that considers equity and respect for individual differences as crucial for all students in today’s changing world? (Katter, p. 10)

For a variety of reasons in today’s society, many Americans know little about
their own culture or cultural heritage. In most families, both parents work in order to survive. The result is that most parents do not have enough time or energy to teach or pass on cultural concepts to their children. Added to this time crunch is the availability of television plus the lack of parental supervision, resulting in a society of youth which are culturally deprived, non-readers, and less academically motivated. (Balch, p. 39)

The unfortunate reality of the fact that most United States students are not as aware of culture, literature, music, art and language as they should be - their own culture or the culture of others- is that there are many benefits to such literacy. "Such literacy provides us with a common vocabulary, a shared body of ideas with which we can carry on serious discussions about serious topics. It also contains wisdom - profound insights into human nature and its situation in the moral and physical universe." (Balch, p. 39)

Scott Willis maintains that all students should learn about their own culture as well as the culture of others. (Willis, p. 1 ) Learning about themselves helps prepare them to learn about others. William Anderson maintains that educators can make a difference in the way children see themselves in the context of diversity. (Anderson, p. 25) When learning about their own culture, care should be given to ensure a positive experience which focuses on the strengths and the unique gifts of that particular group. Connections should also be made with other groups which illustrate their interrelatedness.

Much research as been published as far as the necessity of including more multi cultural opportunities in the educational system for all ages and disciplines. A recent publication of the College Music Society entitled "Music in the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Reassessment included this statement: "Ethnic and cultural diversity are a
reality. The question of the academic community’s responsibility to our multicultural and multiethnic populace proceeds from this reality... The undergraduate curriculum should begin to reflect a pluralistic perspective of our age, and goals for student development should involve global awareness and cross-cultural competency.” (Anderson, p. 53) “The American Tapestry: Educating a Nation” a report written by the National Association of State Boards of Education articulates the need of infusing the American educational system with a variety of multicultural experiences. (Anderson, p. 53) Joan Conlon in her article about multicultural opportunities in music points out that as our nation becomes more and more culturally diverse, we must seek to enrich our students knowledge of the world and should reach out to study the artistic traditions of many of our new resident cultures. (Conlon, p. 46) “Multicultural art education is built on the premise that the United States is informed by and made stronger by its diversity of customs, artistic practices, aesthetic design systems, social functions and beliefs, sacred and secular, that are embodied in the symbolic and artistic expressions of the people who make up the nation.” (Delacruz, p. 58)

There are many benefits to the addition of multicultural opportunities and instruction. Multicultural education has been shown to help students develop more positive intergroup attitudes. (Banks, 1993, p. 5) Especially in more homogeneous classrooms, multicultural instruction lets teachers expand their student’s perspectives of diverse cultural realities. (Katter, p. 11) Integrating multicultural studies inside the regular curriculum allows students to examine issues both inside and outside of the class setting. It encourages middle schoolers to examine and cherish their own beliefs and customs and
to develop a sensitivity and respect for those of neighboring cultures. (Roberts, p. 40)

Multi cultural education teaches students to understand and affirm their own identities and to reach beyond their own cultural borders. (Delacruz, p. 59)

One excellent way to incorporate multicultural experiences is to use celebrations. Learning about the culture’s songs dances, games and performing these makes the celebrations come alive for students in a direct personal way. It validates the backgrounds of various populations and it allows students to come forth as experts and proudly share their heritage. It also gives students outside the heritage a taste of the special qualities of the tradition and invites them to discover similarities with their own culture. (Goodkin, p. 41)

The absence of multicultural education and opportunities can have disastrous effects. It results in a narrowed focus - the opposite of an expanding vision. Narrowing the focus can blunt a child’s imagination and create or encourage an intolerance that might lead to racist attitudes. (Willis, p. 145) It can also result in a lack of self-esteem as children relate to a curriculum which may not seem relevant to their perceptions of life. (Banks, 1993, p. 41)

There are some detractors who continue to maintain that multiculturalism does not belong in the educational agenda. These educators tend to be predominately traditional white upper-middle class males for whom ownership of knowledge seems most important regardless of its relevance or worth. (Beane, p. 618) For them it seems more a struggle of control than a genuine concern for the greater good.

A multicultural orientation can enrich our lives and broaden our focus. Joan Cone
an English teacher at El Cajon High school in Richmond California shared that it is her belief that our American identity becomes enriched by including our diversity. (Willis, p. 5) Scott Willis in his article on multicultural teaching described having a multicultural focus as if looking through a telescope. This view allows a discovery of a variety of related material and attempts to bring clarity. A search for the interrelatedness and complexity of issues is possible. In contrast, without this overview, it is as if reduced to looking through a microscope. Only one cell is in clear view at a time. With the focus narrowed, there is no possible way to discover what is represented from the view of one cell. (Willis, p. 145) Anna Julia Cooper, the African American educator stated her view of the importance of multiculturalism in a different way when trying to explain how the addition of the perspectives of women enlarged our vision. She stated- ”The world has had to limp along with the wobbling gait and the one-side hesitancy of a man with one eye. Suddenly the bandage is removed from the other eye and the whole body is filled with light. It sees a circle where before it saw a segment.” (Banks, 1993, p. 6)

Multicultural education honors diversity by going into the details of what sets one culture apart from another. A multicultural education such as this builds on the premise that the United States is made stronger by its diversity. This kind of education also acknowledges unity by examining the universal qualities that all cultures share. (Goodkin p. 43) As our world continues to shrink and become more and more globally oriented, our students need to be aware of other cultures and customs. They need to be as well prepared as they can to live and relate well in a changing society. With this additional knowledge, it may be possible to celebrate our unity and appreciate our
different strengths as we work together for common goals.

**Exploratory Activities**

Researchers are also interested in expanded opportunities for success at the middle school level. According to the Carnegie Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents in “Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century”, the middle school years represent the last best chance to avoid a diminished future. This is the time to offer every student ample opportunities to find areas in which he or she can excel. It may be the key to their increased self-confidence and the interest to continue on in their educational pursuits. (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, p. 22)

The traditional curriculum has been more of a single subject approach. Young people and adults have been led to believe that the purpose of education is to master or “collect” facts, principles and skills that have been selected for inclusion in one or another subject area. There has not been an emphasis in discovering how these isolated elements might be used for real-life purposes. (Beane, p. 618) This separate subject approach continues to be a legacy of Western-style classical humanism which has a tendency to view the world in divided compartments. To become “educated” means to master a finite set of discrete skills. (Panaritis, p. 628) This set of factual knowledge for the most part is passively absorbed by paying attention to the “authority” of the moment. (Cardellichio, p. 630)

The problem with this type of an approach is that for most young people, including the privileged, the separate-subject emphasis offers little more than a
disconnected and incoherent assortment of facts and skills. There is no unity, no real
sense to it all. (Beane, p. 618) As a result, students are unable to take this set of
knowledge or skills and apply them successfully in other situations. (Siegel &
Shaughnessy, p. 199) Reality is that life itself does not know or respect the boundaries or
compartments of what we call the disciplines of knowledge, thus students are at a
disadvantage when faced with the complexities of life and life’s problems.

In addition, many students consider the single subject approach boring. (Liner, p.
6) As a result of students being less actively involved in the learning process, many
teachers have discovered that instead of acquiring knowledge the typical middle school
student forgets the majority of the information presented. (Balch, p. 39)

The U.S. Department of Education charged that our nation was “At risk” because
of the schools inability to prepare young people for the complex lives they would face as
adults. (Renyi, p. 438) Researchers point out that members of this age group have a
strong urge to find out about things that arouse their curiosity. They need to learn more
about ideas that capture their interest. Activities and experiences should provide
opportunities for self-expression, emotional release and personal satisfaction. (Romano,
p. 106) Students need meaningful, purposeful enriching ways of learning from which they
can form connections. (Rief, p. 25) They need opportunities to interact with other
students informally in a more casual setting. (Romano & Georgiady, p. 106) They need
chances to derive personal satisfaction and gratification from a variety of exciting and
challenging activities that may not be considered strictly academic. (Romano &
Georgiady, p. 107) Creativity and exploration are the key. (Steffans, p. 30) They need
opportunities to succeed regardless of previous achievement or the pace at which they learn. (Carnegie Council, p. 25) They need to cultivate skills and capabilities that are valued in the community and in the broader society. These may be nontraditional intelligences that fall between the cracks of the traditional disciplines. (Gardner, p. 207) When students are exposed to a variety of topics they may not otherwise have taken, it broadens their horizons, whets their appetites and may encourage further study in areas they excel or are interested in. (Steffans, p. 32)

The results of this type of a program with integration of subject material and expanded opportunities are that it allows middle school students to discover relationships that apply to everyday life. They are able to make connections that cannot be made by studying in a narrow chronological approach. Patterns are recognized and the ability to transfer this skill to other subject areas is a natural outgrowth of this process. (Weaver, p. 10) With integration comes meaning. Particular knowledge is not abstracted or fragmented as is the case when its identity and purpose are tied only to its place within a discipline (Beane, p. 620) This approach helps students find relevance in the content and become more actively engaged in learning. They remember more and become more creative thinkers as they make connections to their personal lives. (Clark, p. 5) Becoming more involved in the process results in less competition, more cooperation and allows them to learn to accept the differences and appreciate the strengths and talents of their classmates. (Clark, p. 5)

It has not occurred to middle school students that because they know one thing, they do not know everything. (Anglin & Sargent, p. 67) A creative, integrated approach
allows students chances to explore. Middle schoolers love to explore. It is thrilling to discover a new talent or skill. They need the time and the opportunity to exercise their creativity as they potentially discover new gifts or areas of interest that they didn’t know they had. (Romano & Georgiady, p. 103) Further study becomes a natural and desired extension. (Rasinski, p. 31) Many students consider these classes the highlight of their day. They find that they are able to utilize their talents in creative and meaningful ways and succeed. It allows them to develop a positive self-image. (Steffans, p. 30) It increases self confidence and perseverance. (Levinson, p. 191) Offering each student ample opportunities to find areas in which they can excel cultivates the self confidence and interest needed to promise a brighter future. (Gerber, p. 39)

Exploratory activities can be structured to allow students to give free reign to those feelings and expressions that are inside them. Freedom of expression is encouraged.”The capacity to consider various intellectual and social possibilities confers fresh power on an individual’s artistry. No longer anchored to realistic portraits of one’s surroundings, the youth can venture forth along at least two different paths: she can depict items in ways that make personal sense, even if they fail to satisfy canons of realism; and by the same token she can draw objects or events that do not exist, and even ones that have never existed.” (Gardner, p. 213).

“Multiple windows leading into the same room.” (Gardner, p. 207) Expanded opportunities allow students to discover that there is more than one way to approach a problem. Since all children do not learn in the same way, this provides a way to reach more of them and lets the students display their understanding in a way that is
comfortable for them as their personal strengths and preferences are taken into
consideration. (Gardner, p. 208)

Exploration allows for the development or discovery of potential leisure skills.
Middle schoolers need to learn how to spend leisure time in ways that are fulfilling to
avoid the despair of boredom and uselessness. (Liner, p. 8)

Integrated exploratory and art classes usually have a looser agenda and provide
for a different kind of teacher/student interaction. There is a closeness that develops as
both student and teacher work towards a common goal. Casual conversation allows for
common bonds to be discovered across generations. John Lounsbury in his article entitled
“Music: Universal Language, Universal Curriculum?” contends that all early adolescents
ought to play in a band, however poorly or sing in a chorus, however imperfectly. He
maintains that the relationship between a band or chorus director and their student is
special. It is a valuable relationship that should be experienced by all. (Lounsbury, p. 44)

This type of approach provides an excellent way to enlist the talents of parents
and community members. It is an opportunity to engage them in the school environment.
(Bobango, p. 28) It gives them a reason for them to come back to school and share their
expertise, personal experiences and interests. The result - once again common bonds and
interests can be formed across generational lines.

Most adults consider education as vital to future success. The addition of
meaningful exploratory-based integrated activities and experiences into the educational
agenda offers an unprecedented opportunity to bring meaning to learning and provides
opportunities for students to discover new areas of interest and abilities. These newly
discovered interests might prove the key to future career goals or paths of enjoyment.

**Importance of Arts Education**

In the play “Our Town” by Thornton Wilder on a visit home Emily remarks, “I can’t look at everything hard enough... Oh! It goes so fast. We don’t have time to look at one another. I didn’t realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Do human beings ever realize while they live it - every, every minute?..... No... The saints and poets, maybe they do some.” (Levison, p. 191)

The Arts are crucial to life itself. We need the artists, the poets, the musicians, the dancers. We depend on them to point us to the meaning of life. Scholars from John Dewey to Suzanne Langer have stressed the importance of the aesthetic experience. Art has the ability to educate the imagination, improve the sensibilities, increase awareness and provide peak experiences. (Barrell, p. 334) We need the Arts to build bridges between our collections of isolated facts - to help us discover how things are related. Our goal is to develop an understanding of larger patterns- to be people of wisdom and understanding, not just be prepared to win a game of Trivial Pursuit. (Barrell, p. 334)

Many schools have specialized programs such as band, chorus, drama or artistic drawing for those students with previous knowledge or specialized skills and abilities, but few have offered all students the opportunity to explore these areas in a positive and non-threatening manner. In 1993, the National Endowment for the Arts reaffirmed that the Arts are essential to every child’s education. They feel that exposure to the Arts contributes to higher-order thinking skills and workplace skills. (National Endowment for
the Arts, p. 18) The document “Turning Points” for the Carnegie Foundation also pointed out that the Fine Arts is considered part of a basic “core curriculum” through which all students should be expected to succeed as learners in thinking critically, expressing themselves clearly, and synthesizing subject matter across the disciplines studied. (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, p. 29) Some researchers feel that the traditional academic curriculum without the Arts is not enough. John Lounsbury in his article entitled “Music: Universal Language, Universal Curriculum” states that he considers the academic block of four subjects too sterile. He says that “one’s education is stunted no matter what it does for the mind, if it does not also open the heart.” (Lounsbury, p. 43) The founder of the American school system, Horace Mann, believed that music was essential to the education of the young for the development of aesthetic appreciation, citizenship and thinking. (Miller & Coen, p. 459)

The Arts have an image problem in today’s schools. In order to maintain curricular credibility, they have been forced to look and act like an academic subject. There is a growing perception among the general public that nothing is really learned from participation in the Arts. (Reul, p. 34) The view is that the Arts are not useful, rather they are the frills or decorations that take away from the real work of public schools. (Greene, p. 392) “The Humanities in American Life” a 1980 report commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation concluded that the arts were strongly alive and well only in isolated institutions such as museums and universities, but that their future was at risk because most American children received little exposure to them in school. (Sautter, p. 433)
In actuality, scientific studies show the opposite. The College Entrance Examination Board has found that students who took more than four years of music and art scored 34 points higher on the verbal sections of the SAT and an average of 18 points higher on the math sections than those students who took these subjects for less than a year. (Sautter, p. 435) In 1980, a study by James Hanshumaker on the effects of arts education on intellectual and social development found that time for arts instruction and released time for instrumental music instruction did not result in lower academic achievement. He stated that with the many benefits arts programs bring to children and schools, classroom teachers would be wise to argue for more rather than less instruction in the arts. (Hanshumaker, p. 12) In a 1984 paper titled “How Arts Instruction Affects Reading and Language: Theory and Research”, Gary McGuire concluded that research showed a positive correlation between music and visual arts and academic achievement in language and reading. (McGuire, p. 835) In reviewing literature on music and language arts, Gail Cohen Taylor found that listening skills and language awareness were enhanced through musical instruction. (Taylor, p. 363) Years of experience among art educators and classroom teachers who use the Arts to motivate and instruct students, thousands of artist-in-residence programs over the last 25 years, plus the growing body of research strongly suggest that education in and through the Arts can play a significant role in the effectiveness of schools. (Sautter, p. 433) Jerrold Ross, director of the National Arts Education Research Center notes that Arts education research has demonstrated that in a variety of settings with a diversity of population groups, the Arts have had a significant positive impact on academic achievement. (Sautter, p. 435)
Around the world, the Arts hold more of a position of value. Every Japanese student between grades 4 and 9 is required to play at least one musical instrument. (Reul, p. 35) In his article, “What Do We Want Our Schools to Do?”, Eric Oddleifson speculated that the Japanese insistence on aesthetics could have much to do with their economic success. (Oddleifson, p. 451) Likewise, educators in China and Germany assume that all students should study the Arts. (Perrin, p. 52)

A poll of United State senators and members of Congress revealed that more than 95 percent of them pursued the Arts while they were in school. (Reul, p. 35) A large New York accounting firm recently disclosed that when they recently hired four MIT graduates who minored in the Arts, they were amazed at their creative thinking, flexibility and presentation skills. This firm is now using the Arts minor as a screening criterion for future applicants. (Harris, p. 100) Henry Mintzberg stated that the important policy-level processes required to manage an organization rely to a considerable extent on the faculties identified with the brain’s right hemisphere. These are the more intuitive, holistic, imaginative and conceptual capabilities that are developed through training in the Arts. (Oddleifson, p. 451)

Benefits of Arts Study

Serious study of the Arts is one of the best ways to educate a person for college and employment. Workers need to be creative thinkers and problem solvers. They need to work well with others or independently. They need to be active learners, risk takers who push themselves towards goals. These are characteristics that can be developed through
Students who study the Arts develop self-discipline and motivation. They enjoy coming to school and working hard. High standards become the norm. Ron Berger, a sixth grade teacher in Massachusetts noted that, "The infusion of the Arts has had a profound affect on student understanding, investment and standards. As a whole, students not only do well on standardized testing measures but more importantly and demonstrably do well in real-life measures of learning. They are capable and confident readers, writers and users of math, They are strong thinkers and workers and they treat others well." (Oddleifson, p. 148) A 1990 study for the Florida Department of Education by the Florida State University Center for Music Research documented the role of the Arts in dropout prevention and in improving student motivation. "For sometime now, Art teachers in the high schools have been well aware of the intensity of student interest and involvement when these young people participate in the creative process of playing in the band or orchestra, acting in a play, singing in a chorus or other musical production, creating a painting or a sculpture, or participating in a modern dance of ballet. This enthusiasm for expressing oneself through the various art forms seems to be a motivating force for student attendance in these classes and for the development of skills essential to satisfactory artistic expression." (Sautter, p. 436)

Students work together. It is a social environment, (Anglin & Sargent, p. 68) They learn how to respect their peers and treat them well. They learn how to take criticism from their peers, teachers, parents and audiences. (Sautter, p. 436) Students and teachers become personally connected in a search for common goals. (Anglin & Sargent, p. 68) It
bridges the age gap and can be used to form relationships with parents and the community at large (Romano & Georgiady, p. 109) Arts capitalize on the imagination of students and teachers and puts energy into common learning. It makes the learning experience a more coherent one with more connections between the curriculum. (Sautter, p. 34) It provides opportunities for positive self-image development resulting from the varied opportunities to interact with students in a more casual setting. (Romano & Georgiady, p. 106) There is a noticeable improvement and growth in self-esteem and self-confidence that come from participation and feelings of success and satisfaction. (Sautter, p. 436)

The Arts allow a total involvement. Participatory encounters with painting, dances and stories enable us to recapture a lost spontaneity. (Greene, p. 382) It gives the chance to experience something in a totally different way. It requires imagination- entering an unreal world. “It is the belief that these is more in our experience of the world than can possibly meet the unreflecting eye, that our experience is significant for us, and worth the attempt to understand it... It is a sense (rather than an item in a creed) that there is always more to an experience and more in what we experience than we can predict. The Arts release our imagination and open us to immeasurable possibilities.” (Greene, p. 398)

“The Arts is the place for those feelings and intuitions which daily life doesn’t have a place for and mostly seems to suppress.” (Donoghue, p. 129) “Participatory involvement with the Arts allows us to see more in our experience, to hear more on normally unheard frequencies, to become conscious of what daily routines, habits and conventions have obscured.” (Greene, p. 379)
Children come to school as integrated people with thoughts and feelings, words and pictures, ideas and fantasies. They are intensely curious about the world. They are scientists, artist, musicians, historians, dancers and runners, tellers of stories and mathematicians. The challenge we face as teachers is to use the wealth they bring us. They come to us with a two sided mind. We must encourage them to use it, to develop both types of thinking so that they have access to the fullest range of mental abilities. (Oddleifson, p. 149)

The Arts are valuable as a means of self-expression. They bring emotional release and satisfaction. They are basic in individual development since they, more than any other subject, awaken all the senses. (Geoghegan, p. 458) The Arts allow us to address the issue of what does it mean to be human? They tell us something about ourselves, stretch our imagination and enrich our experiences. Encounters with the Arts nurture us, They allow us to live more ardently in the world and resist the tyranny of the technical. (Greene, p. 382)

These are some of the generalizations that apply to most Art experiences, but there are some unique benefits to each discipline.

Benefits of Music

Music holds a special place in the affairs of humankind. It touches the soul. (Miller & Coen, p. 461) Songs and singing are associated with the major events of families and nations. It is a means of expressing feelings of joy or sadness, of praise or protest.
(Lounsbury, p. 42) It binds communities together. For many children, music and dance unlock doors that the stereotypes of gender, race, language, religion or ability have kept shut. (Foltz-Gray, p. 59) Music’s place in the out of school life of most ten to fifteen year olds would certainly indicate its closeness to them. Rarely, do you see a middle schooler without a set of earphones plastered on their head during their free time. Music gives permission to say what can’t be spoken. (Foltz-Gray, p. 59) It is a comfort, a release, an understanding companion. It gives voice to many of their feelings and longings. (Lounsbury, p. 44)

Music has the unique quality of being able to present a powerful cultural message in an appealing format- one in which students learn by thinking and feeling. Music may be able to deliver messages about the value of other cultures that courses such as social studies cannot match. (Schmid, p. 41) Similarities and differences are immediately perceived and the usefulness of different contributions to musical creativity are easily demonstrated. (Seeger, p. 29) As they discover the richness of their own cultural heritage, they are able to see in others a common ground that minimizes national boundaries and language differences. (Firth, p. 69) Music is universal. (Conlon, p. 46)

Music is one of the few classes left in the curriculum that speaks to the intuitive right side of the brain. (Reul, p. 35) It fulfills the mission of the middle school better because it develops the whole self. Gloria Kiester states, “Quality education means total education. This means teaching and learning in every way possible - not just reading and writing and calculating, but also feeling and moving, drawing and singing, dancing and creating. And that is why music must exist in the school at the heart of the curriculum -
not as entertainment or relaxation, but as a unique way of knowing and as the foundation of feelingful intelligence.” (Reul, p. 36)

Music has a pedagogy that has been proven to develop the areas of reading, math, language and comprehensive skills. (Reul, p. 34) Specifically, the scientific journal “Nature” published a study by researchers at the Center for Neurobiology of Learning and Memory at the University of California, Irvine. In this study, 36 college students were given three sets of standard spatial reasoning tasks that commonly appear on I.Q. tests. The college students were also exposed to three listening experiences prior to taking these test. One experience involved listening to 10 minutes of Mozart's Sonata for 2 pianos in D major. The second listening experience involved a relaxation tape and the third listening experience was total silence. The results showed that the performance of the students on the spatial reasoning test was 8 to 9 points higher after listening to the Mozart sonata. The researchers suggested that the complexity and organization of the music resulted in the higher score. “The intricacies and complexity of the music could enhance abstract reasoning by reinforcing certain complex patterns of neural activity.” (Rauscher, p. 611) One of the researchers, Gordon Shaw, proposed that what was happening was that the music was priming the areas of the brain that may be involved with the other task. The researchers also speculated that making the music rather than simply listening to it, might have a longer-lasting impact on intelligence. (Rauscher, p. 611)

Music teaches discipline. It provides an experience for cooperative learning as the success of the performance depends on the cooperation of a group of individuals. (Miller & Coen, p. 461)
Finally, music relieves stress. A survey by Lewis Thomas of undergraduates applying to medical school found that most would-be doctors majored in biochemistry. Of the bio-chemistry applicants, 44 percent were admitted to medical school. A comparison was made of the percentages of majors admitted to medical school. This comparison found that there was one group where 66 percent of the applicants were admitted to medical school. This group was those who had majored in music. His conclusion was that those people who are steeped in the liberal arts are capable of relieving stress through playing music, acting, dancing and so on. His recommendation was that undergraduates spend more time studying literature, philosophy and the Arts so that they would first grow as a human being before seeking to be a physician. (Miller & Coen, p. 461)

Benefits of Art

Art is important in that it provides an insight into the soul. It can be used as a powerful communication technique and help children express their inner thoughts and feelings. As children draw what they know and feel rather than what they see, an unprecedented opportunity is provided for teachers to observe a visual representation of what their students are thinking and/or feeling. (Page, p. 6)

Art gives opportunities for developing imagination. (Egan, p. 65) The work is never limited to the painted, sculpted object. It is seen as a shadow of what is real. It can be viewed as a limited representation against the background of the universe - a view of the world as it might be. (Greene, p. 283)
Our first impressions of the world are visual. Only as we get older are we asked to set aside this preference and concentrate on the printed word. Reconnection with the visual rewards all types of learners. (Darlington & Dake, p. 47) "Pictures as well as words are important to human bring in their communication; we need to expand our narrow definition of literacy to include visual dimensions, and in doing so answer the call of researchers for the recognition of multi-literacies and ways these literacies can work to complement each other." (Darlington & Dake, p. 47) Visual art theorists Crowther and Wilson have suggested that the" Visual Arts need to become an integral part not only of the Arts but a significant aspect of the general interpretation of human existence." (Darlington & Dake, p. 50)

Benefits of Drama

Drama in the classroom can provide action, experimentation, exploration of character, motive and text. It encourages creativity, develops critical thinking and analytic skills in the study of character and script. It encourages understanding and tolerance of differences as students assume and listen to a variety of roles. (Albert, p. 20) It can develop skills in conflict resolution as students observe how different characters react to life’s situations. (Geoghegan, p. 458) It develops social skills and provides opportunities for physical activity. It also offers middle schoolers the opportunity to become valued members of a group while developing their individuality. They receive recognition for their personal achievements. "Play Night gave me an opportunity to show some of my talents that my peers did not know about. They thought I was quiet and shy. I think they..."
were surprised that I was good at acting and speaking in front of an audience. After Play Night I felt an inner respect from some of them that thrilled me.” (Albert, p. 24)

Drama also encourages reading development. In the book Building An Effective Middle School, Louis G Romano quotes a lengthy reference from a paper by J. M. Muldrew of the Michigan Association of Middle School Educators entitled “Focus on Creative Playmaking in the Middle School.” Mulgrew states that:

“Playmaking provides unlimited possibilities for developing and extending academic skills. Creative activities can be designed to provide reinforcement, review, and enrichment of learning components of the middle school curriculum. Perhaps reading is one of the areas in which playmaking has made the greatest impact on skill development. What better way is there to help students discover and remember the moral, sequence, and plot of a story than to allow them to dramatize it? Some other reading skill improvements which playmaking can bring about are: (1) Improvement of oral expression - repeated practice with pronunciation, enunciation, and intonation helps to produce better articulation skills. (2) Improved critical reading and thinking skills - creative activities cause students to be more attentive to what they read, better listeners to what they hear, and therefore able to understand the nature of a character and/or the main event of a story. (3) Improved auditory discrimination - active involvement and participation increases vocabulary development and enhances decoding and encoding training.” (Romano & Georgiady, p. 108)

Benefits of Dance

“Dance gave me self-discipline, responsibility and self-confidence,” said one at-risk student mentioned in an article by R. Craig Sautter. She continued, “It also showed me how to budget my time.” (Sautter, p. 436) These are not unique benefits for they have been mentioned in the other disciplines as well. One of the distinctions of dance is that in dance all thought is channeled through the mind to a certain point of the body. (Greene,
p. 382) It offers a unique opportunity for students to respond in a kinesthetic way to the contemplations and reflections of their soul. Dance integrates the whole self. (Greene, p. 382)

Summary

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. says, “If history tells us anything, it tells us that the United States like all other nations, will be measured in the eyes of posterity not by its economic power nor by its military might.....but by its character and achievement as a civilization. The study of the Arts makes us civilized.” (Miller & Coen, p. 461) If we want to be civilized how can we afford not to include these activities in our curriculum?

This representation highlights some of the current research literature concerning the necessity of multicultural instruction across the curriculum, offering expanded and integrated exploratory arts experiences at the middle school level and the importance of arts education as a critical part of the curriculum for all students. This sample of research reinforces my opinion that this is an important topic and that my proposal will have a positive effect on the growth, both academic and aesthetic, of the students in my class.
Chapter Three: Implementation

Current Situation

This program with the addition of visual and performing art elements to the current literature based reading curriculum and inclusion of the corresponding celebrations is being uniquely designed with consideration of the needs and abilities of the students, staff and teachers of Woodcrest Christian Middle School. The school, located in the rural outskirts of Riverside county, currently has approximately 180 students in grades seven and eight. It has six full time teachers which are evenly divided into a seventh and eighth grade core. Supplemental teachers are used for additional classes during the day.

The schedule at Woodcrest Christian Middle School includes a reading class at the seventh and eighth grade level. The rationale behind this class (as explained by the Superintendent of the school district and the Principal of the Middle School) is that the members of the Riverside County Christian Schools Board of Education feel that the more students are exposed to good literature, the better prepared they will be for success later in life, whether in high school or beyond.

Because Woodcrest Christian Middle School is a continuation of a Christian elementary education at Riverside Christian Day School with high academic standards, the students coming to us at the middle school level are excellent readers. Those entering the school as transfer students are also tested to evaluate their reading level. Thus, with the high level of reading ability, the purpose of this class has always been one of enrichment—not remediation of basic reading skills.
A problem exists in that just having a separate reading class limits the opportunity within the daily school schedule to explore other options and activities. There aren’t enough minutes in the day to handle all the material you need to cover plus extras. The middle schools years give an unprecedented opportunity for exploration. The students are open to new experiences and are eager to learn more about ideas and things that capture their interest and/or arouse their curiosity. (Romano & Georgiady, p. 105) They are eager to try new things. In addition, the self image of all students, which is so fragile at this age, can benefit by being able to experience success in new areas and from having a place to express their changing feelings and emotions. Here at Woodcrest, having this extra class in the schedule limits the ability to provide these additional learning activities. Currently, the seventh grade has an excellent reading program which focuses on the writings of Shakespeare and the Renaissance Period, the writings of Mark Twain and life on the Mississippi and the writings of Louis L’Amour and the Old West. All seventh graders get an opportunity to focus on each of these areas, one author per quarter, and then a final celebration day is planned for the spring. This celebration day which is called the “Language Arts Festival” gives the students an opportunity to experience first hand some of the “extras” of those particular time periods. Teachers and students work hard to prepare plays featuring excerpts from the literature. Games and songs are learned to be presented to parents as a culminating event. Costumes are made and parents are enlisted to create and bring food that is appropriate for each of the time periods. On the day itself, the kids present their dramatic scenes, sing their songs and invite their parents to join them in playing their games. All stop at noon for a feast and
enjoy food from all three genres. It is a highlight of the seventh grade year.

Although the seventh grade festival has been in existence for several years, it has not been reciprocated with a similar festival or culminating activity during the eighth grade year. The focus in the eighth grade has been mainly on covering specific literature. It has been left up to the individual teacher to go beyond the curriculum. No concerted effort as a team has been made to strive for common goals or a shared culminating experience for the students. Although recognizing the existence of dedicated students who have already demonstrated their eagerness to go beyond the traditional curriculum, the staff has not provided opportunities for these kind of additional enrichment experiences. The eighth grade teachers have not even shown much interest in joining with the seventh grade teachers and turning the Language Arts Festival into a joint middle school celebration. Part of the reason for this lack of participation or the initiation of a separate project has had to do with the teachers that have been teaching this grade level in the past. None of them have seemed to have a vision of something outside their classroom environment. In addition, until last year, one of the eighth grade teachers was also the Middle School principal. This double duty led to a general lack of planning time and a feeling that all were overburdened and did not have the extra time to initiate a big project on their own.

The situation in the eighth grade has changed in the last year. There is now a full team of three teachers for the eighth grade with a full time middle school principal. A concerted effort is being made to hold regular grade level planning meetings. As the teachers get together and discuss different ideas about how the reading class could be
improved, including discussions of how such a project could be implemented, the enthusiasm builds. Imaginations are stimulated by the interaction with each other and a vision is starting to develop. There is also great support from the families. The parents are ecstatic about the possibility of adding extra activities to the eighth grade. Each year, the excitement builds as the parents of the seventh grade experience the “Language Arts Festival”. Without fail, questions are voiced as far as what is being planned for the next year and how they can be an integral part of it.

The prescribed solution to this problem is to expand this current reading curriculum at the eighth grade level with the addition of several exploratory activities in the fields of the visual and performing arts. (These activities may or may not take up an entire class period.)

Current literature selections that would be utilized include *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Sadako and the 1000 Paper Cranes* and *the Pearl*. The cultures highlighted would include the Jewish, Japanese and Mexican cultures. The celebrations involved would be Hanukkah, Children’s Day and Mexican Independence Day. (These celebrations may or may not be celebrated on the actual day depending on facility availability, staff requirements and other variables.)

When beginning a certain unit of the reading curriculum, the study would be expanded to discover a special celebration mentioned in the literature or a celebration of importance in the culture that is featured in that selection of literature. The students would find out what the special celebration was all about. They would discover whether the celebration had any particular significance in that culture and the historical time frame
for beginning this celebration. Then in preparation for experiencing a celebration day, certain art objects would be made, songs and games would be learned (ideally in the native language), and dramatic presentations would be prepared. The goal would be a culminating celebration day where the students could tie many different aspects of the culture together with the literature. Because of the nature of this school where we have an abundance of parents who love to be involved in their children’s education, the parents would also be invited to participate. Some parents might be involved in helping the students create costumes or flags for the celebration. Others might get involved in preparing food that would be appropriate for the special day. All would be invited to the celebration and be encouraged to participate in whatever way they felt comfortable.

Although the goal is to start with three different pieces of literature already included in the current reading curriculum which emphasize three different cultures so that the students would have three different celebration days to look forward to during their eighth grade year, this plan could be expanded or revised in the future depending on the needs and interests of the students and the school community.

I feel that the addition of these different activities in the arts which correlate with the existing literature would have many benefits including but not limited to the following:

- It would encourage the students to appreciate more of the global culture than they are currently being exposed to. Although the diversity of the student body is becoming richer, the school is still predominately a traditional
white middle class school which would benefit from this type of enrichment opportunity.

• It would allow students to explore the richness that the arts (both visual and performing) offer in a positive non-threatening way and encourage discovering some of the more aesthetic aspects of the literature.

• The addition of these extra activities would be possible within the time framework of the current schedule.

• It would bring unity and continuity to the learning experience by allowing a central focus on the celebration as a culminating activity.

• It would increase parental satisfaction as they would be able to observe a visible demonstration of the knowledge gained in this unit. They would experience pride in their student’s part in the performance on the celebration day.

• The use of a variety of mediums would appeal to a variety of learners and/or learning styles and enable those who are more musically, aesthetically or kinesthetically motivated to succeed and to make a deeper connection with the literature.

• The self-image of the students could be greatly enhanced by the opportunity to explore the literature in a different way that encourages the release of emotions and the opportunity for self-expression and creativity.
Plan of Implementation

Because Woodcrest Christian Middle School is such a small school, implementation is more simplified than it would be in a larger school or even a district. In fact, it is even easier in this case because the reading class already exists in the eighth grade schedule. If this class did not exist, any change in the class schedule would involve drafting a proposal to the Middle School Principal which would then be forwarded to the curriculum committee of the school board where subsequent recommendations would be made as far as implementation. But since the class is already included in the schedule, the implementation can begin immediately.

Another advantage of this program is that it has not been written in isolation. The principal and the other eighth grade teachers have been a part of the plan from the beginning and have been allowed and encouraged to add their input and feelings. This has helped develop a community feeling and less of a hesitancy to adopt the proposal.

The plan for implementation starts with selecting certain days that will be set aside for the three different celebrations throughout the year. This will be done at the end of the year orientation for teachers which is held as a wrap up day following the last day of school in June. This orientation day will serve the purpose of blocking out those dates from athletic or other conflicts and ensure a measure of control. These days may or may not be on or near the actual celebration days. Some restrictions that might have to be considered include space availability and resources.

Grade level meetings of teachers and administration are held on a regular basis throughout the summer to plan for the following year. Blocks of time during these
meetings would be designated to discuss plans for the coming year and firm up details for the celebration days

As the teachers spend parts of their summer in preparation for the days during the year, sample lesson plans would be developed and potentially tested out on each other in the process. In this way, those teachers who do not feel as comfortable with a particular lesson would have an opportunity to practice and fine tune their skills before the school year started.

In the planning sessions a variety of leadership roles could be established. To minimize stress- each teacher could take one celebration and adopt that as their special project or a single teacher could coordinate the program on their own.

Sometime during the summer a letter would be sent out to parents to inform them of the plans for the coming year. One of the characteristics of this school is the willingness of the parents to get involved. This would allow us to find out what parental resources were available for us to draw on in the coming year. A form would be included which would encourage parents to volunteer to be on a planning committee to help in the specific celebrations.

When school resumed in the fall, discussing the celebrations would be added to the Orientation Meeting agenda. Again, parents would be asked for their input and encouraged to volunteer their expertise and assistance. At this point, a parent committee for each celebration would be formed. This committee would be responsible for helping ensure the success of the celebration. These committees could decide to provide food for the special day if that was their desire.
A second letter would be sent out a month before a celebration to remind parents of what was going on and again to solicit their input, resources and participation. This letter would be duplicated three times during the year for each celebration and sent out to the families.

In order for this program to be a success, several factors need to be in place. First of all, the teachers need to be committed to the program. It also needs the support of the administration and the parents. These are all currently in place. The final factor is that the program will need some funding. This support has also been promised by the administration and additional funds for this program have been volunteered by several families.

**Potential Problems of Implementation**

There are several problems that might occur when trying to implement a program such as this. First of all, if the teachers and staff do not buy into the program and want to support it, it will fail. This has been addressed by including the current staff in the planning stages of this program so that they would feel that they could support its implementation.

Secondly, there may be teacher who does not feel qualified to lead a certain activity. This has been addressed by giving them an opportunity to test out these activities during the summer without students. This hopefully will alleviate their concerns. However if there was a specific activity which one teacher did not feel they were adequately prepared to try, a switch could be made and one of the other eighth grade
teachers could stand in for that particular lesson. This is possible because in the current schedule, all of the reading classes meet at the same time of day.

A third problem could be a lack of excitement and motivation from the students and the parents. This has also been proved false on the parental side as fifteen parents have called this year to volunteer for a program that is not yet in existence and as the students have repeatedly asked when the program was going to be put into effect.

The final potential problem concerns a lack of funding. This also has been addressed by the administration as a portion of the Gold C fund drive has been promised to this program. Several parents have also come forth with promised donations to help implement the addition to the curriculum.

All in all, it seems like everything is in place and ready to go. There is one final issue that I think needs to be addressed. This the importance of rewards. All of us like to be appreciated for what we do. Sometimes these rewards can be as simple as a verbal “thank you”. Other times might call for a card or a gift. Whatever it is, recognition needs to be given to all those who participate in the celebration. Potential rewards might include an awards assembly for parent volunteers and/or treats and cards to staff/parents as an expression of our appreciation for all their effort and hard work.
Chapter Four: Assessment

Reflecting back, the program stated the following objectives.

After completing a unit of study and having the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities during the “celebration”, students will:

- be able to explain the purpose of the particular celebration
- be able to recount the historical significance of the celebration in that culture
- perform a song or drama related to that culture and/or celebration
- participate in a folk dance and/or game relevant to that culture/celebration
- have created an artifact relevant to that particular culture or celebration
- experience first hand the celebration of that culture in a unique culminating experience

Since this is essentially a proposal rather than a discussion of a program which is already in existence, the program has anticipated results rather than reported and observed ones. The anticipated results include increased involvement with the literature selections as the students get a chance to dig deeper and see a glimpse of the cultural traditions of the characters in the literature. Increased parental involvement is anticipated as the parents are given an opportunity to share their gifts and talents with the school population. There is an expected improvement in self-esteem as the students are given the chance to succeed in a nontraditional arena and be recognized in front of their peers.
Finally there is hopefully, a developing sensitivity for the cultural differences of others. As the students are given the opportunity to learn about the other cultures and their celebrations, similarities and differences will be discussed. An awareness of these cultures will be nurtured with the goal of encouraging increased sensitivity to other groups in their local communities.

Measures of Assessment

The program is broad in its approach and will of necessity have a broad base of assessment.

As far as the students are concerned, much of the assessment will be performance based. Are they able to sing the songs, play the games, create the artifacts, etc. Participation will be observed. Notice will be taken as far as if the majority of the students are actively engaged in the lesson or activity. Teachers will look for an increased interest in coming to “reading” class or conversely notice if the students drag their bodies in the door complaining that they want to stay at lunch?

Those activities or lessons which allow (because of size and shape limitations) will be incorporated into the student’s existing portfolios as samples of work. A concerted effort will be made to include several samples of various stages of work in an attempt to show progress throughout the unit.

The students will also be given a more formal assessment tool at the conclusion of the “celebration” day. This will be be added to their portfolios. Here, the students will be given the opportunity to reflect back on what they have learned and experienced. They
will be asked to describe their favorite and least favorite part, give recommendations for improvement and give specific examples of similarities and differences to other cultural celebrations. After completing this reflection, the students will be given a chance to share this information with their peers in a class discussion.

Parental assessment will primarily be observed. Responses will be verbally solicited as the parents come on campus for the celebration day. One of the main indicators of parental success will be the number of parents who volunteer each year to be a part of the celebrations. This could be as part of the planning committee, as a special guest speaker or as a participant and/or observer on the special day. This year has been a year of planning and reflection as the school has anticipated putting this program into effect. Just being in the planning stage however, has caused an increased excitement among the parents. Already, there have been fifteen volunteers this year for a program that doesn’t even exist.

Another tool of assessment that will be used is the use of video recording. This is another area where the parent’s help will be enlisted to get a variety of shots, angles and points of view. With a variety of tapes to choose from, selections will be picked and reformatted to form a master tape which could then be distributed to the students as a visual reminder of their learning experiences. As an assessment tool, an effort will be made to capture the rehearsals as well as the finished product in order to show the growth and development throughout the unit.

Those parents on the committees who were involved in the planning and execution of the celebration day will also be asked to fill out an evaluation form of their
own. This form will focus on areas of strength and improvement. Recommendations will be made for the next year and will be saved for reflection by the new committees.

This form will also be filled out by the teachers and school staff involved. This will provide a wide base for any anticipated changes for the following year. Additions or deletions of certain activities will be addressed and a general discussion as far as feelings of success or failure of that particular day.

Future Plans

From discussions with administrative staff, fellow teachers, students and parents, anticipation for this project is high. It is not a question of whether it is implemented, but rather how soon can it be in place.

There has been some talk about expansion of this unit in the future. Other pieces of literature which highlight different cultures could be featured. An effort might be made to feature particular cultures prominent in the local community or within our specific school community.

Ideas would also be shared in a variety of formats with other schools. More informal sharing could be done on a local basis with other teachers coming over to observe during the school day. Beyond that, there is the opportunity to share ideas at conferences both on the local and state level. Because Woodcrest is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International, one of the choices would be to give a seminar at the yearly state ACSI convention. Seminars could also be given at the California League of Middle Schools convention.
Recommendations

Although this project was designed specifically for a small Christian school, with modification it could be adapted for a variety of situations. A preliminary evaluation would need to be made as far as the gifts/talents of the staff and particular limitations of the particular school site. Student and parental interest should be solicited and encouraged. Then plans could be made to make the necessary changes to the program in order to provide a successful experiences within the guidelines of the specific school.

Project Summary

Altogether, this project attempts to take a program which is already in existence at Woodcrest Christian Middle School and broaden it's focus. This broadening would allow a variety of objectives to be met. It would allow a predominately white middle class student body to be exposed to and experience the culture and specifically the cultural celebrations of others. It would give these same students a chance to explore non-traditional venues within the framework of their existing curriculum and broaden their understanding of the piece of literature being studied. Finally, it would allow them to experience a minute exposure to the arts - an exposure that might encourage them to develop their own gifts with further study.
Appendix A: Evaluation Forms

Student Evaluation Form

Name ____________________________

Period __________________________

1. What did you know about _________________ before starting this unit?

2. What do you feel that you have learned from your study of this culture?

3. What was your favorite part?

4. What was your least favorite part?

5. Do you see any similarities between other cultural celebrations? Describe them.
6. Has experiencing the celebration of another culture made a difference in your life. How?

7. What recommendations do you have for improving this celebration next year?

8. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, how would you rate this celebration? Why?

9. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, rate your knowledge of this culture before starting this unit?

10. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest rate your knowledge after experiencing the celebration.

Comments/ General reaction:
Committee/Staff Evaluation Form

1. On a scale of 1 -5 with 5 being the highest, How would you rate this celebration day? Why?

2. What do you consider was the best part? Worked the best?

3. What needs the greatest improvement?

4. What additions or changes would you make?

5. What do you think the students learned from the preparation and the celebration experience?

6. From your observations, what was the parent's response?
7. What was your personal response? On that day or now upon reflection.

General comments
Dear parents of incoming 8th graders;

Are you excited about the coming school year? We are. We can’t wait until September!

One of the special activities to look forward to in eighth grade at Woodcrest Christian Middle School is the opportunity to participate in three cultural festivals throughout the year.

These three festivals are connected to literature that we study in the reading class. All eighth graders will get an opportunity to learn about the Mexican, Jewish and Japanese cultures, study and experience a specific holiday important to that culture and have an opportunity to participate in a selection of drama, music, art and dance activities which center around the celebration day. (Parents will be invited to participate in these celebrations as well.)

We would like to expand these celebrations with the help of our parent supporters. Three different parent groups will be formed which will work with the teachers to help coordinate and plan the celebrations.

One group will plan a Mexican Independence celebration in September. Another will work on a Hanukkah celebration in December and the final group will plan a Japanese Children’s Day festival in May.

The scope of the involvement of the parents groups will depend on the interests and abilities of each group. One group may choose to plan a feast to go along with the celebration while another may choose to simply coordinate parent support and/or find guest speakers.

I know it is summer and you haven’t switched into “school” mode yet, but it would help us in our planning for next year if you would take the time to fill out this survey and return it to school by August 1st.

Thanks so much for your time and attention. We hope that you are having a wonderful summer and we look forward to seeing you at the orientation day in the fall.

Yours in Christ,

The Eighth Grade Teachers at WCS
Parent Response Sheet

Parents name__________________________________________

Students name________________________________________

Phone Number_________________________________________

_____ I am interested in being part of the Mexican Celebration committee

_____ I am interested in being part of the Hanukkah Celebration committee

_____ I am interested in being part of the Japanese Celebration committee

_____ I am not interested in being on a committee but I have the following resources that I would be willing to donate or provide for a celebration

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________


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Parent Orientation Letter

Dear parents;

In the weeks ahead, the eighth grade will be reading ____________________.
This selection features the culture of ____________________.

In our study of the literature, we will also be studying the people of this culture focusing on one particular celebration. Our unit will culminate in a special celebration day. We will be using drama, music, art and games to help us study this culture.

In order to make this a hands-on experience, we could use your assistance. If you have any artifacts or any areas of expertise that you would like to share with us, we would greatly appreciate it. We would also appreciate any decorations you would like to bring for our celebration or for class display.

Please indicate your response and return by ________________

____ I have __________________ that I would like to share with the class
____ I am interested in helping with the celebration committee
____ I could teach ______________________
____ I have slides, videos, etc.
____ Money, toys, books, magazines, clothes
____ Tapes, musical instruments
____ Guest speakers
We welcome guest speakers (parents relatives or friends who have traveled or lived in ________________) Here is your opportunity to share a dance or a story or......

Thanks for your interest and support

The Eighth grade teachers of WCS
Appendix B: Japanese Celebration Plans

Celebration Day- Children’s Day May 5

Why is this day important in the culture?
The day used to be called Boy’s day
It has been changed to honor all children
Celebration: a large windsock made out of paper or cloth
    is hung outside the home
Oldest has largest fish
Youngest has smallest
Dad’s fish is black
Mom’s fish is light pink
Child’s fish is light blue
The fish is sign of strength in Japan
    It is a symbol of strength, courage and determination in the streams of life

God loves children. Jesus said,” Let the Little children come to me for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 19:14)

Activity: Make posters as groups
    History of celebration
    Importance to culture
    Biblical application
    Basic facts about country

Activities on Celebration Day
    Description of Celebration Day
    Importance in culture
    Historical references
    Theater Presentations
    Choir song
    Kite Flying Contest
    Games
    Displays of Origami, Fish socks
    Potential: Tea Ceremony, feast (Parent’s responsibility)
        Japanese costumes fashion show
        Cooking demonstration by Mr. Smith
Drama

Kabuki Theater

First performed and enjoyed in the 17th century. It is primarily about the common man and his triumph over the upper class. Stage decorations are simple and serene. Costumes and makeup are elaborate and elegant. Features historical and/or domestic events.

Noh Theater

Actors wear masks. The painted facial expressions identify the characters. Mainly historical plays and legend that are based on the warrior and samurai classes. Little scenery is used and a pine tree suggest that the scene is outdoors. Actions are slow and the actors move with much grace and beauty. The actors perform the story with movements and gestures. Another group of people (the Chorus) chants the lines of the play.

Bunraku Theater

Slightly less than life size puppets. Stories are told by a narrator. These plays evolved from ancient religious ceremonies.

Activity: Each class (one of 3) research one of these theater styles, write your own play and be prepared to perform it for the celebration
Music

“Sakura”-sung by 8th grade choir on celebration day

Songs:

Colors- sung to Down by the station

Yellow is kiiro
Purple’s murasaki
I learned all the colors
From my friends in Japan
Orange is orenji
They call green “midori”
Red is aka; blue, ao.

Telephone Talk- sung to London Bridges

Moshi, moshi, anone
Anone, anone
Moshi, moshi, anone
Li tenki

Moshi, moshi, anone
Anone, anone
Moshi, moshi, anone
A so desu ne

Japanese Numbers- sung to Are you sleeping

Ichi, ni, san
Ichi, ni, san
Shi, go, roku
Shi, go, roku
Nana, hachi, kyu, ju
Nana, hachi, kyu, ju
Mo ichido; Mo ichido

Ichi, ni, san
Ichi, ni, san
Shi, go, roku
Shi, go roku
Nana, hachi, kyu, ju
Nana, hachi, kyu, ju
Oshi mai; Oshi mai

Body Parts- sung to Love Somebody- Yes I do

Tap your head and say “atama”
Tap your nose and call it “hana”
Tap your shoulder call it “kata”
Shake your fingers now and say “yubi”

Touch your neck and call it “kubi”
Touch your ear and call it “mimi”
Touch your hair and call it “kami”
Shake your fingers now and say “yubi”

Wash your face and call it “kao”
Wash your cheek and call it “hoho”
Wash your chin and call it “ago”
Shake your fingers now and say “yubi”

Music references:

Art/Artifacts

Origami:

Class Activity - To be put on display on celebration day
Also have student demonstrations for parents

Cranes

Legends state that the crane is a bird that can live as long as 1000 years. The crane is a symbol of long life in Japan. It has become a symbol of peace because Sadako believed if she could fold 1000 cranes she would recover from leukemia.

Materials:
Origami paper

Activity:
See instructions in reference book


Magic Stars:

This amazing model transforms from a ring into a star and back again. For a successful model, it is very important that you fold very neatly. If the units are not folded accurately or are joined together in a sloppy manner, the smooth sliding actions of the finished model will be hindered.

Materials:
8 square pieces of paper

Activity:
See instructions in reference book

Japanese Fish Windsocks

Materials
Brown lunch bags
String
Markers

Activity:
Decorate the bag on all four sides to look like a fish
Attach strings from each of the 4 corners of the bag
Tie 4 strings together 12" from the bag
Hang from the ceiling for a display
Variation: Hang from a dowel

Yakko Kites
These miniature kites are flown for good luck

Materials:
1 thin piece of bamboo 6 3/4 x 1/4
1 thin piece of bamboo 5 3/4 x 1/4
Paper
Glue
Paper tail
Kite string
Small label

Activity:
Make a Yakko kite in class
On celebration day, have a kite flying contest to see whose kite flies
the highest, longest, quickest up and most maneuverable

For instructions see reference:

Japanese Book

Bring in Mr. Smith as a reference person
Write words for numbers, colors, common expression in Japanese book

Book Instructions:

Material:
- Paper
- Scissors

Activity:
- Fold paper in half lengthwise
- Fold paper twice in the opposite direction
- Unfold
- Fold in half crosswise and crease
- Hold with fold on top of paper
- Using scissors cut from the fold to the intersection of the fold lines
- Holding two fold edges with your hands, gently pull apart until they form a straight line
- Fold the paper into a book

Number Painting

Materials:
- Black tempera paint
- Fine paint brushes
- White paper
- Number worksheet

Activity:
- Practice copying numbers on number worksheet
- Use white paper to paint either your birthday, phone number or zip code
- Display on board

Chopstick Painting

Materials:
- Tempra paint
- One pair of chopsticks per student
- Thin, fine point paintbrushes
- Copies of Japanese designs

Activity:
- Make rough draft of design
- Try painting on blank chopsticks
- Keep wrapper on lower half to keep clean
- Spray with lacquer
Games

Hobble Race

Materials:
- Ribbon

Activity:
- Line up in two teams
- Tie a bow around the knees of the first person in line
- Mark a finish line some distance away
- At a given signal, both players hobble up to and cross over the line
- After crossing the line, they remove the bow and run back
- The next person ties the bow around his/her knees and continues
- The first team to finish all players wins

Baseball Card Throw

Materials:
- Baseball cards
- Circle drawn on ground

Activity:
- Try to see who is best at throwing baseball cards on the ground
- Attempt to turn your opponents cards over with your throw
- You may even knock them out of the circle

Sumo Wrestling

Sumo wrestling is a popular sport in Japan. Sumo wrestlers are huge men who stand over 6 feet tall and weighs over 300 pounds.

A match is lost by the wrestler who steps out of the ring or touches the floor of the ring with anything but the soles of his feet.

It is an extremely difficult sport that requires a great amount of strength. Sumo wrestlers train long and hard hours. They follow a special diet which helps them gain weight. Sumo wrestlers in Japan are viewed as superheroes.
Materials:
- XXXXL mens long underwear
- Balloons
- Circle painted on field

Activity:
- Each class should choose two sumo wrestlers
- Each class needs to blow up the balloons
- Then they should stuff them inside the long underwear of their wrestler
- Contestants must force opponent out of the ring
- Contestant must not touch the ground with anything but soles of feet
- Winners will vie for grade level champion

Funnel Race

Materials:
- Funnel made out of poster board and scarf
- Top should be diameter of face
- Bottom should be diameter of silver dollar
- Player should not be able to see out the sides
- Scarf attaches funnel to players head
- Soccer ball

Activity:
- Tie funnels on head of first student in line
- On signal, the first person dribbles the ball down to designated line
- They take off funnel and dribble back
- Continue on as the funnel is tied on next person in line
- First team finished wins

Nippon These

Materials:
- 3x5 cards
- Books and brochures on Japan
- Colored marker

Activity:
- In Japan this method is used to memorize poetry
- Write questions about Japan on one 3x5 card
- Write the answer on another card
- Decorate tops of card with simple identical design
Objective:
1. All card are face down
2. Select two cards, put them back if they do not match
3. If they match, keep pair
4. Player with most pairs at end of game wins

Gomoko

Materials:
Graph paper
Two colored markers or beans

Activity:
A player puts a marker on an intersection of 2 lines
The next player counters with their marker
Object of the game is to get five in a row
Go- means five
Moku- intersection
Dance

Scarf Dances:

Materials:
- Scarves
- Drums
- Japanese music

Activity:
- Make drums out of empty coffee cans
- Listen to Japanese music

With your scarf, pretend you are a tree
  - A waterfall
  - A river
Appendix C: Mexican Celebration Plans

Celebration Day- Dia de la Independencia - September 16

Mexico's independence from Spain is cause for celebration. This day marks the beginning of Miguel Hidalgo's War of Independence in 1810. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (El Grito) with his famous call.

"Viva La Independencia! Viva Mexico."

Independence Day festivities begin on the night of September 15. At 11:00 p.m. the President give "El Grito" (Viva La Independencia) from a balcony.
The people below repeat his words. A bell is rung.
Fireworks are set off and flags and pinwheels are waved.

On September 16th there is a large parade.
School children and adults march.
Cowboys (charros) ride on horses.
Cars decorated with crepe paper flowers carry people dressed as the heroes of the Revolution.

Freedom is a gift beyond measure. In the book, the pearl was a gift beyond measure. Biblically, the kingdom of God is likened to a pearl of great value. In Matthew 13:45-46, the parable describes a merchant that sold all that he had to buy this pearl that represented the kingdom of God.

Activity: Make posters as groups
- History of celebration
- Importance to culture
- Biblical application
- Basic facts about country
Activities on Celebration Day

- Description of celebration
- Importance in Culture
- Parade of Revolution
- Flannelgraph Stories
- Marionette Performances
- Songs
- Soccer Tournament
- Ole Tournament
- Band- La Bamba
- Mexican Hat Dance
- Pinata
- Potential: Fiesta, Dance demonstrations
Drama

“The Pearl” is a parable.

Activity:
- Develop your own parable
- Make a flannelgraph version of your parable
- Be prepared to present it for the celebration
  (The figures must be large enough to be seen in the M.P. Room.)

Alternate activity:
- Pick a scene from “The Pearl”
- Write dialogue for it and be ready to present it on the celebration

Dramatize a scene from the Mexican Revolution

Using marionettes develop a play about the Mexican Revolution
Be prepared to share it for the celebration.
Music

Band - Learn and perform La Bamba

Songs:

Yo Cuento (I am counting) - sung to Three Blind Mice

Uno, dos, tres
(Echo)
Cuatro, cinco, seis
(Echo)
Siete, ocho, nueve, diez
(Echo)
Yo cuento.

The Elephant Song - counting song

Un elefante se balanceaba
Sobre la tela de una arana
Como vela que resistía
Fue a llamar a otro elefante.

Dos elefante se balanceaban
Sobre la tela de una arana
Como velan que resistia
Fueron a llamar a otro elefante.

(Repeat until ten)
(Tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez)

(Translation)
One elephant was balancing on a spider web.
Because it seemed so strong, they called another elephant.

Ten elephants were balancing on a spider web.
Because it seemed so strong, they called another elephant.
Bop! (The spider web breaks.)
Class Song

Choose a familiar song melody
Write lyrics to one of the three songs in the Pearl

The Song of the Family
This is a song of happiness- of being whole
Being together in harmony with the family

The Song of Evil
This is a song of disruption
Of the breaking of happiness

The Song of the Pearl That Might Be
The pearl represents happiness and good

La Rueda de San Miguel

To the circle of San Miguel
All bring their box of honey, until it’s ripe, until it’s ripe
May ____________, the donkey, turn around.

Ah la rueda de San Miguel, San Miguel, San Miguel
Todos traen su caja de miel
a lo maduro, a lo maduro
Que se volree ____________ de burro.

Reference for music:
Art/Artifacts

Guiros:
Materials:
- 12 oz juice cans
- Corrugated cardboard
- Paint

Activity:
- Cut cardboard to fit around juice cans
- Glue to cans
- Paint
- When dry, use a pencil to scrape the guiro rhythmically
  (Guiros must be very dry before they can be played)

Maracas:
Materials:
- Egg cups, spice jars or pudding cups
- Popsicle sticks
- Dry beans or popcorn
- Newspaper strips
- Liquid starch
- Tempra paint
- Spray lacquer

Activity:
- Place beans in one cup
- Use masking tape to hold the two cups together
- Cut slit for craft stick handle
- Cover cups with several layers of paper mache
- Paint as desired
Pinata

The tradition originated in Italy - used pots. The pinata symbolizes evil while children are good. When a child breaks a Pinata - good triumphs over evil.

Materials:

- ½ inch strips of newspaper
- Wheat paste or liquid starch
- Large Balloon
- Paper cups
- Strong rope
- Scissors
- Tempera paint/brushes
- Tissue paper, feathers, crepe paper

Activity:

Inflate and tie a large balloon
Dip strips in paste and apply to balloon - 3 layers
Add paper cups and wadded newspaper for legs, neck and head.
Secure with strips. Let dry
Cut an opening in the bottom of Pinata - pop balloon
Decorate and paint pinata
Fill cavity with candy, small toys and goodies
Secure with tape
Secure a rope to the top of the pinata with strips of tissue paper

Eyes of God - “ojo de dios”

God’s eyes or ojo de dios are traditionally woven on bamboo frames using colored yarn. They are often associated with protection. Fathers often start weaving when a child is born and add onto it for the first five years of the child’s life.

Materials:

- Colored yarn
- Popsicle sticks
Activity

Start winding the yarn behind the stick
Bring it completely around the stick
Bring it around the next sick
Bring it completely around the stick
Continue on in this same pattern.

Add another color by tying it onto the first piece of yarn

Spanish Word Book

Materials:
- Paper

Activity:
(For instructions for book see Japanese celebration)
Cut picture out of magazines
Find examples of numbers, colors, animals, common expressions
Write the Spanish words in the books under the pictures.
Bring in Spanish teacher as a resource

Clay Pots

Materials:
- Modeling clay
- Tempura paint
- Brushes
- Spray lacquer

Activity:
Roll clay into tennis ball size
Poke thumb into ball
Pinch the sides into shape
Use toothpicks to etch geometric designs in the clay
Air dry for 3-7 days
Paint with a reddish brown tempura to give an earthy tone
When dry, add designs with tempura designs
Seal the colors with lacquer
Yarn Painting - "ofrendas"

Materials:
- white glue
- Poster board
- Thick colored yarn
- Scissors

Activity:
- Draw the outline of an animal, flower, fruit or vegetable on the paper
- Go around the outline with a line of glue
- Press the yarn into the glue
- Continue gluing down the yarn working towards the center
- Add new colors for details

Lacquerware Plate

Materials:
- Paper plates
- Black tempura
- Crayons
- Brushes
- Glue and water mixture

Activity
- Use crayons to create a large flower design in the center
- Color brightly pressing hard to build a thick layer of wax
- Paint the entire plate with black tempura including design
- When dry add a lacquer like finish by applying a coat of glue mixed with water
Bark Paper Painting

In Mexico, designs are painted on bark peeled from the trees. Using water and smooth stones, they pound the bark until it is very thin and then paint designs related to nature on them.

Materials:
- Brown grocery sacks
- Black crayons
- Bright tempra pains
- Brushes

Activity:
- Choose an image from nature that can be found in Mexico
- Crumble and straighten the brown paper several times to soften
- Sketch the image on the paper
- Go over sketch with black crayon
- Press hard to leave a wide outline
- Fill in the outline with bright paints
- Add tiny white dots of paint around the outside of the object
Games

Ole!

Materials:
- 2 sets of Spanish number cards
- Cards with Mexican flag
- Cards with “Mexico” written on it
- 1 Mexican bean bowl

Activity: 4 players
- Place the Mexican bean bowl in the center
- Shuffle the Spanish cards and place them face down next to bowl
- Give one cup to each player
- Players take turns drawing cards from the center
- Player must read aloud the number and take number of beans
- Beans are placed in players cup
- If player draws the Mexican flag, all players shout Ole!
- Five beans are removed from players cup and put in main bowl
- If “Mexico” card comes up
- All players shout Ole!
- Three beans must be given to each game player from players cup
- After all cards have been used, winner is one with most beans

Colores:

Materials:
- Variety of colored ribbons

Activity:
- Relay race
- One student is designated as the “governor”
- One student is designated as the “revolutionary”
- Both students take turns calling name of colors in Spanish
- Each student has a colored ribbon
- When their color is called, they try to run past the line of safety
- The governor and the revolutionary take turns calling out colors
- Winner is one who catches most at end of game
La Loteria

Materials:
- Popcorn kernels or beans
- Scissors
- Tape
- La Loteria boards
- Caller cards

Activity:
- Students prepare La Loteria boards using words in their Spanish books
- Teacher prepares a list of hints or poems to go with these words
- Play game by reading a hint/poem
- Players place a bean on the word that matches the hint
- First one with three in a row wins

Soccer

Materials:
- Soccer field
- Soccer ball

Activity:
- Organize a soccer tournament
- Parents could be invited to participate
- Teams - class related
Variation: Pyramid Soccer

Materials:
- Soccer ball
- 3-5 plastic bottles

Activity:
- Arrange the bottles in a pyramid in the middle of a circle
- Arrange students around outside of circle
- The "goalie" must defend the pyramid
- The students outside the circle kick the ball into the circle
- The one who knocks down the pyramid becomes the new goalie
Dance

Mexican Hat Dance

Materials:
Sombreros

Activity:
Students place hats in front of them on the ground
Hands on hips
Students hop from one foot to another

Right heel, left heel, right heel
Left, right, left
Right heel, left heel, right heel
Left, right, left

Now join hands with neighbor and circle three times to the right
Switch directions and circle three times to the left

Start over at beginning
End with shout of Ole!

The Rueda de San Miguel

Song: La Rueda de San Miguel

To the circle of San Miguel
All bring their box of honey, until it’s ripe, until it’s ripe
May ____________, the donkey, turn around.

Ah la rueda de San Miguel, San Miguel, San Miguel
Todos traen su caja de miel
a lo maduro, a lo maduro
Que se volree ___________ de burro.
Activity:

This is a simple dance.
Students sing the words to the song as they move around the circle.
In the last line, the student whose name is called out is the donkey.
They must drop hands, turn outward and dance the next dance backwards.
Eventually, everyone will face outside
Appendix D: Jewish Celebration Plans

Celebration Day - Hanukkah

Hanukkah comes in December. The Greek rulers tried to destroy Israel. The Jews fought their enemy for three years and won. There was only enough oil left to keep the lights burning in the temple for one more day. The miracle was that the light burned for eight days and nights giving the Jews time to prepare more oil.

In the New Testament, Jesus was dedicated at the temple during this feast. At His dedication, Simeon said,"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou has prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke 2:29-32)

Hanukkah is also called the Festival of Lights. It lasts eighth days. It commemorates not only the triumph of the Maccabees over the great army of the Syrian King Antiochus IV in 165 B.C., but also the universal message that all people have the right to be free.

Activity: Make posters as groups
Topics include:
- History of celebration
- Importance to culture
- Biblical application
- Basic facts about country

(Poster to be displayed on celebration day)

Activities on Celebration Day
- Description of Celebration
- Importance in culture
- Drama Presentations
- Choir- Havah Nagilah
- Games
- Dance
- Art display: Menorahs, Star of David, Menorah designs, books
- Potential activities - Latkes, Menorah ceremony, guest speaker
Drama

Each class pick a scene from the play "The Diary of Anne Frank"
Practice and be ready to perform it on the celebration day

Alternate: Write and perform a drama based on the story of Hanukkah.
Characters should include:
Mattathias - a Kohein who started the Maccabees
Judah- Mattathias' son who led the Maccabees
Antiochus IV- emperor of Syria
Syrian army members
Jews who want to be like the Greeks
Jews who want to be Jewish
Maccabees

Make sure to tell the story of what happened and why.
Music

Choir- Learn Havah Nagilah

Songs:

Hanukkah Song
Oh, Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah,
Come light the menorah!
Let’s have a party, we’ll all dance the hora.
Gather ‘round the table,
We’ll give you a treat,
A dreidel to play with, and latkes to eat.
And while we are playing,
The candles are burning low.

One for each night,
They shed a sweet light,
To remind us of days long ago.

One for each night,
They shed a sweet light,
To remind us of days long ago.

Driedel Song
I have a little dreidel
I made it out of clay
And when it’s dry and ready
Then dreidel I shall play
Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel
I made it out of clay
Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel
Now dreidel I shall play

It has a lovely body
With legs so short and thin;
And when it is all tired
It drops and then I win.
Oh dreidel,dreidel,dreidel,
With legs so short and thin;
Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel,
It drops and then I win.
My dreidel’s always playful,
It loves to dance and spin;
A happy game of dreidel-
Come play, now let’s begin.
Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel,
It loves to dance and spin;
Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel,
Come play, now let’s begin.

Hinei Ma Tov
Hinei ma tov u mam a im
Shevet achim gam yachad
Hinei ma tov u manaim
Shevet achim gam yachad

Hinei ma tov, Hinei ma tov
Lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai

Hinei ma tov, Hinei ma tov
Lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai

Behold how good and how pleasant it is
for brothers to dwell together
Behold how good and how pleasant it is
for brothers to dwell together

In unity, in unity
Lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai
In unity, in unity
Lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai, lai

Rock of Ages: Maoz Tzur
Rock of Ages let our song
Praise Thy saving power;
Thou amidst the raging foes
Wast our sheltring tower.
Furious they assailed us,
But Thine arm availed us,
And Thy word broke their sword
When our own strength failed us.
And Thy word broke their sword
When our own strength failed us.
Kindling new the holy lamps,
Priest approved in suffering
Purified the nation’s shrine
Brought to God their offering.
And His courts surrounding,
Hear in joy abounding,
Happy throngs singing songs,
With a mighty sounding.
Happy throngs singing songs,
With a mighty sounding.

Children of the martyr race
Whether free or fettered,
Wake the echoes of the songs
Where ye may be scattered.
Yours the message cheering,
That the time is nearing,
Which will see all men free,
Tyrants disappearing.
Which will see all men free,
Tyrants disappearing.

Reference for musical notation:
Art/Artifacts

Menorah Art Design- Seed Art Design

Materials:
- Selection of seeds, beans, rice etc
- Board or heavy posterboard
- Glue

Activity:
- Draw a simple design of a menorah on your board
- Fill in sections with different kinds of seeds
- Glue to board

Star of David Mobile

Materials
- Glue
- Scissors/ hole punch
- String
- Glitter
- Two contrasting colors of construction paper

Activity:
- Make two triangles out of each color of construction paper.
- Fold the triangles in half
- Cut out the center of each triangle leaving an outline of ½"
- Glue two triangles together (choice of color combinations)
  (One should point up and one point down)
- Repeat with second set of triangles
- Glue two stars together at top and bottom points
- When dry, spread out the points of the triangles
- Punch hole in top and hang with string.
Hebrew Books

Materials
Paper
Make folded books (See Japanese celebration instructions)

Activity:
Bring in Hebrew teacher from the high school language classes
Since the books read from front to back, start at the back
Copy and learn the numbers and letters of the alphabet
Write them from right to left in the book
Remember the first page is actually the last.

Dreidels

Materials:
Egg cartons
Small pencils

Activity:
Cut egg cartons into separate sections
Draw Hebrew letters ג, ח, ט and ו on sides of egg section
Punch hole in bottom of egg carton section
Stick a pencil through the hole
Spin the dreidel and begin play

Menorahs

Materials:
Marshmallows
Candles
Frosting
Poster Board

Activity: Make menorah using marshmallows
Glue nine marshmallows in a row
Glue the 10th marshmallow on top of the middle one
This represents the shammash or servant candle
Stick candles into marshmallows
Dreidel Game

Materials:
- Dreidels
- Candy or beans for counters

Game: The dreidel is a four-sided spinning top
- The letters written on the side of the dreidel are Hebrew for "A Great Miracle Happened There"
- Each symbol represents a different instruction for the game
  - If it lands on ה the player receives half of the kitty
  - If it lands on כ the player receives the whole kitty
  - If it lands on ג the player gets nothing
  - If it lands on פ the player must add one to the kitty

Variation: Instead of using the beans or candy, points are tallied.
- פ = 300 points
- כ = 50 points
- ג = 3 points
- ה = 5 points

Pin the Shammash on the Menorrah

Materials:
- Hanukkah banner with menorah on it
- Shammash flames

Activity:
- Blindfold student and turn several times
- Student attempts to put flame on shammash candle on banner
Card Games:

Materials:
- Playing cards
  (Optional - use cards with Hebrew letters on it)

Activity:
- Pass out cards evenly to players
- Total value wins
  (If using Hebrew letters give a certain value to each letter)

Target Toss

Materials:
- Egg carton
- Pennies or beans

Activity:
- Write a number from 1-12 inside each of the egg cups
- Each player gets six “arrows” (beans) to throw at the target
- Whoever gets 50 points first is the winner

Trees

Materials:
- Pencils
- Paper

Activity:
- Choose a word associated with Hanukkah (i.e. Maccabee)
- See how many other words can be formed using the letters
- Winner is one who finds the most
  (Can be played as a team activity)

Maccabee Line-up

Materials:
- Playing boards
  (Square pieces of paper (7 ½" x 7 ½")
  (1 ½ " squares on the paper- 5 down and 5 across)
- Pennies, beans or colored markers (designated as “Maccabees”)
Activity:
For each game, 10 “Maccabees” are needed
Five of one color and five of another color
Each player takes his five Maccabees and places them on the board
The object is to get all five of your color in a row
You also do not want your opponent to win
Players take turns moving one marker at a time until one has 5 in a row
Moves may be forward, backward, sideways or kitty cornered
You may not jump another player
Five in a row may be in a straight line or across the board diagonally

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X  
X  
X O
O O X O O
    X
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Dance

Jewish Folk Dance: The Hora

Materials: Dance music included on CD.

Instructions:
Gather in a circle
All participants place their hands on the shoulders of the neighbors
Move around circle with following steps:
1. Step right with your right foot
2. Put your left foot behind your right foot
3. Step right again with your right foot
4. Now hop on your right foot
5. Then step left with your left foot
6. Now hop on your left foot
Repeat these steps over and over then switch directions
Start with the left foot and go the other way

Once the circle is turning, one or two can enter the center of the circle
Have them do their own special dance while everyone dances around them
Switch places in the middle so several people get a chance
Appendix E: Teacher Resource Material


Weaver, Andrew M. And Jackie G. Weaver. (1994, Spring). Integrating Middle School Social Studies Through the Use of a Cultural Approach. Current Issues in Middle Level Education, 3, 4-10.
