Culture Quilt
Elementary

Historic Homes • Gardens • Artifacts • Costumed Crafts People
Boat Tours • Gift Shop • Restaurant
Standards

Standards as developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Available online at http://www.vermilionville.org/vermilionville/educate/lesson-plans.

Grade 3
Social Studies
Louisiana and United States History
- GLE #54: Describe the importance of events and ideas significant to Louisiana’s development (H-1C-E1)
- GLE #57: Identify cultural elements that have contributed to our state heritage (e.g. Mardi Gras, Cajun/Creole cooking) (H-1C-E4)

English Language Arts
- CCSS.ELA.literacy.W.3.c: Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.

Grade 4
Social Studies
Physical and Human Systems
- GLE #13: Explain and compare the cultural identities of various U.S. regions and how a region is influenced by past events and the heritage of its people (G-1C-E4)

Louisiana and United States History
- GLE #62: Identify and explain cultural elements that have contributed to our national heritage (H-1C-E4)

Objective

1. Apply knowledge of different aspects of Louisiana culture to create a class quilt showing ways that our culture has unified us as a whole through traditions in food and festivals.

Pre-Visit Activity

Teachers. We have made two introduction documents available to you on our website – a word document as well as a PowerPoint with pictures depicting the cultures that we represent. Please take some time to review these two documents with your class prior to your visit here. You can access them here, by clicking on
- Introduction to Vermilionville and
- Vermilionville PowerPoint
Anchor Lesson

Materials needed: crawfish boil supplies, toy instruments (accordion, frottoir, fiddle, triangle), radio or iPhone for music, Zydeco Bounce song/line dance steps, card stock with holes punched in them, pieces of yarn, markers, crayons, quilt (there are some quilts in the Beau Bassin house here at Vermilionville for you to show your students)

YouTube for Zydeco Bounce: Zydeco Bounce dance steps

As students enter the Beau Bassin house, they will gather around the quilting table. Tell students that quilt making is an Acadian tradition, one that brought Acadian women together. Given the fact that quilt making is a long, complex task, group quilting can shorten the length of time needed to complete a quilt. Generally, most group work is done in the last stage of quilt making in which the layers of the quilt are stitched (quilted) together. In the past, most Louisiana women participated in group quilting on occasion although today they usually make their quilts alone.

It is said that quilts were hung on porches as a way of communicating. It could be to announce a birth, a death, a wedding, or any other important message. There is actually no written documentation on this. However, it does not mean it did not happen. It is part of the oral tradition and cannot be discounted as false because there is no written account of it.

Ask students if they can think of any other Louisiana traditions that bring people together today.

Students should answer with things such as food, festivals, religion, music, etc.

Now, students will be split into two groups (if you have more than one teacher accompanying the group – if you do not, keep the group together and do the activities back to back). One group will learn about how Louisiana foods bring people together. The other group will learn about festivals in Louisiana that unify people of all cultures.

Food Group
Students will learn about how Louisiana foods unify people by participating in a simulation of a crawfish boil. A discussion will follow to show that indeed a crawfish boil does unify people through culture and traditions.

The teacher will ask: does anyone know some Louisiana foods that might bring people together or that your family eats together?

Students should offer various types of Louisiana foods that they have eaten and associate with Louisiana.

Then, the teacher will give a brief history/description about crawfish boils.

The local Native Americans are credited with harvesting and eating crawfish before the Acadians arrived in Louisiana. The Natives would bait reeds, stick them in the water, and then pick up the crawfish that were attached to the bait. This is how the Natives would scoop up the crawfish. By the 1930s, they started using nets to catch crawfish and in the 1950s, the crawfish trap was invented. The tradition of crawfish boils originated in poor Acadian communities. Today, crawfish season takes place from approximately late January until mid-May. Cooking techniques, recipes, and traditions are passed down from generation to generation. Locals still hold traditional crawfish boils, where family and friends gather to feast on pounds of crawfish.
Give plastic crawfish to students so they can throw them in the pot. The teacher will then allow students to act like they are pouring seasoning and crab boil into the pot. Let them take turn stirring the pot.

As the pot of crawfish cooks, the teacher will prompt students to brainstorm other Louisiana food traditions that bring people together and they will draw those on their card stock to make their collective quilt (see Patch Making Activity below).

**Festival Group**

Students will learn about the Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival (Opelousas), how it brings people together, and they will also learn a dance.

The teacher will ask if students have ever been to any festivals in Louisiana. Chances are students have been to one or two and they should then talk about their experiences. The teacher will continue with a short description of the Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival.

**The Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival**

In the olden days, Creole communities would gather at harvest time to complete a task. When a family had a task, everyone would take part in the work. When the work was done, people would celebrate and entertain themselves. Music would be played with traditional Creole instruments such as scrub boards (frottoirs), spoons, fiddles, triangles, and accordions. Families would charge 10 cents for people to come and drink homemade beer and eat gumbo. Over the years, one of those celebrations has turned into the Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival in Opelousas to remind us where we came from and to appreciate our past.

The teacher will show students some toy instruments (fiddle, accordion, triangle, frottoir) and pass them around so the students can try playing with them.

Then, the teacher will teach a line dance called the **Zydeco Bounce**. At the end of the dance lesson, the whole class will be able to dance together to the music (on the iPhone or on CD).

Finally, students will discuss other festivals that they may have attended in the past and make their own patch for the collective quilt (see Patch Making Activity below).

**Patch Making Activity**

After students have learned about either Louisiana foods and/or Louisiana festivals, they will create a patch depicting one thing they learned in their group. On the back of their patch, they will write their name, what their drawing represents, and how that tradition brings people together.

If your class was split into two groups (food and festival), each student will have one patch, depicting either a food or a festival. At this time, you would pair students together (one student from the food group and one student from the festival group) for them to share what they learned in their group, and what their patch represents.

If your class was one big group, each student will have two patches. You can make one big quilt or two smaller quilts.

Now is time to sew your quilt. Use the yarn, thread it into the patch holes, and tie your class quilt together. Bring it back to school and hang it for everybody to see what was learned during the Vermilionville field trip.

Hopefully, the students will see how well they worked together to make the quilt. It represents their class being unified through an Acadian tradition.

Ask questions such as:
• Today, we learned that quilting brought people together. Who can tell me one reason why women gathered to make quilts? (because it was a long process)
• Today, quilt making is not really a tradition anymore. What are some Louisiana traditions that we still see today that bring Louisianans together? (food such as crawfish boils, king cake parties, gumbo; festivals such as Rice Festival, Festivals Acadiens et Creoles, Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival).

Post-Visit Activity

Materials needed: computer for research, mini poster, art supplies

The students will create a new Louisiana festival to celebrate an aspect of Louisiana culture. They will do this in small groups. The students will research current festivals using the internet. Google “Louisiana Festival Guide” and you will come across several good sources about Louisiana festivals.

The students will:
• Research current fairs and festivals
• Brainstorm and come up with an idea to celebrate
• Plan a location and time of year for their festival
• Create a list of festival events
• Tell what type of foods will be served at their festival
• Create a logo for their festival
• Write a paragraph describing how their festival contains cultural elements and how it brings people together
• Create a mini poster for their festival including all of the different aspects of their festival

Evaluation

Students will show knowledge of Louisiana foods and festival traditions by displaying what they learned on a quilt patch by drawing a picture and writing a fact that they learned in their groups.

Differentiation of Instruction

Struggling learners will be assisted by the teachers when tying their quilt patches together.

Advanced learners will have the option of writing more than one fact that they learned in their group instruction.

Tactile learners and visual learners will benefit from drawing a picture to represent what they learned.

Social learners will benefit from discussing what they learned with a partner.