Mardi Gras 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 2
Standard 1 – Historical Thinking Skills
• GLE 2.1.4: Explain reasons for local, state, and national celebrations, cultural events, and traditions and their significance

Grade 3
Physical and Human Systems
• GLE #16: Identify and compare customs, celebrations, and traditions of various cultural groups in Louisiana (G-1C-E4)

Louisiana and United States History
• GLE #57: Identify cultural elements that have contributed to our state heritage (e.g. Mardi Gras, Cajun/Creole cooking) (H-1C-E4)

Objectives

1. Following a whole class discussion of the characteristics of traditional Cajun Mardi Gras, students will demonstrate their understanding of the Cajun Mardi Gras costumes by creating a mask.

2. After participating in traditional Cajun Mardi Gras activities, students will write a journal entry explaining the characteristics of traditional Cajun Mardi Gras making sure to compare and contrast to the Mardi Gras they personally experience today.

Information

The traditional Mardi Gras costumes hid the identities of the participants and mocked the upper class. The hat is called the capuchon. The shirts and pants are made by sewing together pieces of cloth in a patchwork style.

The capitaine rides the horse in the front of the group and asks permission for the group to step onto property to play, dance, and beg for food.

The chickens are released on the approved property and are chased by the Mardi Gras participants.

They riders end their day at a designated spot where they cook a gumbo using the various items they collected along their route, such as chickens, rice, and onions.

In the few weeks leading to Mardi Gras, you can book a capuchon workshop for $4/student and also a king cake cooking demonstration for $3.50/student. Email tours@BayouVermilionDistrict.org for more details.
Pre-Visit Activity:

Materials Needed: Mardi Gras word search (document #1)

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

Students will complete a word search based around Mardi Gras terms. The teacher will then introduce information about each of these terms in order to provide background knowledge for the anchor lesson.

Anchor Lesson:

Materials Needed: Pre-cut masks, tape, feathers, crayons, scrap construction paper, pre-cut hats from poster board, clear packing tape, crepe paper, fabric, yarn, 4 laminated photos, La Danse de Mardi Gras (CD/music or on YouTube)

Introduction
Students will participate in a discussion about their Mardi Gras experiences prompted by a Cajun Mardi Gras song, La Danse de Mardi Gras (play song in the background). The teacher will ask the students to share their thoughts about the song and their experiences with Mardi Gras. They can compare and contrast different students’ experiences.

Cajun Mardi Gras Photo Activity
First, the teacher will have to make some copies of the traditional Cajun Mardi Gras pictures and laminate them for future use. Make enough copies for each student to have one picture.

The students will each receive a laminated photo of something that relates to the traditional Cajun Mardi Gras, such as photos of the costumes, horses, chickens, and gumbo. The teacher will ask students who have a specific photo to raise it in the air for others to see. The teacher will then ask how this item may be related to the traditional Cajun Mardi Gras or the similar carnival, Courir de Mardi Gras that is celebrated today. After the students present their responses, the teacher will present information about how each item is used during the carnival.

Students will create a Mardi Gras mask and/or a capuchon using their new found knowledge about the traditional costumes and colors.

The students will each receive a blank pre-cut mask. They will be provided with art materials, such as colors, feathers, scraps of paper, and tape. They will use these items to decorate their mask to hide their identity.
Post-Visit Activity:

Materials Needed: student journals, coloring sheet (document #2)

Each student will write a journal entry explaining the characteristics of the traditional Cajun Mardi Gras. They will compare and contrast the traditional Mardi Gras to the style of Mardi Gras they personally celebrate today.

Students will complete a Cajun Mardi Gras Coloring Sheet.

Evaluation:

During the lesson, the student should be able to identify his/her Mardi Gras photo and how each item relates to Cajun Mardi Gras. Students should further be able to compare and contrast between Cajun Mardi Gras and the style of Mardi Gras they personally celebrate.

Differentiation of Instruction:

**ESL (English as a Second Language)**
- ESL students will be paired with an English-speaking student as a buddy throughout the activity in order to assist him when needed.
- The teacher will provide numerous visuals throughout the lesson’s activities in order to eliminate the possibility of misconceptions due to one’s difficulty with the English language.
- The teacher will provide the ESL student with simple instructions that will be repeated and rephrased numerous times.

**Motor/Physically Impaired Student (using a wheelchair):**
- The student will be provided with a wheelchair accessible work station in which he or she will have ample amount of table space to work.
- The student will be provided with a partner in case of an incident in which he or she may need help, such as if something may be out of reach. This is used as a peer-buddy system.
- All of the materials necessary for an activity will be placed in arm’s length of the student so he/she will be able to easily access them.
Resources for Teachers:

*Dance for a Chicken* documentary  
http://www.folkstreams.net/film.168

*Dance for a Chicken* article  
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/creole_art_dance_chicken.html

Mardi Gras word search puzzle  
http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/mardi_gras_word_search.pdf

Photograph is by Matthew Sackmann. Used with his permission.
Document #1: Mardi Gras Word Search (words only)

Words for Puzzle

Carnival: Another word used around the world for the Mardi Gras celebration

Music: Mardi Gras has many celebratory songs such as “La Danse De Mardi Gras”

Dancing: One of the traditions to celebrate Mardi Gras

Capuchon: Hat worn during the Mardi Gras celebration

Parade: Different groups called Krewes parade around town to celebrate Mardi Gras

Mask: Part of the traditional Mardi Gras costume

Tuesday: Mardi Gras takes place on “Fat Tuesday”

Horse: Traditionally, Mardi Gras riders used horses to go from house to house

Capitaine: the front rider that asks permission to home owner to enter his property

Chicken: Chasing the chickens is part of a traditional Mardi Gras celebration

Gumbo: After a long day chasing the chickens, people gather and cook a gumbo

Rice: Another ingredient needed for the traditional Mardi Gras celebration

Mardi Gras: French for Fat Tuesday
Bowl of chicken & sausage gumbo

Chicken during the *Courir de Mardi Gras*, Vermilionville, 2014
Mardi-Gras participating in the annual Courir de Mardi Gras, sporting their masks and capuchons, Vermilionville, 2014

Horse during a traditional Courir de Mardi Gras
COURIR MARDI GRAS