

Pre-Visit Packet

Family Journeys: The Chinese American Experience **Grades K-8**

Program Overview

A trained museum educator will lead your students in an interactive hour-long program in the permanent gallery. The program includes directed discussions, exploration of the permanent exhibit and hands-on activities to allow students to experience history from original sources. Students will learn about successive waves of Chinese immigrants, their motivations for coming, where they settled, how they were treated, how they adapted to their new lives, how they defined their cultural identity and how they shaped American society.

Concepts/Themes covered in this program:

Family, Community, Immigration, Government, Citizenship, Identity, Culture, Empathy, Change.

Curriculum Connections:

The program is tailored to the grade level and curriculum goals of your students.

For **Grades K-3**, this program is designed to complement the following New York City social studies learning standards:

- ❖ My family and Other Families, Now and Long Ago
- ❖ My Community and Other United States Communities
- ❖ Communities Around the World—Learning about People and Places

For **Grades 4-6**:

- ❖ Local History and Government
- ❖ The United States

For **Grades 7-8**:

- ❖ The United States and New York State History, Geography, Economy and Government from 1850 to the Present.

Suggested Pre-Visit Activity 1

Our Families' Immigration Stories Map

Aim: To introduce the concept of immigration and make connections to your own family's immigration story.

Materials: Large map of the world, index cards, yarn, thumbtacks, colored pencils or markers.

1. Introduce the concept of immigration: people from all over the world leave their homes to make a better home in another country. Encourage students to talk about their own experiences. Guiding Questions: *What are some places your family is from? What are some reasons your family might have immigrated to America?*
2. Have students draw a self-portrait on an index card (for large classes, cut the cards in half). Have students staple the card on the world map (preferably in the oceans where their cards will not cover too many countries). Have them locate the countries of their origin on the map.
3. Using a piece of yarn and a thumbtack, connect the student's card to the country(ies) of his dad's/guardian's origin. Repeat with a different piece(s) of colored yarn to mom's/guardian's country(ies) of origin. Repeat with grandparents and great-grandparents.
4. Have the class notice what countries their families are from and see that America is shaped by many immigrant groups both past and present.
5. *Extension:* Have students interview a close relative about his/her life history in order to gain a better understanding of their family's backgrounds.

Suggested Pre-Visit Activity 2

Stories from Personal Objects

Aim: To relate our cultural and personal identity to our personal belongings.

Materials: Teacher's own personal objects

1. Tell the students that you can learn about a person's identity, family, home, community, history, culture and experience by examining a person's belongings. Point out that most of the earliest immigrants to America never left home and didn't know much about their new homes. They also couldn't bring everything they owned. Most of the immigrants carried the few possessions they could fit into their suitcases.
2. Guiding questions: *If you had to leave your home in search of a better life in a new place and you could only bring one carry-on suitcase with you, what kind of things would you bring?*
3. Teacher brings in a few objects of importance and explains how they connect to his/her own cultural and personal identity.
4. Have students write down a list of five items and explain why they chose to pack each item.
5. *Extension:* Have students bring in a few objects that are significant to them and do a show-and-tell, or have them write a brief blurb about each object and display them around the room in a classroom simulation of a museum gallery.

Suggested Pre-Visit Activity 3

My Customs and Traditions

Aim: To explore our own customs and traditions and understand their importance in maintaining our cultural values and identities.

Materials: Paper and pens

1. Have students create a list of customs and traditions that they are familiar with (i.e. holidays, religious, cultural, etc.)
2. In pairs or groups, have students generate a working definition of the words “custom” and “tradition” and then discuss as a class.
3. Discuss with your students some of their traditions and their meanings. Guiding questions: *Do you think it's important to maintain customs and traditions? Why or why not? What kind of holidays does your family celebrate and why do you celebrate them? What significance do customs, traditions, and holidays have on people's cultures? Describe a tradition that your family keeps.*
4. *Extension:* Have students get into groups, with each group exploring a particular custom/tradition/holiday of a specific culture that they may or may not be familiar with. Teacher will provide the necessary materials for the project. Students must come up with a presentation to the class explaining its significance.

Suggested Pre-Visit Activity 4

Where is Home?

Aim: To discuss various definitions of “home” and to make connections between our homes and the American immigrant experience.

Materials: Paper and pens, copies of “home” phrases

1. Remind students that America has been home to diverse immigrant groups for hundreds of years. Discuss the guiding questions with your students and generate a list of their definitions of “home”.
2. Guiding questions: *Where is home for you and what makes it your home? Is where you consider home the same place as where your parents and/or grandparents might consider home?*
3. Have students get into pairs or groups and read through a few phrases about home and then discuss whether or not they agree or disagree with each phrase. Then discuss together as a class.
 - a. “Home is where the heart is.”
 - b. “There’s no place like home.”
 - c. “Home is where you hang your hat.”
 - d. “A (wo)man’s home is his/her castle.”
4. *Extension:* Have students write a short journal entry from the perspective/voice of a newly arrived immigrant to the U.S. How might that person have been feeling about the home he/she just left? What might be the reactions to his/her new home?

Vocabulary List:

Grades K-3

Culture: the characteristic beliefs, values, attitudes, goals, and norms shared by people in a place or time.

Custom: a common or habitual practice common to people of a particular place or class.

Immigration: the process of moving from one country to settle in another country.

Immigrant: a person who moves to and settles into a new country.

Tradition: an inherited or established pattern of thought, action, or behavior.

Grades 4-6

Exclusion: the act of excluding, or preventing the entrance of.

Immigration: the process of moving from one country to settle in another country.

Immigrant: a person who moves to and settles into a new country.

Primary Source: first-hand accounts of events, practices, or conditions (i.e. documents, letters, articles, etc)

Sojourner: one who stays as a temporary resident (see: journey)

Grades 7-8

Discrimination: the act of discriminating, or making a difference on a basis other than individual merit.

Prejudice: judgments or opinions formed without grounds that are directed against an individual, group, or race.

Primary Source: first-hand accounts of events, practices, or conditions (i.e. documents, letters, articles, etc)

Secondary Source: accounts of the past that are created by people who are not first-hand witnesses of the event.

Stereotype: generalization not based on fact, often with traits of one person applied to an entire race or ethnic group.

Adapted from Merriam Webster Online

Teacher Resource - Book List

Elementary School Students

- Bouchard, David. (1999) *The Dragon New Year: A Chinese Legend*. Atlanta: Peachtree.
- Carling, Amelia. (1998) *Mama & Papa Have a Store*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.
- Chang, Heidi. (1988) *Elaine and the Flying Frog*. New York: Scholastic Inc.
- Chinn, Karen. (1997) *Sam and the Lucky Money*. New York: Lee & Low Books.
- Dorow, Sara. (1997) *When You Were Born in China: A Memory Book for Children Adopted from China*. St. Paul: Yeong & Yeong Book Company.
- Lee, Milly. (2006) *Earthquake*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Lee, Milly. (2002) *Nim and the War Effort*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Levine, Ellen. (1989) *I Hate English!* New York: Scholastic Paperbacks.
- Look, Lenor. (2001) *Henry's First Moon Birthday*. NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.
- Low, William. (1997) *Chinatown*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC.
- Mak, Kam. (2001) *My Chinatown: One Year in Poems*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Simonds, Nina & Swartz, Leslie. (2002) *Moonbeams, Dumplings and Dragon Boats: A Treasury of Chinese Holiday Tales, Activities, & Recipes*. Boston: Gulliver Books.
- Stepanchuk, Carol. (2002) *Exploring Chinatown: A Children's Guide to Chinese Culture*. Berkeley: Pacific View.
- Stepanchuk, Carol (1994) *Red Eggs & Dragon Boats*. Berkeley: Pacific View.
- Waters, Kate & Slovenz-Low, Madeline. (1990) *Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- Wong, Janet. (2000) *This Next New Year*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Yang, Belle. (2004). *Hannah Is My Name*. Candlewick Press.
- Yee, Paul. (1996) *Ghost Train*. Canada: Groundwood Books.

Middle School Students

- Behnke, Alison (2004) *Chinese in America*. New York: Lerner Publications.
- Chin, Steven A. (1992) *Dragon Parade: A Chinese New Year Story*. New York: Steck-Vaughn.
- Hoobler, Dorothy & Thomas. (1994) *The Chinese American Family Album*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Lord, Bette Bao (2003) *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson*. New York: Harper Trophy.
- Namioka, Lensey. (2003) *An Ocean Apart, A World Away*. New York: Laurel Leaf.
- Stepanchuk, Carol & Wong, Charles. (1992) *Moon Cakes and Hungry Ghosts: Festivals of China*. San Francisco: China Books and Periodicals.
- Wong, Janet. (2007) *Good Luck Gold and Other Poems*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks.
- Yamada, Debbie L. (2001) *Striking it Rich: Treasures from Gold Mountain*. Chicago: Polychrome Publishing Co.
- Yee, Paul. (2004) *Dead Man's Gold and Other Stories*. Canada: Groundwood Books.
- Yee, Paul (1999) *Tales from Gold Mountain*. Canada: Groundwood Books.
- Yep, Laurence. (2001) *The Amah*. New York: Putnam Juvenile.
- Yep, Laurence. (1999) *Chinatown Mystery Series (series)*. New York: Harper Trophy.
- Yep, Laurence. (1977) *Golden Mountain Chronicles (series)*. New York: Harper Trophy.
- Yep, Laurence. (2000) *The Journal of Wong Ming-Chung: A Chinese Miner. California, 1852. (My Name is America)*. New York: Scholastic, Inc.

Brief Timeline of Chinese American History

- 1785** - The arrival of three Chinese seamen in Baltimore marks the first record of Chinese in the United States.
- 1840-1842** - Great Britain and China engage in the Opium Wars. China loses political control of Hong Kong to Great Britain and is forced to open ports to British commerce.
- 1861-1865** — U.S. Civil War.
- 1863-1869** - Chinese workers help to build the U.S. Transcontinental Railroad.
- 1882** - The United States passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, suspending the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States and denying Chinese the right to become American citizens. It is the first U.S. restriction on immigration based on race and nationality, and stops large scale Chinese immigration for sixty years.
- 1898** — In “Wong Kim Ark v. United States”, the U.S. Supreme Court concedes that a child of Chinese descent born in the United States is an American citizen.
- 1906** — The earthquake and fire in San Francisco destroys municipal records, opening the way for the immigration of Chinese “paper sons.”
- 1910** - Angel Island Immigration Station opens in San Francisco Bay as an entry point and detention center for Asian immigrants.
- 1913** - The California Alien Land Acts prohibit Chinese and Japanese from owning land. Other states pass similar laws.
- 1915** - The Chinese American Citizen's Alliance forms to protect the civil rights of Chinese in the United States.

1920 - American women gain the right to vote.

1922 – The Cable Act decrees that any American woman who marries “ an alien ineligible for citizenship shall cease to be a citizen of the United States.”

1924 – The National Origins Act is passed, which restricts immigration by establishing national quotas that discriminates against immigrants and virtually exclude all Asians. It lasts until the 1960s.

1940 - The U.S. government closes Angel Island Immigration Station.

1941-1945 - During World War II, Asian Americans voluntarily enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces in large numbers.

1943 - The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed and Chinese in the United States are given the right to become naturalized citizens. The quota for Chinese immigrants is set at 105 per year.

1955- late1960's - The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) creates the Chinese Confession Program, which offers legalized status in exchange for confession of illegal entry into the country. The program results in nearly 14,000 confessions, which allows the INS to bar future immigration.

1965 - The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 abolishes restrictive quotas based on race and nationality. Chinese American population nearly doubles between 1960-1970.

1970 - Asian American students, artists, and community activists establish Basement Workshop, an Asian American community arts center in New York's Chinatown organizing publication services, literary events, exhibitions and community-based projects.

1972 - President Richard Nixon visits China at an historic summit with Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong. These talks open the way for Chinese Americans to visit China for the first time in 22 years.

1979 - President Jimmy Carter declares a week in May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Eleven years later U.S. president George Bush officially extends it to a month-long celebration.

1982 - The murder of Vincent Chin sparks national awareness of anti-Asian violence. His murderer, a man distraught by the decline of the Detroit auto industry, did not spend a single day in prison for his crime. In response, the Asian American community creates the advocacy group American Citizens for Justice.

1996 - Washington voters elect Gary Locke to the governor's seat. Locke becomes the first Chinese American to become the governor of a U.S. state.

2000 – The Museum of Chinese in America celebrates its 20th anniversary. MOCA is one of a handful of museums dedicated to Chinese American history.

Adapted from MOCA publication, "Timeline: 400 years of History of Chinese in the Americas"

The educational programs of Museum of Chinese in America are made possible by our members and by funds provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Humanities, New York State Council on the Arts - Museum Program & Special Arts Services, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Department of Education, Jackie Chan Charitable Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, Citigroup Foundation, CJ Huang Foundation, JT Tai Foundation, MetLife Foundation, Museum Loan Network, Ong Family Foundation, Pumpkin Foundation and the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation.