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Model Lesson Plan for Pesah



PASSOVER SYMBOLS: A COOPERATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE For Primary Grades 2 – 3* by Sallie Olson

Enduring Understandings:

1. The celebration of Passover commemorates the beginning of our national life.
2. The symbols of the Seder help us recall the important events of the Passover story.

Instructional Objective:

After participating in the cooperative learning structure known as "Jigsaw," students, working in teams, will be able to create a story from pictures of Passover symbols.

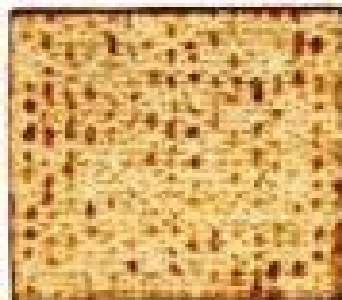
Activities:

Jigsaw, Group Discussion

Materials:

Poster board; drawing and writing paper; pictures of four selected Passover symbols, such as: a seder plate, matzah, a kiddush cup and an Elijah's Cup (one set per group); one large picture, or sign, of each of the same symbols; 3x5 index cards; paste, markers, pencils, scissors.

Sample Set:



Overview of the Lesson:

1. Procedure:

The teacher helps students group in teams of four. Team members will then meet in "expert groups" (Jigsaw structure) to brainstorm how to write/draw a story about four Passover symbols. Each student in the class becomes an "expert" on one of the four Passover symbols and teaches information about that symbol to the other members of the team. Teacher will check to see that all students participate, and stories will be shared with the class. The teacher circulates from team to team assisting students when necessary while checking on each team's progress. See #'s 4,5,6,7,8, below for details.

2. Selection of experts:

Students are in their teams of four. They "letter-off," (alef, bet, gimel, dalet) and each team is given a packet of four pictures, for example, pictures of a seder plate, matzah, a Haggadah, and an Elijah's Cup. Alef takes the picture of the seder plate; Bet, the picture of matzah; Gimel, the picture of the Haggadah, and Dalet, the picture of the Elijah's Cup. Pictures can be drawn or duplicated from clip art, and pasted onto 3 x 5 cards.

3. Preparation of Expert Groups:

In each corner of the room, on the wall, students will find either a large picture of one of the symbols (or a sign naming the symbol e.g. "Matzah," etc.). Students with the same picture meet together in the same corner of the room to form Expert Groups (teacher directs this transitional activity). All Alef students will go to the corner with the picture of the seder plate on the wall; all Bet students will go to the corner with the picture of matzah on the wall, etc. If there are fewer than 16 students in the class then adjust the number of students per team, the number of corners, and the symbols cards accordingly.

To prepare for the following activity, (#4), each "Expert" group requires a piece of poster board and markers for brainstorming pictures/descriptions.

4. Expert Groups Gather Ideas:

Each Expert Group thinks of as many descriptive words as they can about their particular picture. For example: the group with the picture of the seder plate would think of words such as "Seder, bitter, sweet, Spring, hard, smooth, slavery etc." Younger children draw pictures on the poster board; older children print/write the descriptive words. Students take turns working on the posters, each one contributing ideas. The teacher circulates from group to group.

5. Review the Brainstorm Ideas:

Students in the Expert Groups help each other remember all the words/pictures by reading/describing what is on the poster board to each other. The posters are displayed in the room so teams can refer to them. The teacher circulates from group to group during the activity.

6. Teams Create Story:

At a signal from the teacher, "experts" return to their regular teams. The teacher distributes writing paper and pencils and tells the class that each team will make up a story which mentions all four symbols (if students are not developmentally ready to write, an oral story can be created.) Each "expert" on a symbol offers some ideas of descriptive words that could be used for that symbol. For example, team members may ask, "What could we say about the Haggadah?" "What words can we use to describe the the seder plate, matzah, the Elijah's Cup?" The team decides

on at least one of the descriptive words suggested by the “expert” student on a particular symbol to use in the story. The team goes through this process for all four symbols. While they are working, one student for example, is designated by the teacher to check that everyone on the team contributes descriptive words.

7. Illustrate Story and Evaluate Social Skill:

Teams now receive a poster board, markers/crayons, drawing paper, paste and scissors. They make an illustration to go with their team story and paste the pictures of the four symbols onto the illustration.

8. Practice/Present the Story:

Each team practices telling their story together. Each team member participates in the practice session/presentation, describing a symbol on which he or she was not originally an “expert” (if possible). The teacher circulates from group to group.

9. Evaluate the Cognitive Objective:

Teams present their stories. After each story is told, the other teams take a few minutes to discuss if they heard all four symbols mentioned, and descriptive words given for each. Call on a few students to tell you what descriptive words they heard from a particular team. Compliment teams that included these words in their story.

10. Debriefing the Lesson:

Use group discussion to find out how students felt about the lesson. Did they enjoy working in groups? How does it feel to be an “expert”?

Variations:

Symbols can be changed to fit any holiday or topic the class is studying.

*Older children can be given words instead of pictures.

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