

## **Immigrant Quilt**

By: Arianna Ross

Age group: Pre K – 8<sup>th</sup> grade

## **Requirements**

Two Electrical Sockets

Small Table

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM**

1. To encourage children to think creatively
2. To teach about the history of immigration in the United States
3. To expand their knowledge of other communities, cultures and traditions

## **CONTENTS OF THE PROGRAM**

*Opening:* I will begin from the back of the auditorium playing the flute. By the time I reach the stage we are ready to go on a magical journey through the history of the US. As an introduction to the story, we will play a game of Call and Response using a phrase in Yiddish, the language of my people, Russians, who came to the United States in the 1910's thus beginning the body of my performance.

*Body:* We will go on an imaginary tour to through the history of the US starting in the 1600's and ending in the 1900's. They will discover during the course of our time together how each community adds another square to the quilt of America with their different stories, culture, and traditions. Then we jump back in time to period of the Pilgrims. Together we tell the story of an eight-year-old boy growing up in a New World.

*Finale:* I bring my program to a close as I share with the children a true story of an African girl named Sally who was forced to come to the United States. She tells the story of her journey of survival and how her adopted grandmother shared with her the legend of the "Spy quilt." As we leave the 1800's and come back to modern time, I ask them to think about where their families originally came from. I ask a few children to stand up and tell the group where their family was from. I encourage the students to go home and ask about their heritage. We remind ourselves of the amazing stories we just listened to and they have the time to ask questions.

## **PRE-PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE**

### **Vocabulary:**

*Yiddish:*

Wei Gehts: What's Up?

Shalom: Hello

Was es los?: What's Doing?

### **Historical Time Line:**

When did the Pilgrims come to the New World? When was the immigration rush of the Eastern Europeans?

When were the Africans forced to come to America?

Draw a picture of what life was like in the 1600's, 1700's, 1800's, or 1900's

When did quilt making become popular in the United States?

### **Geography:**

Where are Russia, Africa, Holland, and England?

Where do the Pilgrims come from? Where did many of the African Slaves come from?

Draw a picture of the world. Show the path the Pilgrims took to come to the United States.

### **Culture:**

How many different Cultures live in the United States?

Write down a list of what you eat for Dinner and compare it to your neighbor.

How many languages are spoken in the United States?

What traditions did the Pilgrims, the Africans, the Russians, the Latin Americans, the Asians...bring with them?

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### **POST-QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

#### **The Story:**

Imagine that you are leaving your home. What kind of adventures would you go on?

Draw a picture of the different people in the story.

Have every child choose his/her favorite character. Create a puppet version of every character. Make up your own puppet show.

These stories are very similar to historical stories and other Folk Tales in our community. Read to the students other stories where the people move or animals are the hero's.

Write your own mythical story or ask your family to tell you a story about your family history.

#### **The Russians:**

Go to the Web and research about the mass migration of the Russians to the United States in the early 1900s.

Ask them to step into the shoes of a child who was traveling in steerage on a ship packed with people for close to 2 months. Ask them to write a monologue or a short story about what it was like to travel alone or with their family.

Compare and contrast the hardships of immigration today to life in the early 1900s.

#### **The Pilgrims:**

Go to the web and research about the pilgrims.

Read them stories about the pilgrims. Talk to them about the customs and culture of their community and how different it is today.

Create your own play about the story of the young pilgrim boy who was the first to.....

In a creative drama exercise they can explore the different environments. As the teacher, you can ask them to close their eyes and imagine they are in the desert. Describe to them the type of animals and plants and the weather. Explain to them that when they open their eyes they should imagine the room they just landed on the New World. For reference refer to a drama book on environmental dramas.

#### **The African Slaves:**

Imagine being taken away from your home. How would you feel? Write a letter home to your family that you left behind about what it was like on the boat.

Walk through the history of the Underground Railroad. As a group, create a class quilt of what you imagined the map would look like.

Create class time from the day the first African arrived in the New World till the Civil War.

#### **The Community We Live in:**

Draw a picture of the different people who live in your community.

Talk about why it is important to respect and like everyone even if they are different from you.

Ask the children to write a compliment for everyone in the classroom and put it in an envelope. Each student should take the envelope home and read it with their family.

Remind them that everyone in the classroom is from different communities or families. Ask each student to bring in an object from their own house, a dish of food, or a piece of music and share it with the other students.

**\*Resources for Immigrant Quilt available upon request\***