

## Cheryl Coyle

**Lesson:** **Riding the Underground Railroad**

**Subject:** Social Studies

**Grade:** 3rd

**Objective:** Students will be able to experience the Underground Railroad through guided imagery and then will decide what they would do – stay or go with Harriet Tubman.

They will be able to justify and analyze their decision about running away.

### **Kentucky's Learning Goals and Academic Expectations:**

2.20 Students understand, analyze, and interpret historical events, conditions, trends, and issues to develop historical perspective.

1.13 Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with visual arts

**Materials:** Freedom River by Rappaport and Collier  
Riding the Underground Railroad guided imagery sheet  
Riding the Underground Railroad student sheets

### **Procedure:**

1. We have been studying American History and Government for the past several weeks and are now up to the 1800s and the Underground Railroad. On the previous day we will have read **Young Harriet Tubman – Freedom Fighter** and completed several activity sheets on Harriet Tubman therefore the students understand the premise and background of the Underground Railroad.
2. Today we will be bringing the concept of the Underground Railroad into the lives of the student. First by reading the book, **Freedom River**, a true Underground Railroad story that takes place right here on the banks of the Ohio River between Kentucky and Ohio. Discuss with the students that the slaves from this area as well as south of Kentucky were all trying to get to the Ohio River (they called it the River Jordan) because it led to freedom. They were trying to get to Ohio and then to Canada to be free.
3. Ask the students how many of them have crossed the Ohio River into Ohio? After a show of hands discuss how we take it for granted and what the river must have looked like and meant to those slaves who had risked everything to make it there.
4. Tell the students that they are going back in time, that they need to put themselves in this place and picture the setting around them, and that they will have a difficult decision to make once we are through – turn out the lights,

play appropriate music in the background (if possible) and read the Guided Imagery Activity – *Riding the Underground Railroad*.

5. When finished the students need to visualize what they are going to tell John, why they have made their decision and what fears they have. They are then to complete the student sheet and draw a picture of what they were seeing in their mind when they were going through the guided imagery activity.

**Assessment:** The student's response to John's question (Are you going or are you staying?), their reasons for their decision and what fears they would have as a slave, and their depiction of the scene from the guided imagery activity as well as their participation in the discussion.