

Subject: Social Studies/Language Arts
Topic: Slavery and the Underground Railroad
Grade Level: primary
Lesson Length: 2-3 class periods (30 minutes each)

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain how slavery began using a sequencing chart
- Students will recall ways that slaves used nature to help them escape and travel along the Underground Railroad.

Materials:

- Pictures of slave ships bringing slaves to America
- Rope, yarn or tape
- Barefoot: Escape on the Underground Railroad, Pamela Duncan Edwards
- The Middle Passage, Tom Feelings
- Sequencing chart
- The Strength of These Arms: Life in the Slave Quarters, Raymond Bial

Procedures:

DAY ONE -

1. Discuss wordless picture books as being able to tell a story without words. *You may want to teach students how to use wordless picture books to create stories prior to this lesson if they do not have previous experiences with this concept.* Explain to students that the class is going to read a picture book with no words.
2. Show and discuss **selected** pictures from The Middle Passage:
 - Pg. 1-2: Does this look like where you live? Where do you think this is? What clues make you think so? Discuss Africa and show its location on a map compared to North America.
 - Pg. 3-4: What do you think is happening in these pictures? Does it look like a happy time? How do the pictures make you feel? Why?
 - Pg. 9-10: What's happening in this picture? What are the people wearing on their necks and wrists? Who do you think put these on them? Why do you think they're wearing these things? How do you think it made them feel?
 - Pg. 21: Where are the people now? Where do you think they're taking them? Do you think they want to be going?
 - Pg. 23-24: How do you think they were treated on the boats? What clues from the picture tell you so?
 - Pg. 33-34: Look how crowded it is on the boats! How would you feel if you were this crowded together? Stop at this point and crowd the students together in the same position the slaves had to stay in. Time the students and see how long they can handle being in these conditions.
3. Discuss the sequence of events in The Middle Passage.
4. Students recall sequence of events leading up to slavery in America by drawing pictures of tribes in Africa, fighting in Africa, Africans being bound in rope, and/or a slave ship.

DAY TWO -

1. Open today's lesson with a discussion using the following questions: Is there anything that makes you different from other people (glasses, braces, red hair, freckles,

- etc.)? Has anyone ever treated you mean or teased you because you are different? Let the students draw and share a picture about a time when they were treated badly.
2. Remind students of the pictures in The Middle Passage. Review the events that brought slavery to America, and recall how it felt to look at the pictures from the book.
 3. Point out the fact that the slaves in America were black and that white people owned them.
 4. Use photographs from The Strength of These Arms: Life in the Slave Quarters to compare how enslaved people and plantation owners lived. As the class looks at the pictures, interject oral stories about the life of a slave (the hard work, lack of food, being beaten if they didn't do a good job, families being separated, etc.).

DAY THREE -

1. Open today's lesson by reminding students of the times when they were treated unfairly. Talk about how they have felt when they were treated unfairly. What can you do if someone treats you mean? Tell an adult, teacher, parent, etc. and they'll stick up for you.
2. Ask students if they remember how Africans were treated unfairly. Help them to realize how much worse it would have felt to be enslaved because there weren't parents and teachers who could stick up for you.
3. Explain that sometimes slaves would run away to a place where there was no slavery. Sometimes there were people who helped slaves run away. Oftentimes their owners would try to find them.
4. Read Barefoot: Escape on the Underground Railroad. As the Barefoot and Heavy Boots enter the story, ask students who they think the characters are. Lead them to identifying the Barefoot as an escaped slave and the Heavy Boots as his owners.
5. Discuss the following questions with students after reading:
 - How did the animals help Barefoot?
 - What do you think would have happened if Heavy Boots had caught Barefoot?
 - Did anyone else besides the animals help Barefoot?
 - How did Barefoot know the person in the house would help him? Discuss that a lantern in the yard or candles in the window were other signs that someone would help an escaping slave.
6. Students draw and write about one of the animals and how they helped the slave escape.

Assessment:

- Class participation
- Teacher observation
- Student work: sequencing chart, writer's notebook entry, Barefoot drawings