

## *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*

**NAME:** Lisa Ross

**LESSON LENGTH:** 2 HRS.

**GRADE:** 4

**SUBJECT:** Social Studies

**TOPIC:** Underground Railroad & Quilts

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**OBJECTIVES:** The students will be introduced to an organization called the Underground Railroad and recognize its significance, as well as the significance of quilts, in American history. The students will create their own class friendship quilt.

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**CONTEXT:** The lesson is to be used in a series about the Southeastern United States and its history, including the Civil War and slavery.

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**MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY:** Modern and antique quilts to display, crayons, magic markers, glue, butcher paper, Book *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*, 30 photocopied plain and lined quilt squares for the students to design.

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**PROCEDURES:** After the book is read aloud, the class will discuss whether or not the book is fictional. It will be pointed out to the students that Underground Railroad Experts have some disagreement as to whether quilts were really used as maps, and we will discuss the likelihood of this happening.

The lesson will begin with a KWL session to discover what the students know about the Civil War and the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad will be explained, including the use of constellations and maps used to help slaves find their way to freedom. The students will be introduced to conductors and key players of the Underground Railroad such as Harriett Tubman, John Parker and Rev. John Rankin.

The class will then discuss the use of quilts as a way to make maps and guide slaves to freedom across the Ohio River. The class will examine the quilt collection on display, and the book *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* will be read aloud.

After discussion each student will be given two paper quilt blocks, one with lines and one plain square. The students will design the plain square as they wish, and write about a memorable experience on the lined square. The students will be encouraged to make maps to their homes, to school, etc., on the plain square. Geometric designs, handprints, and scenes will also be suggested.

The finished squares will be mounted on butcher paper with glue in a friendship quilt design, thus creating a classroom friendship quilt.

The class will then view the finished product, and the teacher will invite feedback about the lines, shapes, and patterns that emerge, and their significance. The class will discuss whether or not they are satisfied with the group project. They will discuss what is good about it and how it could be improved.

Students who finish ahead of the allotted time will be invited to peruse more quilt books, and a collection of juvenile books dealing with slavery and the Underground Railroad taken from the course bibliography.

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**STUDENT ASSESSMENT:** Assessment will be in the form of class discussion, and participation in the class friendship quilt project.

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### *RUBRIC*

- 4** Outstanding participation in class discussion.  
Outstanding participation in lesson summation.  
Completion of two quilt squares.  
Shows outstanding understanding of topic.
- 3** Much participation in class discussion.  
Much participation in lesson summation.  
Completion of one and a half quilt squares.  
Shows good understanding of topic.
- 2** Some participation in class discussion.  
Some participation in lesson summation.  
Completion of one quilt square.  
Shows some understanding of topic.
- 1** Little participation in class discussion.  
Little participation in lesson summation.  
Completion of less than one quilt square.  
Shows little understanding of topic.
- 0** No participation in class discussion.  
No participation in lesson summation.  
Completion of no quilt squares.  
Shows no understanding of topic.