

**ANTHROPOLOGY OUTREACH OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
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**(This resource guide was originally prepared for Anthropology for Teachers Program,
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Classroom Activities

1. Ceremonies:

- a. Learn about another culture's ceremony and try to re-enact it as closely as possible. An example is the Japanese tea ceremony.

- b. Construct a personal time-line. A composite of all the students can be put on the walls around classroom. Have students write down everything designating coming-of-age and describe any associated rituals and ceremonies.

- c. Discuss the difference between ceremony, ritual, and custom. (Ceremony usually has a beginning, middle, and end. It also embodies myth and can be re-enacted.)

- d. Analyze ceremonies and rituals in the school.

- e. Observe ceremonies in your community. (a Bar Mitzvah, Chinese New Year celebration, Kwanza, a Mass). Discuss as a class their meaning and function. Or have each student take one religion to research, interview relevant people, and observe rituals. Or have several students discuss their own religion's ceremonies.

- f. Describe a ceremony in your own culture to a person in another culture.

2. Kinship roles:

- a. Construct kinship charts for your family.

- b. Discuss who does what in their family--use role playing.

- c. Describe an incident from the point of view of a child, then a parent, then a godparent, and then an outsider.

- d. Make a list of all the terms of reverence and address you know of for your different relatives. Then compare your terms with other students'. Compare particularly girls' and boys' terms for mother and father. Any difference? Any differences between ethnic

groups?

3. Interviews:

a. Have students interview students enrolled in "English as a Second Language" (ESL) classes and the ESL students can ask questions of the American students. Possible questions might be:

- 1) What are the groups or institutions which are important in your life?
- 2) What are the rules of behavior in each of these groups?
- 3) How did you learn these rules?
- 4) Rank the groups in order of importance to you.

For more details see: Martha Williams, "Teachers' Corner: Fieldwork in the Classroom," in the Anthropology Teacher's Packet and originally *Anthro.Notes*, vol. 3, no. 2, Winter 1981, pp. 4-5.

b. Interview three generations of mothers about birth or raising children.

c. Have students interview people of different ages and backgrounds to find out what those people think it means to be an adult in our society or an adolescent.

d. Have students interview their parents on their "growing up" or life for them in the "8th grade."

4. Speakers:

a. Invite someone from Parent and Child or Lamaze ASPO classes.

b. Invite a pediatrician or obstetrician to talk about birth in our society.

c. Invite a rabbi, priest or minister to discuss meaning of "life crisis" ceremonies.

d. Invite a person to talk about their stage of life: a teenager, a young mother, a person in their 40's, 50's or 70's.

5. Trip: Look at the role of children in Amish society, rural America, Williamsburg.

6. Childrens' Games and Stories:

a. Have students describe and analyze behavior and role attitudes expressed in childrens' games and fairy tales. Make a study of what nursery rhymes are "teaching." Sex roles? Superstitions? Magic? Myth?

b. Listen to the record "Free to be You and Me" by Marlo Thomas. Have the student discuss how the record

7. Observations:

- a. Have the student observe a playground, day nursery, Bar Mitzvah, Baptism, and record their observations.
 - b. Have students observe how the school functions as a socializing agent, i.e. what behavior is rewarded, what behavior is punished.
8. Study attitudes toward youth and old age through the media, especially advertising.
 9. Compare primate and human mothering.
 10. Ask high school students to read novels that describe growing up in different sub-cultures in the U.S. For example: *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok, *A Member of the Wedding* by Carson McCullers, *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, *Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain, *Studs Lonigan* by James Farrell.