

Cultural Study of Vietnam in an Elementary Montessori Setting

Author: Barbara Roxas

Subject: Cultural Study of Vietnam in an Elementary Montessori Setting

Grade Levels: High School Grades 9 -12

Time Required: Approximately 3 weeks (30 hours)

Philosophy of Montessori Pedagogy

1. Foster independence, self-motivation, love of learning
2. Multi-age learning
3. Prepared Environment
4. Materials
 - Use of self-correcting materials to progress at own pace according to own level of development
 - Concrete and hands-on
 - Real objects and experiences, photos based on reality
 - Story telling

Background to Culture Study: Planning

1. Meeting with children
2. Assessment of knowledge by asking questions:
 1. What do you know about Vietnam?
 2. What would you like to know?
3. Organization of children's questions
72 questions into 11 categories

Cultural Study of Vietnam in a Montessori Elementary Environment

- A. Discussions for whole group lessons
 1. Review of questions from last spring's group meeting
Categories: language/arts, education, economy/development, homes, clothing, leisure activities/sports, religion, society, food/agriculture, ecology/environment, government

Ask: "Do you remember when we met last spring and I asked you these questions: What do you know about Vietnam and what would you like to know? Do you remember what some of the questions were? Let's review some of them together"

Spend 20 minutes discussing some or all of the questions and see what they remember. Explain that the next time we meet we will talk more about Vietnam and try to answer some of the questions together.

2. Overview of Vietnam Travel

- a. Geography (use **map**) cities/regions visited:
 1. Ha Noi
 2. Sa Pa
 3. Ha Long Bay
 4. Hue
 5. Hoi An
 6. Ho Chi Minh City
 7. Can Tho
- b. Cultural experiences (some or all may be covered depending on the interest of the group)
 1. History of Ha Noi
 2. Literature of Vietnam
 3. Musical performance by the Ha Noi Music Institute
 4. Ethnic minorities
 5. Women's role in Vietnam
 6. Education
 7. Fine arts and film
 8. Temple sights
 9. Food/cooking
 10. Religion
 11. Transportation
 12. Special project in Can Tho

*The overview should be broken into several whole-group discussions.

- c. Guest Speaker

B. Extensions

These are small group sessions and are done as follow-up work to the large group discussions.

1. **Extension 1: Language Arts Using Photo Images**

- a. Photos and Oral Story Telling

Use 4x6" photo cards to share information about places mentioned in the large group lesson. Ask questions to encourage recall of information and further thought.

b. Reading Cards

Use a second set of photo cards that match the photo cards used with the Oral Story Telling but add a 2-4 sentence description of the image in the photo.

Introduce this as an independent reading choice to use for research or read together with children who need support.

c. Writing Stories

This session is based on the writing level of the group.

Materials: photos, lined story paper, pencil

- As a group, make a sentence that may describe what is seen in the photo. Model writing for those who need assistance and allow them time to copy onto their own paper.
- Have each child form a sentence or sentences and share it with the group.
- Offer the opportunity to make an illustration that corresponds with the sentence.

d. Folk Tales

- Read one of the traditional folktales and discuss the characters.
- Talk about a folktale from our culture. How does it compare to the story just read?
- Create a folktale together based on suggestions from the children.

2. **Extension 2: Geography with Map Outlines**

- Make a set of maps which depict the political outline of Vietnam on cloth or vinyl. Include the following information:
 - **control map** which has: names of cities, rivers, mountains
 - **blank physical map** outline and small labels with names of the cities, bodies of water and mountains.
 - small **resource map** with crops, industry and natural resources
- Study the maps together and then allow an individual child or small group to use the blank map and place the names and/or photos in the correct location.
- Use watercolor paints to write names of cities, mountains, or rivers on the blank vinyl map. Can also paint crops and industry icons in the appropriate regions.

3. **Extension 3: Sewing: Study of Ethnic Minority Tapestries and Clothing**

- Look at samples of designs from hill tribes of Sa Pa area.
- Create patterns on paper based samples of designs used on cloth
- Use fabric to sew a mini-tapestry.

4. **Extension 4: Food: Agriculture and Common Meals**

- Grow herbs such as mint and cilantro used in traditional Vietnamese cooking.
- Read and discuss recipes. What ingredients are needed and how much of each item?
- Cook traditional foods: Goi Guon (fresh spring rolls), Nuoc Cham (fish sauce), Che Chuoi (bananas in coconut milk)
- Taste fruits such as: chom chom...

5. **Extension 5: Holidays**

- Read, Vietnam: A Portrait of the Country Through its Festivals and Traditions together.
- Discuss the celebrations and their meanings. Compare with American holidays. What is similar? What is different?
- Make a traditional greeting card for Tet Nguyen-Dan.

Resources for Information

Person from Vietnam - oral presentation of information

Photo cards - made with photos from visit to Vietnam

Reading cards - made with photos and information gained from visit to Vietnam

Books - listen below

Books about Vietnam for the Elementary Age

Non-fiction

- Dahl, Michael. *Vietnam*. Bridgestone Books, 1998.
- Vietnam. Grolier Educational, 1997.
- Kalman, Bobbie. *Vietnam: The Culture*. Crabtree Publishing Company, 1996.
- Kalman, Bobbie. *Vietnam: The Land*. Crabtree Publishing Company, 1996.
- Kalman, Bobbie, *Vietnam: The People*. Crabtree Publishing Company, 1996.
- Willis, Terri. *Vietnam: The Enchantment of the World*. Children's Press, 2002.
- Wright, David K. *Vietnam is My Home*. Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 1993.

Related Non-Fiction

- Ajmera, Maya and Versola, Anna Rhesa. *Children From Australia to Zimbabwe: A Photographic Journey Around the World*. Watertown: Charlesbridge Publishing, 1997.
- Hollyer, Beatrice. *Wake Up, World! A Day in the Life of Children Around the World*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999.

Fiction

- Tran, Truong. *Coming Home, Coming Home*. San Francisco, Children's Book Press, 2003.
- Trang, Ngoc. *The Flower Bo-Nga-Cho-Re*. Hanoi: Kim Dong Publishing House, 2000.
- *The Legend of the Tiny Sea Crab*. Hanoi: Kim Dong Publishing House, 2003.