

A Sense of Community

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| Developed By | Stephanie Dean-Moore |
| Suggested Length | Four 30 minute lessons |
| Suggested Grade Level(s) | Primary |
| Subject Areas | Visual Arts, Social Studies, Drama, Mathematics |

Overview

Community is the foundation of our society. This unit will explore what community is and how communities have changed in the last 100 years.

Links to Curriculum Outcomes

Students will (be expected to)

- identify and explore interactions among individuals, groups and societies (Social Studies) visually communicate stories, ideas and experiences, using a variety of materials (Visual Arts)
- explore basic art skills, techniques and vocabulary (Visual Arts)
- develop and play roles (Drama)
- recognise, describe, extend and create patterns and sequences in a variety of mathematical and real world contexts (e.g., geometric, numeric and measurement) (Mathematics)

Links to Telling Stories: Themes / Key Words

- Details of everyday life
- Who are we?
- Setting, time and place

Art Works

- Drawing, *Market Day, Queen's Square, Charlottetown*, Robert Harris, CAG H-115
- Painting, *John Gordon Mackenzie*, Robert Harris, CAG H-593
- *Untitled*, Robert Harris, CAG H-1797
- *Untitled*, Robert Harris, CAG H-1828
- *Untitled*, Robert Harris, CAG H-8006.21

Context

This unit works with the Primary theme, “Community Is”. Lessons focus on how Canadian community has changed since Robert Harris’ time.



Lesson #1: Collaging Together a Community

Objective Students will discuss the role of a “town square” within a community. They will explore texture, colour, and collage techniques, and the concepts of foreground and background, as they create their own community square.

Related Art Work(s)

- *Drawing, Market Day, Queen’s Square, Charlottetown*, Robert Harris, CAG H-115

Materials

- heavy paper (background)
- magazines and newspapers
- decorative papers
- glue
- scissors
- scrap paper for designing
- pencils

Activities / Explorations

1. Harris’ drawing of a town square shows a bustling and energetic place. People are working, playing, talking and gathering. It is the physical core of the community. Times have changed. Yet we still gather as smaller communities within a larger society. Discuss with students how communities have transitioned over the years.
2. On scrap paper, have students do a simple design of a place that represents community to them. They should work out their ideas and basic design at this point.
3. When creating a collage, remember that layering, colour, and texture all combine to make the image exciting. Background areas recede, colours and outlines “blend” into greys. Foreground areas advance, have crisp lines and brighter colours. By layering in this way, dynamic landscapes are created.

4. Have students go through magazines and newspapers, cutting and tearing to get the shapes they need. Organize and place the shapes on the heavier paper.
5. Once the cut paper design is completed, glue everything down. Begin with the bottom layer, and build. Students can use their original drawings as a reference.

Ideas for Assessment

Display the “community squares”. Have a class discussion about what makes each a community. Allow each artist the opportunity to present their collage and express what makes that community vital to them.



Lesson #2: Weaving a Family Community

Objective Students will explore the tradition of family tartans. Reflecting upon their own families, they will create a tartan of their own.

Related Art Work(s)

- *Painting, John Gordon Mackenzie, Robert Harris, CAG H-593*

Materials

- paper
- crayons, coloured pencils, markers
- rulers
- coloured papers (optional)

Activities / Explorations

1. Show students Harris' portrait of a boy wearing a tartan shawl. In a whole class discussion, consider what a family tartan is. Tartan designs were created to reflect a family's heritage, with colours emphasizing their environment and traditions.
2. Discuss what colours would represent the students and their families (blue for water, gold for wheat, for example). Perhaps a student has a favourite sports team, flag, symbol, whose colours they would like to include. Favourite colours can be included “just because”!
3. Depending on the importance of each of these elements, the lines will be of varying thickness. A central life focus may be a very thick line that is placed in the middle of the pattern. It may be supported by lines that represent people or places. Use this discussion time

as an opportunity to focus on the students' immediate communities and what makes them unique. Don't forget to consider a background colours for the designs.

4. Have students experiment on paper, deciding what colours and patterns best reflect them.
5. This combination of "lines" is the basis of the tartans. By repeating this pattern both vertically and horizontally, a tartan is created.
6. As a twist, students can cut or tear strips of coloured papers to create their pattern, and then "weave" their designs, gluing them down on a background sheet of paper. Try this after the initial design has been created.



Lesson #3: Heads Up

Objective Students will work three dimensionally to create their own hats. The role of the individual within a community, and how fashion can reflect that role, is explored.

Related Art Work(s)

- *Untitled*, Robert Harris, CAG H-1797
- *Untitled*, Robert Harris, CAG H-1828

Materials

- strips of corrugated cardboard
- stapler
- glue
- glue gun (optional)
- papers of all sorts
- found, recycled, natural materials

Activities / Explorations

We wear hats for practical reasons. They keep us warm, dry, and protected from the sun. In the past, hats were essential components of fashion. They were worn whenever someone went out into the community. They protected, but they also made a statement.

1. Examining the two drawings by Harris, discuss how the hats reflect who the people are. What did these people do? Where did they live (rural or urban?). What about their hats tells you about their personalities?

2. Have students brainstorm about the type of hat they would wear to reflect their personalities. What colour would it be? What would it have on it? Feathers, stuffed birds, baseballs, paintbrushes...?
3. Using the cardboard strips, measure each child's head and staple the band to fit. Place the flat side of the staple on the inside. This is the base for the hat.
4. Giving them a large array of materials to choose from, allow them to explore the materials, building their own structures. Encourage them to work "downward" from the band, not just upwardly.
5. As things progress, you may have to help students attach elements and solve design difficulties. Use this time to discuss what makes each child unique within their community, and how their hat represents that uniqueness.
6. For particularly bulky elements, you may need to attach them for the students with a glue gun.



Lesson #4: The Love of Leisure

Objective Students will learn about primary and secondary colours and basic colour mixing. Exploring the theme of "leisure", they will create works using a monotype printing technique.

Related Art Work(s)

- *Untitled*, Robert Harris, CAG H-8006.21

Materials

- saran wrap
- masking tape
- tempera paint
- paper

Activities / Explorations

1. With the students, look at Harris' sketch of people enjoying leisure time. Leisure time used to be something that people had one day a week, when shops were closed and no one was working. During that day, people would often dress up and go out into the community. Parks and green spaces became very important places of focus and many were created during the 19th century.

2. Our concept of leisure time is different now. We often spend our leisure time alone, pursuing a hobby or relaxing. As our towns and cities get bigger, our personal communities seem to be getting smaller. Discuss what favourite leisure activities students have. Are they done in groups or alone? In public or private places?
3. Tape a piece of saran wrap down for each student. Have them decide upon a scene of “leisure” for their drawing.
4. Using only the primary colours (red, blue, yellow), have students create their drawings on the plastic. (Primary colours are those basic colours that cannot be created through mixing. They are the basis of all other colours.)
5. As the drawings are created and the paints are mixed, secondary colours will be created. (Secondary colours are those made when two primaries are mixed: red & yellow = orange; yellow & blue = green; blue & red = purple.)
6. Make sure that the students don’t “over mix”, as they will end up with brown.
7. Once the drawings are done, students should wash and dry their hands.
8. Carefully place a piece of paper on the drawing. Gently pat it down, making sure that all parts touch the paint. Lift up slowly and let dry.
9. You may be able to do a couple more prints of the same drawing. Have students sign and number each one.

Wrapping up the Learning

Create a class play about a leisurely day spent out in the community. Have students wear their hats and behave in a way that reflects the design elements they created. They could make flags out of their tartan designs and carry them with them.

Bringing it all Together

Consider having a class meal, where a specific classroom event brings everyone together as a community. As a group, discuss what foods would be appropriate – what reflects their communal tastes.

Invite another class to tea. Encourage them to wear hats and wear those that you created.

Possible Extensions

Extend your classroom community. Students could send cards to Canadian Peace Keepers or to seniors in a local nursing home. Perhaps there are other people in your community who they can reach out to. If so, who?

Students could design a class tartan to adorn the envelopes and create and print drawings for the cards themselves.

