



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2002 Volume II: Exploring the Middle East: Hands-On Approaches

A Bash in Baalbeck: Creating a Lebanese Festival

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Think back. What are your earliest memories? Most likely they are of your parents, your siblings, and possibly other family members as well. What else can you remember? Do you remember your home and neighborhood, and your school experiences? Children understand best and retain an understanding of that which they can relate to. Even young children easily associate their own concrete experiences with family, neighborhood, school, clothing, and food, to the similar experiences of their friends. The challenge of our schools, then, is to teach children that there is a world of cultures beyond their home and the immediate neighborhood, to which they are accustomed.

This unit, which explores the culture of Lebanon, is thus premised on the notion that students understand different cultures best when they are compared with their own. It culminates in a “street festival,” based on a combination of a market place, the Muslim and Christian religious festivals, and the Baalbeck Festival. Our festival will have music, arts and crafts, foods, and displays of student’s projects about Lebanon.¹

Objectives

This multi-disciplinary unit uses lessons in English, Home Economics, Art, Science, and other disciplines. The intent of the unit is to promote diversity. The unit discusses Arab culture as it relates to Lebanon, a country that is Arab but in which many of the Arabs living there are Christian. That coupled with a strong influence from the Western cultures and socio-economic variation makes Lebanon an interesting country to study. That is precisely why I chose Lebanon for this unit. By seeing the diverse Arab subcultures within the Lebanese culture it is hoped that the students will understand that it is impossible to make generalizations about Arabs just as it is impossible to make generalizations about any group.

While the limited space of the unit allows for only an introduction to the culture of Lebanon, the teacher and the students can delve deeper into those parts of the Lebanese culture that interest them. To facilitate this process, several websites are given throughout the Unit. The unit will cover what the term “Arab” means. It will discuss the Arabic language and teach a few basic Arabic words. However, the main emphasis is on how

children in Lebanon are brought up. It discusses home life, school, food, religion, and recreation. At the end of the unit the students will be able to celebrate the diversity between their own culture and that of the Arab culture in Lebanon. By gaining an understanding of this culture it is hoped that the students will learn to transfer their understanding to all races and ethnic groups.

Lebanon -- Background Information

The people of Lebanon have a rich heritage that in part is due to the strategic location of the country on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. At one time or another Phoenicians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Arabs, European Crusaders, Ottomans, and French all ruled or had influence over the land that is now Lebanon. Syria is its neighbor to the east and north and Israel is to the south. The whole country is only 50 miles wide from east to west and 120 miles long from north to south. Lebanon has a total of 4,015 square miles.² If you had a direct highway, it would take less than an hour to drive across it and only about 2 hours to go from the north to south. In one day a person can go from the sea to the mountains and then to the Bekaa Valley to see the Roman ruins at Baalbeck.

The War

Most recently its geographical position -- next to Israel, Syria and Jordan, led it to be the site of a complicated civil war in which Syria, Israel, the US, and some European powers intervened. Lasting from 1975-1991, it left its mark on a generation of children. Just as people of our country who lived through the Great Depression were left with character traits developed from that experience, the parents of the current children of Lebanon still have the Civil war of 1975-1991 firmly embedded in their minds. Before the war the country was a prosperous banking center for the Middle East. It enjoyed a high standard of living, along with good educational opportunities and health care. As might be expected the war disrupted that standard of living. The country is slowly coming back. One day it may regain its former status as a banking capitol.

The Flag of Lebanon

The flag of Lebanon is a symbol of that hope. It has three bars running horizontally. The top and bottom bars are red and are a reminder of sacrifice. The middle bar is wider than the other two. It is white and represents the hope of peace. In the center of the white bar is a green cedar tree. The Cedar tree is a national symbol. Cedars once covered much of Lebanon but now cover less than five percent of the country.³

Population of Lebanon

The estimated population of Lebanon as of July 2001 was 3,627,000 people.⁴ There were 350,000 registered Palestine refugees in Lebanon in March 1996 with 53.2 percent residing in twelve camps spread across the country and 46.8 percent living outside the camps. Registered Palestine refugees are estimated to represent 12 percent of the population of Lebanon. ⁵ Ninety-five percent of the people of Lebanon are Arabs. The country is interesting because it is a unique blend of three distinct Arab cultures that live together, in the past not always harmoniously, in an area about three quarters of the size of Connecticut.

The people are mainly descended from the same Semitic stock, but religious diversity and social class have divided them into many self-contained groups and this has been a barrier to social integration. All Lebanese feel an intense loyalty to their own clan or religious group.⁶

The Difference Between Arabs and Muslims

Before we go on, the difference between Arabs and Muslims must be clarified. Arab is a term that refers to an ethnic group made up of a member of an Arabic-speaking people who share a distinct culture. On the other hand, Muslim is a term that refers to a person who practices the religion of Islam. The fact is that some, if not most, Arabs are Muslims. However, some are not. Many Arabs, especially in Lebanon, are Christians. On the other hand, some Muslims are Arabs, but most are not. Another clarification should be made. All Palestinians are Arabs but not all Palestinians are Muslims. In fact, some of the Palestinian leaders such as Hannan Ashrawi and Edward Said are Christians.

Religion in Lebanon

Muslims

There is no official religion in Lebanon. Muslims are the largest religious group in the country with 70% of the population falling into that group. A Muslim might belong to the Shi'a (Shiite), Sunni, Isma'ilite, Alawite, Nusayri or Druze groups.⁷ Muslims are followers of Islam. The word Islam means "submission."⁸ Islam, as well as Christianity and Judaism find their origins in the prophet Abraham. Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last in a line of prophets that included Moses and Jesus. The Islamic religion is based on the Quran which is a "masterpiece of prose and poetry"⁹ received by Muhammad. The religion is based on five duties or pillars. They are Testimony, Prayer, Giving, Fasting, and Pilgrimage.¹⁰

About 100,000 people follow the Druses religion that grew out of Islam. This group has many secret beliefs, and they keep separate from both other Muslims and Christians.

Christians

Those people who are not Muslim, most likely are Christian. (There is a very small Jewish population that resides in Lebanon.) In Lebanon 30% of the population is Christian. This is the second largest religious group in the country. Most Lebanese Christians belong to the Maronite Church, which has similar beliefs to the Roman Catholic Church, but has its own priests. The church is named after the Syrian saint Maro. The Christians are further divided into the Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic, and Protestant sects.

The Palestinians

Although the Palestinians are also Arabs and are both Christians and Muslims, they have a different national identity than the Lebanese. Some of the Palestinians originally fled from Palestine in 1948. Others fled to Lebanon after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war or are refugees who first went to Jordan in 1948 or 1967, and then fled from Jordan to Lebanon after Black September.¹¹ They live in overcrowded refugee camps that lack sanitation and safe drinking water.¹²

When teaching about life in Lebanon it should be pointed out to students that it is difficult to make generalizations because what may be true about one social, economic, or religious group may not be true about another. Students might understand this if you point out that something that is true in an urban area of the United States is not necessarily true of a rural area. However, if we learn about life in inner city New Haven, as well as life in Appalachia, a farm in Kansas, and a Native American village in the Pacific Northwest we will get a picture of the fabric of America. Still, this study is valuable as long as we understand that at times we may be looking at but one facet of a multifaceted culture.

The two religious groups, the Muslims and the Christians, as well as the Palestinians when coupled with the wide range of socio-economic and educational groups that cut across all religious and political divisions make up the fabric of Lebanese Arab culture.

Lebanese Culture

Family Life

So what is family life in Lebanon like? Just as in our own country, children are held in high esteem and the family unit is very important. In all groups the family tends to be very close knit.

In *Understanding Arabs*, Margaret K. Nydell describes the roles of the mother and father in an Arab family. She is not writing specifically about Lebanon but as far as generalizations go, the statement applies to Lebanon as well.

In the traditional Arab family, the role of the mother and the father are quite different as they relate to their children. The mother is seen as a source of emotional support and steadfast loving kindness. She is patient, forgiving, and prone to indulge and spoil her children, especially her sons. The father is seen as a source of love, but may display affection less overtly; he is also the source of authority and punishment.¹³

Again, I feel compelled to point out that the above statement is a generalization. Many examples of families can be given in which the above statement is not entirely true.

In the cities and among the wealthy and educated classes family life looks much as it does in the West. However, in the countryside the extended family is still the norm. Along with their father, “Babba” (there is no p in Arabic thus babba instead of poppa) and mother, “Mamma” a child might live not only with his or her brother, “Akh” and sister “Akht,” but also his grandparents might live in the same house. Lebanese children call their grandfather “Jiddo” and their grandmother “Taytay.” These are phonetic spellings of informal spoken Arabic as are other Arabic words that will be used in this paper.

It is common for a mother to call her child “Mamma” and for a father to call his child “Babba.” Other family members might refer to a child by the position they hold as well. There are totally different words to describe the in-laws on the father’s side and mother’s side of the family. Your uncle on your mother’s side would be referred to as “Khalo.” An uncle on your father’s side is referred to as “Yammo.” “Yammo” is also a term of respect that is used for an older man who is a friend of the family as a term of respect.¹⁴ The value of this custom of specifically identifying family members is that it reinforces family relationships.¹⁵ Much of what is done, and how it is done, in Lebanon depends on a knowledge of family relationships.¹⁶

It is also possible that your uncle and aunt as well as your cousins might live in the same house or nearby. Again, this is more common in the countryside. The Lebanese child is very close to his or her cousins. Often times, a cousin may have the same standing as a sibling. (Note: for more Arabic words see Appendix A.)

Rarely would a child be put in day care, it is much preferable for the grandparents to take care of the child. There are several advantages to this, including safety, cost, and certainty that the grandparents will pass on values such as respect and honor that are important to the family.

Respect and Honor

In a Lebanese family, it is very important for a child to show respect. When adults in Lebanon meet each other on the street they exchange greetings asking about the health of each other and their families. Often they kiss on the cheeks three times (first to the left, right and then left again.) Young people also show respect when greeting adults.

Along with respect, the child is expected to do nothing that will shame the family. A child is taught from an early age to abide by the rules of society. It is felt that if a child (or adult for that matter) does anything that discredits himself that individual will bring shame to the whole family. This would be unacceptable because the future of the whole family may suffer as a result.

If you are a boy in Lebanon your family would have different expectations of you than if you were a girl. In all regions, socio-economic groups, and religions of the country the male is favored above the female. When a son is born the father will give a bigger feast than when a daughter is born. When the first boy in the family is born people start calling the parents “father of (son’s name)” or “mother of (son’s name).”

The first male child born to the eldest son is named after the grandfather. (The father’s father.) This is done to pay respect to the grandfather. This practice insures that the grandfather’s memory is honored after he dies.

It can be said that in more cases than not the family unit in Lebanon is very strong. Lebanese social and economic tradition is based on the close-knit family. A business owner would prefer to hire a family member before hiring someone else. This comes not only from the standpoint of trust but also from a feeling of obligation to take care of family members. Even politics in Lebanon finds its roots in the family.

School

Just as in our own country, school is a very big part of a child's life in Lebanon. A major goal for a family is to get a good education for the children. Children must go to school from the time that they are six years old until they are fourteen. Primary education is free, but if the family can afford it, they might send their child to a private religious school to get a better education. French and English are often taught in private schools. After primary school a student may elect to get a secondary education in a low-cost government school or a technical education at the National School of Arts and Crafts. After secondary school a student may attend one of the many universities such as the Beirut Arab University, Lebanese University, Saint Joseph University, or the American University of Beirut. Many students go to universities in other countries. Children who go to college earn great respect from their family. Children in Lebanon receive one of the best educations in the Middle East and 86.4% of the population is literate; 90.8% of the males and 82.2% of the females age 15 and over can read and write.¹⁷

How Children Spend Their Leisure Time

Children in Lebanon spend their leisure time in much the same way that children in America do. One of the favorite pastimes of children in Lebanon is playing soccer. Basketball is another sport which is becoming popular in Lebanon. Urban children play in schoolyards and playgrounds. In the summer children like to swim and play other water sports. When they are at home they often watch television or play ping pong or board games.¹⁸ Video games are available, but are not as widespread as in the United States. Children may play on bicycles and Big Wheels. Recently a Barbie Doll with Arab features has been introduced. For those children who can afford it, water skiing at the shore and snow skiing in the mountains is popular. Children from higher income families are more likely to have toys that are similar to those of Western children.

Children also like to hang out with friends. This is learned from their parents who love to socialize. It is more likely that a child's mother would socialize with her friends at home, while the father might visit a café where he would play cards, chess, or a board game called Tawaleh that is similar to backgammon. They also enjoy playing billiards.¹⁹

If you were a child of an upper class family, whether Christian or Muslim, there is a good chance that you would read and write in both Arabic and French. Babar the Elephant and Asterix and Cleopatra are two popular French series for children in Lebanon. If you were from the more educated class you might read in English as well. If that were the case you would read many of the same books that American children read. Children from wealthier families grow up with much the same toys, and books, as children in the US.

Dwellings

Just as in our country, what your home is like is going to depend upon how much money your family has and if you live in the city, the suburbs, or in the country. In the city people often live in two to four bedroom apartments made of concrete. ²⁰ Depending on your family's situation these apartments may be very basic accommodations or they may be quite luxurious with all of the modern conveniences. In the city, homes have two water systems. The water system for the kitchen is chlorinated and the water system for the rest of the house is not.

People who live outside of the city live houses that are traditionally made of limestone walls and tiled or thatched roofs.²¹ Further out in the country the houses are even more basic. Many farmhouses are made of earth and include a room called a Liwan ("LEE-wan") that opens on to the outside through a large arched

doorway. The flat roof of the house is covered with dried mud.²² This mud roof often cracks when the weather is hot in the summer and the family has to go up on the roof to make repairs.

As mentioned above, in the Palestinian refugee camps the shelters are close quartered with poor sanitation. However, even in the middle class there are many more people to a house or room than we are used to in the United States.²³ The extremes of living conditions in Lebanon illustrate the diverse socio-economic situation in the country.

Lebanese Cuisine

As with any cuisine, the locally available produce plays a major role in what people eat. Thus it should not be surprising that olive oil and fresh fruits and vegetables, which are available in the area, are staples of the diet. Lebanese cuisine however uses many spices that are not indigenous to the country. Geography may play a role here. As mentioned elsewhere, the location of Lebanon at a crossroads of sea and land travel brought in the influence of many cultures. Likewise as a trading center, spices from far reaching areas became available to the Lebanese.

Lebanese food shares certain similarities with the cuisines of other Middle East countries. Common ingredients include lamb, eggplant, chickpeas, yogurt, garlic, mint, and olive oil combinations. In Lebanon, however, they are combined and prepared in a way that helps to make Lebanese food especially delicious.²⁴

Felafel, hummus and ful are indispensable dishes for most meals. Felafel (“FEHL-a-fehl”) are balls of chickpea paste mixed with spices and deep fried. It is often served in pita bread with fresh tomatoes and/or pickled vegetables. Felafel can be eaten with Arabic bread. A variation of this is shawarma (“shah-WAHR-mah”) which is made with meat.

Hummus (“HUM-us”) is made with chickpea paste and mixed with lemon, sesame oil, and garlic.

Fuul (“FU-ul”) is made with fava beans (either whole or ground), garlic, sesame seed oil (tahini) and lemon.

Kibbi or kibbe (“KIBB-ee”) is made of meat and cracked wheat shaped into a ball and deep-fried. They are often stuffed with more meat, chopped walnuts and onions.

Traditionally, lunches and dinners are eaten in a leisurely manner. In Lebanon it is the custom to eat many foods with the fingers. The left hand is never used when eating. Meals often begin with tabbouleh (“tah-BOOL-uh”), which is a salad of chopped parsley, onions, tomatoes and cracked wheat. It is often scooped up with pita bread which is used a spoon. Besides hummus, a strained yogurt, called lebni, and an eggplant dip, baba ghanuj, are popular. Lamb served with rice is often the main dish. The lamb may be in the form of cubes on skewers or stewed with okra. Grilled lamb is also popular. Sometimes the lamb is ground and mixed with spices and parsley and onions. Chicken is another favorite main dish.

Oval shaped bread called khobez (“KOH-bez”), which is popular in many Arab countries, is often served hot with meals. In the United States this is known as pita bread.

A Mezza (“MEZ-a”) is a spread of hot and cold hors d’oeuvres. There are many different dishes on a mezza such as rice and meat wrapped in grape leaves, mashed beans, spicy meat balls, and shish-kebab jab.

Coffee and tea are popular drinks. They are much stronger than what we drink in the United States. Turkish coffee is often very thick and muddy looking, and is served in a demitasse with sugar. Arabic coffee is flavored

with cardamom and served in small cups that have no handles. Sugar is not put in Arabic coffee.

Wine is sometimes served with meals. Arak is an alcoholic drink that turns a milky white when mixed with water. Jellahb (“JELL-ahb”) is a non-alcoholic drink made from raisins and served with pine nuts. Limonada (“LIM-on-AH-DAH”) is lemonade. Some yogurts are also drunk.

Desserts tend to be very sweet. An example of this is baklava (“BAHK-lah-vah”), which is a flaky pastry, filled with honey and chopped nuts and covered with a thick rose-flavored syrup. Milk custard with pine nuts and almonds, and semolina cakes filled with walnuts or dates are other popular deserts.²⁵

The following is a description of a Beirut restaurant as described in Jean Said Madisi’s memoir, *Beirut Fragments*. She tells of entering the restaurant called Ajame, through arched doors, and passing huge mounds of mangoes, custard apples, pomegranates, grapes, figs, and whatever other fruit was in season. After a long wait for a table, because the restaurant was a gathering place, the waiters sat you.

...small, round, brown earthenware dishes would come to your table full of fowl, hummos and baba ghanouj, pickles, olives, onions, salads of all sorts. You would cut a piece from the round loaves of warm bread served in small wicker baskets and dip into those dishes with the assurance that this was the best food of its kind in the world. Then would come your shawarma, shisk kabab, fish, or other entrée, and then dessert, usually fresh fruit from that mound exhibited at the entrance. Finally would come the coffee, bitter or sweet, served in small cups and lingered over.²⁶

Society

Lebanon is not a typical Arab country even though the people of Lebanon identify themselves as Arabs. It historically had strong ties with the West, and from 1918-1946 it was a French mandate. At one time Beirut was considered the Paris of the Middle East. Today Lebanon has a blend of French and traditional Arab culture. This blend of the two cultures is evidenced in the Baalbek Festival.

The Baalbeck Festival

The culminating activity of this unit will be to create a “Baalbeck Festival.” The purpose of this section is to give a brief description of the Baalbeck Festival and how it relates to Lebanese Culture. The following background was obtained from the *Baalbeck Festival Web Site* at <http://www.baalbeck.org.lb/main.htm> which gives much more information about the Festival, the culture of Lebanon, Lebanese performers and artists, as well as the history of the temples.

Baalbeck is located in the Bekaa Valley at the point where the Orontes River flows north and the Litani River flows south. It is 89 km from Beirut, less than two hours by car. It was the site of a Phoenician temple “dedicated to the worship of Baal, a Semitic deity.”²⁷ Later the Greeks built an Acropolis on the site. The Greeks called the town Heliopolis which means City of the Sun.

The Romans built new temples on the site. The largest, completed in AD 60, is dedicated to Jupiter. The temples dedicated to Bacchus and Venus, were built in the next 200 years during the reign of the Syro-Roman emperors including, Phillip the Arab. It is thought that “In erecting this monumental edifice, Rome wanted to

assert the supremacy of its atheist religion at a site close to the birthplace of Christianity, which was rapidly becoming a destabilizing force within the empire.”²⁸

After Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity in 312 the temples became churches. Four hundred years later, the Arab conquerors turned the Acropolis into a military fortress. Over the centuries, earthquakes damaged them, but they still stand as some of the best preserved examples of Roman temples.

The roots of the Festival date to 1922 with the reciting of poetry in the ruins by a group of Lebanese and French.²⁹ In 1954 a series of theatrical performances took place. This led to the establishment of the Baalbeck International Festival in 1956, featuring cultural and artistic activities. “The characteristic Lebanese spirit of initiative, coupled with traditional oriental hospitality gradually succeeded in convincing major artists to come in increasing numbers to Baalbeck.”³⁰ The Paris and Milan Operas, the New York and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras, and the Old Vic Theatre Company, Rudolf Nouréiev, and the rock star Sting, are among the participants in the festival over the years.

The Festival evolved in two main directions. It kept with Lebanon’s heritage as a crossroads of civilizations, bridging East and West, and it celebrated creativity by producing original works commissioned from contemporary writers and composers. Of particular significance to Lebanon’s cultural and artistic development was the presentation of works that had been specifically created for the Festival by the Rahbani brothers, Assi and Mansour, by Roméo, Aline and Papou Lahoud, and by the two great singers Feyrouz (<http://Fayrouz.org>) and Sabah, as well as by Abdel Halim Caracalla and his folk dance company.³¹

The Baalbeck International Festival was interrupted by the civil war (1975-1996) in Lebanon and it resumed its activities in 1997. While the Baalbeck Festival is the most famous festival in Lebanon, there are several other festivals and holidays which are celebrated.

Islamic holidays follow a lunar calendar and are not celebrated on a fixed date. Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, which is a three day feast at the end of Ramadan. Ramadan is a month of fasting from sunrise to dusk for Muslims. Muslims also celebrate the prophet Muhammad’s birthday. Eid ul-Adha is a feast held at the end of a pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Christians celebrate Christmas (Dec. 25), Easter, which follows a lunar calendar, and the Assumption (Aug. 15). The national holidays include New Year’s Day, Labor Day (May 1), and Independence Day (Nov. 22.)

Appendix A

The Arabic Language

The Arabic Language is spoken in the Middle East and in North Africa. Almost all Lebanese speak Arabic, which is the official language of the country. Arabic is one of the defining traits of the people we call Arabs. However, just as in the English speaking countries of the world where there are different idioms used from country to country, the Arabic spoken language varies from region to region. The Arabic spoken in North Africa, for example, has more French and Berber words, and may be almost unrecognizable to an Arabic speaking

person from Lebanon who speaks a dialect that is closer to Formal Standard Arabic.³² The Lebanese dialect is similar to that of Jordan and Syria. While spoken Arabic varies from region to region the Arabic written language, on the other hand, which is known as Modern Standard Arabic, is uniform across the region. Classical Arabic is the language of the Quran and is uniform as well.

Arabic has twenty-eight letters and is always written in Arabic script. Arabic is written and read from right to left. As in Spanish or Italian, different forms are used when addressing men and women. In Arabic, adjectives follow nouns so you would say “cow brown” instead of “brown cow.” One odd fact is that in the Western World we use Arabic numerals but Arabs use ancient Indian numbers instead.

In addition to Arabic, other languages may be used in Lebanon. The Armenian people speak Armenian. English is often used in business. Arabic, French and English are taught in school.

Some of the following Arabic words and phrases were found in the Muttaqun Online English to Arabic Dictionary at: <http://muttaqun.com/arabic/english2arabic.html> on the web. The purpose of this list is to get you started. The students can be challenged to find additional words on the web, in the library, or from friends who speak Arabic.

Father = Ab

Mother = Um

Husband = Zawj

Wife = Zawja

Son = Ibn

Daughter = Ibna or Bint

Friend = Sadik if a male, sadikka if a female

I = Ana

No = laa

Yes = na'am

What is your name? = Ma Ismok?

Good morning = Sabah AlKair

Good evening = Masa' AlKair

Good night = Laila Tiaba (or Tisbah alKair)

Excuse me, I'm sorry, you're welcome = 'afwan

How are you? = Kaifa Halok?

Please = Min Fadilak

Thank you = shukran

You (singular) -- Anta (m), Anti (f) You (plural) = Antom (m), Antona (f)

School = Madrassa

I do not understand = Ana laa Afham

Appendix B

Internet Resources

Liban Vision

This site is in French but has a lot of information on the culture, economics, history, and fashion in Lebanon. It also tells of interesting places to visit. This might be used in conjunction with the French class at school.

www.LibanVision.com

Ministry of Tourism

This site offers information on places to go and things to do in Lebanon.

www.lebanon-tourism.gov.lb

The Baalbeck Festival Information on the Festival for 2002. Includes history and many useful links.
(<http://baalbeck.org.lb>) note: be sure to add LB for Lebanon after org.

Lebanon , Lebanese American Association , LAA Geography, culture and history of Lebanon from Phoenicians to today. <http://www.laa.org/tours/tourmap.html>

How it all began - A concise history of Lebanon Book chapter excerpt about the creation of Lebanon in 1920.
<http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/900/902/Kamal-Salibi/#salibi>

Lebanon Profile of Lebanon- Economy, defense, geography, government and people.
<http://www.emulateme.com/lebanon.html>

Travel to Lebanon Information about things to do and see in Lebanon

(<http://www.travel-to-Lebanon.com>)

Shams Inati Professor of Middle East Studies Villanova, <http://www.homepage.villanova.edu/shams.inati> useful resource with links

Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan One

Create a Baalbeck Festival

Overview: This lesson teaches Lebanese culture; heritage, traditions, holidays, music and art. The students will create their own version of the famous Baalbeck Festival which is held each year at the Roman ruins of the ancient city of Baalbeck, Lebanon. There visitors can enjoy opera, ballet, symphony and drama as well as traditional Lebanese song, dance, poetry, and crafts. Our version will be a combination of the festival and a Lebanese marketplace where farm produce, foods, and goods such as handmade linens and inlaid wooden items are sold.

Grade Range: Students in grades 1-6 will present projects that they have worked on throughout the year.

Duration: The festival will take place for two days in the school auditorium. All of the students in the school will be invited to enjoy the festivities.

Lesson Plan Objectives:

The purpose is to allow students to develop an appreciation of the diverse Arab Culture of this small country.

The students will develop tolerance toward cultures which are different from their own.

Social Studies Standards

1. Distinguish differences and similarities among individuals and families.
2. Compare different holidays, traditions and celebrations around the world.
3. Read, view and listen to multiple sources that reflect diversity of culture.
4. Identify and compare different types of global communities.

Lesson Notes

Collaboration: Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers Involved

Classroom teachers in grades 1-6 will assign and present appropriate materials to the students. The students will acquire background information from books, video, and internet research. They will study the family life, housing, clothing, manners and customs, schools, geography, and history of Lebanon. The teacher will help the students to relate what is learned to their own lives. The lessons will incorporate Social Studies, Language Arts, Math, and Science whenever possible.

The Art teacher and the Industrial Arts Teacher will help the students make arts and crafts similar to those made in Lebanon.

Note: for Arts and Crafts projects that reflect an Arab theme, see the Yale New Haven Teachers Institute Unit created by Judith Zurkus 2002, called *Islamic Art: Exploring the Visual Arts of the Middle East* .

The Music Teacher will teach the students folk songs from Lebanon. A good source is the Fayrouz (fay ROOZ) Website at <http://Fayrouz.org>. Fayrouz, whose real name is Nouhad Haddad, is a Lebanese woman who is popular all over the Arab world. "She became popular by singing traditional Arab songs in a way that made them come alive to the listener. She also created new kinds of music by blending different styles and instruments."33

The Gym Teachers will teach the students folk dances done in Lebanon such as the Dabke which is the national dance and done at weddings and parties, usually to the beat of a drum called a derbakka. Directions for doing the Dabke can be found at <http://mobilityexpress.com/sourat/dabke.htm>

The Home Economics Teacher will help the students create a Mezza (a spread of Lebanese foods) to be samples by the students who visit the festival. See some sample recipes provided in Appendix B of this unit as well as lesson three of this unit.

Materials

Internet, books such as *Fiesta! Lebanon: A Portrait of the Country Through Its Festival and Traditions* by Richard Kennedy Walker, magazines, various arts and crafts materials as needed.

Preparations

Students in grade 6 should design a "passport" for all of the students in the school. Using a digital camera the students' pictures should be put on the passports. When the students arrive at the Festival the passport will be stamped with a symbol that is appropriate for Lebanon, perhaps a cedar tree stamp.

Each teacher will be responsible for creating and storing the projects made under that teacher's supervision.

Tables will have to be located and brought to the festival area beforehand. Another possibility is to have the Industrial Arts teacher and students make "street vendor carts" which can be brightly decorated.

Any televisions, VCRs, tape players, projectors, or computers that will be needed must be located and brought to the festival area.

Volunteers will be needed to setup and the displays of the students' projects and the food.

Student volunteers will stamp the passports as the other students arrive at the festival.

Students will sing, dance, and perform.

Assessment

The assessment of this Festival will be through observation of the students and how much they are enjoying the activities.

Further assessment will be through observation of the quality of the displays.

Teachers will be given a questionnaire asking for suggestions of how to make the festival better if it should be held in the future.

Lesson Plan 2

The Geography and Location of Lebanon

A. Objectives:

1. Geography skills- the students will learn about coastal plains, mountains, valleys, and rivers. They will locate these and the capital city of Beirut on the map of Lebanon. They will also locate the town of Baalbeck.
2. The students will see the relationships between geographical location Lebanon and the influence the influences that have led to occupation, wars, civilization, and even cuisine.

B. Materials:

1. Globe
2. Map of the Middle East
- 3 Map of Lebanon
4. Crayons

C. Key Vocabulary:

1. Lebanon
2. Palestine.
3. Jordan
4. Israel
5. Syria

6. Egypt
7. Middle East
8. Mediterranean Sea
9. Lebanon Mountains, Anti-Lebanon Mountains
10. valley
11. river
- 13.. Beirut - Beirut is the capital and most populated city in Lebanon.
14. continent

D. Procedures/Activities:

1. Give each student a copy of the map of the Eastern Hemisphere

Locate Lebanon in relation to Europe, Asia, and Africa.

2. Locate the Middle East.
3. Locate the Mediterranean Sea.
4. Locate Beirut and Baalbeck.
5. Give each student a copy of the map of Lebanon
7. Locate important topographical areas.

8. Label and color the maps

E. Evaluation/Assessment:

1. The students' correct coloring of the maps.
2. The students' abilities to listen and follow directions in correctly locating mountains, valley, rivers, and the capital city.

Lesson Plan Three

Lebanese Foods

This lesson will teach students how to prepare simple Lebanese foods. They will prepare a Mezze. Using an online Arabic dictionary, they will create signs and posters advertising the festival. They will label the foods.

A. Objectives:

1. The students will be introduced to some of the more familiar Lebanese foods and learn the names of the foods in Arabic.
2. Reading and following directions- The students will read recipes and follow the steps for preparing Lebanese foods.
3. The students will follow sequenced instructions to make Hummus.

B. Key Vocabulary:

1. chickpeas
2. garlic
3. lemon juice
4. tahini (sesame paste)
5. olive oil
6. paprika
7. parsley
8. mince
9. purée
10. hummus

C. Ingredients Needed

- 1 16 oz. can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 large clove of garlic
- 1/2 cup of lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons of tahini (sesame paste)
- 2 tablespoon of water

2 tablespoon of olive oil

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon paprika

1/4 cup chopped parsley

D. Procedure

The students will follow the following steps:

1. Mince the garlic in a food processor.
2. Add the chickpeas and purée
3. Add the lemon juice, tahini, water, salt, and one tablespoon of olive oil
4. Purée for two minutes or until the mixture is smooth
5. For variety, add roasted garlic or roasted red peppers before puréeing
6. After the hummus is very smooth place on a plate lined with lettuce leaves
7. Make an impression in the center of the hummus and add the other tablespoon of olive oil
8. Sprinkle on the paprika and chopped parsley.
9. Serve with Arabic flatbread or pita.

E: Other Activities:

1. Using the Internet, library, and cookbooks, the students will research other recipes including, tabouli, baba ganousie, to create a Lebanese Mezzo (spread of foods). This Mezzo will be presented at the "Baalbeck" Festival.
2. List the foods mentioned in the book. Learn the Arabic pronunciation of the foods.
3. The students will write a paragraph describing their favorite Lebanese foods and how they made them. They will make illustrations of the foods.

E. Evaluation/Assessment:

1. Students will be assessed by the outcome of the foods they prepare and how well they follow directions.
2. Students will be assessed on the paragraphs and drawings.

Lesson Plan 4

Plan a trip in Baalbeck to the Festival

The lessons above may be used to create a Festival. The following lesson should be completed before the festival begins.

The students will use various websites including those listed above and others that they may find to “book” a trip to Lebanon and the Baalbeck Festival. They will make flight and hotel reservations, figure out money conversions, arrange transportation to the Beeka Valley from Beirut, purchase tickets, food, and other needed items. If the website becomes unavailable in the future, the lesson may be done using individual websites that the teacher can research in advance for the students.

A. Objectives:

1. The students will plan a trip to Lebanon using several different disciplines
2. The students will develop Internet skills. They will use the Internet to book airline tickets and hotel reservations. They will use the Internet to do money conversions. They will use the internet to learn some basic travel vocabulary in Arabic.
3. The students will build Math skills. They will convert money.
4. The students will build Science skills. They will research the weather and make informed decisions as to what to pack.

C. Procedure

The students have studied the country of Lebanon and they are familiar with what the Baalbeck Festival is. They are told that they will be planning a trip to the festival which is held in June through July. The students will be told that they have \$10,000 to spend and they must keep within their budgets.

1. Using the Internet they will look up the value of the Lebanese pound and do conversions.
2. Using the Internet, they are to find the names of hotels in Beirut. They will find out the rates and availability and will “e-mail” the hotels to make reservations. Of course the e-mails will not be sent and no real reservations will be made.
3. The students will find airline flights to Beirut. They will have to get the best price available so as not to go over their budgets.
4. The students will use the Internet to find out the temperature in Lebanon during June and July. They will be required to make a list of clothing and other essential items that they will “pack.”
5. The students will find Baalbeck on a map and find how far it is from Beirut. (about 90 miles.) They will have

to decide how they will get to the festival and if they want to get a hotel there or commute.

6. Using the Internet the students will compile a list of useful travel phrases ?” in Arabic, such as “How much does this cost?”

7. The students will go to the Baalbeck Festival website to learn the history of the festival, the price of tickets and what performers will be at the festival.

8. The students will be required to keep a journal starting with their research of the trip and ending after they attend their own festival which is part of another lesson.

E: Evaluation

This lesson will be evaluated by the journal which the students will be required to keep.

The students will be required to answer the following questions:

Using the internet, find out the weather for various months in Lebanon. The Festival is held in July and August. What is the average day and night time temp? What is the humidity? What are the chances of rain?

On a given date, what is the value of the Lebanese pound to the American dollar?

What is the name of the hotel(s) you booked?

For what dates did you book the hotel?

For what rate did you book the hotel?

What is the average day and night time temperature in Beirut during July and August? (at Baalack?)

What did you pack for the trip?

What foods do you expect to eat while in Lebanon?

What is your list of Arabic phrases that you will need to travel.

What performances do you plan to see at the festival?

What is the total cost of your trip?

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notes

1 Baalbeck is spelled Baalbeck on the festival's website. Because Arabic has some sounds which are not used in English and also does not have some letters that are used in English, words are spelled phonetically when translated which results in variations in spelling.

2 Leila Merrell Foster. *Enchantment of the World: Lebanon*, Chicago, 1995. pg. 8

3 *Culture Grams Lebanon* , David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University. Provo, UT, 2001. page 1.

4 *Lebanon Fact Book CIA* July 2001. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/le.html>

5 *UN Population Figures Web Site* July, 2002 <http://www.un.org.lb/unteam/agencies/unrwa.html>

6 Margaret K. Nydell. *Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Westerners* . Yarmouth, Maine. Pg. 133.

7 Thomas Collelo, editor. *LEBANON- Country Study* Federal Research Division, Library of Congress Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress. December 1987

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10 Linda S. George. *The Golden Age of Islam*. New York. 1998. pgs. 38-43.

11 Ibid. Collelo,

12 Foster pg. 115.

13 Margaret K. Nydell, *Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Westerners* . Yarmouth, Maine. 2000. Pg. 78.

14 According to Oussamia Inati, Number one son-in-law.

15 According to Ellen Lust-Okar, Professor of Political Science, Yale University.

16 Ellen Lust-Okar

17 Several sources including: Foster, Leila Merrell. *Enchantment of the World: Lebanon* . Childrens Press. Chicago, 1995. pg. 115. and, Sheehan, Sean. *Cultures of the World, Lebanon* . Marshall Cavendish, New York, 1997. pg. 73 and, *Culture Grams* pg. 4

18 Sheehan pg. 106-107.

19 Sheehan pg. 104-107.

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21 Foster pg. 115.

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23 Ellen Lust-Okar

24 *Cultures of the World Lebanon* pg. 115

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27 Baalbeck Festival Website July, 2002 <http://www.baalbeck.org.lb/main.htm>

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ellen Lust-Okar

33 Culture Gram Kids Edition , David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University. Provo, UT, 2001. page 4.

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