

A Day In The Life Of An Enslaved Child

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INTRODUCTION

What this Unit is About

The theme of my curriculum unit is, “A Day in the Life of an Enslaved Child.” This unit includes different aspects of the same theme:

- A Day in the Life of a Field Slave
- A Day in the Life of a House Slave
- My First Day as a Hired Hand
- The Day “Master” Got Angry
- The Day My Mammy Left

Slave children between the ages of 10 to 14 were referred to as “working girls and boys.” We will talk about what some of their duties were, and why they were made to do such work. Children also had chores to do for their parents. What responsibilities did they have? What games did children play when they were not working for the master or for their parents?

Slave children had no money to buy toys or games, so they either made or invented their own. John Price explained it best in Belinda Hurmence’s book, *Slavery Time, When I was a Chillum*, about play time for slave children. “Us chillum make marbles out of clay and dry them and play with them. Us always riding old stick horses -tie a rope to the stick and call it a martingale [rein]” (Hurmence 4).

No slave, young or old, was exempt from work: Mary Island of Louisiana remembers “washing dishes when I was four years old. When I was six, I carried water. When I got to be seven years old, I was cutting sprouts almost like a man, and when I was eight, I could pick one hundred pounds of cotton” (Hurmence 3).

Students will be able to analyze in detail the lives of enslaved children, by going through the process of a day at work. This will include all the duties, responsibilities and consequences of that lifestyle. They will also study the enslaved child’s family unit and social structure, religious practices, medicine, special occasions and celebrations.

Who Are my Students?

The students I teach are new to this country. They come from Latin America, and a high percentage are “at risk.” Their parents move frequently looking for work, and for most of

them this is the first time they will be learning about another culture. In general, their view of the world outside their own culture is very limited. Slavery represents little more to my students than the ideas of work without pay and being forcefully removed from one's own homeland.

I want to teach my students what a slave had to go through daily to complete allotted chores. What duties and responsibilities each slave had depended on their abilities, age, gender, and also looks. By going through the process of a day's work as a slave, my students can make a connection to the kind of lives slaves had to endure. I would especially like to teach my students about the slave children in more detail. I think they will make a stronger connection, and be able to compare their lives to those of less fortunate children. By comparing, contrasting and analyzing, my students will develop their critical thinking skills.

My students will develop a clearer understanding of slavery. They will be able to study the people, their legacy and their traditions. They will learn how these people had to adapt and adjust their traditions and beliefs to their new way of life in a new country. This unit will enrich my student's lives, because each student will be able to understand themselves and other people better, making them more likely to be well rounded and well adjusted adults.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Some of the teaching strategies I will use include readings of transcripts from former slaves and of stories passed down by slaves from generation to generation (*When I was a Chillum* by Belinda Husmence). These readings will provide my students with first hand knowledge of the life experiences of African American slaves. Then, students will write a first-hand personal account taken from the perspective of a slave. This process will help them create a stronger intimate connection to the topic.

I plan to take my students on a field trip to a plantation, so they can experience first hand some of the topics covered in the classroom. We will also study tools and artifacts the slaves used in their daily lives. We will bring in a guest speaker or a storyteller with a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter.

In one particular assignment, slaves' jobs will be divided into three categories: domestic, skilled, and unskilled field work. Students will create a chart with three columns: in the first column, they will list the jobs that a domestic worker would do; in the second column list the jobs of skilled laborers; and in the third column list the jobs of unskilled field workers. Which jobs do you think were most sought after? List the advantages and disadvantages of each category.

The students will view films and documentaries (the film *Amistad*). They will do research at the library and on the Internet. They will create journals, newspaper articles,

and stories. They will also write a play on slavery as a cooperative learning activity. They will do skits and role playing, all based on the information that is acquired on the topic.

THE WORK OF ENSLAVED CHILDREN

When the enslaved children started working on the plantation, they were used to help older workers, and as the children grew older, they became experienced substitutes for aging adults. The ages at which the slaves engaged in regular routines varied according to slave owners and to the size of their slave holdings. Thomas Jefferson ordered that “children till 10 years old to serve as nurses. From 10 to 16 the boys make nails, the girls spin. At age 16 go into the grounds or learn trades” (*Nailmaking at Monticello*).

Enslaved children toiled at specific chores, in labor gangs, and under the task system. Regardless of the labor system, children began to work at a young age. In an interview with a WPA worker, Mingo White, a former slave who lived in Burleson in Franklin County, Alabama, remembered his childhood:

I weren't nothing but a child, but I had to work the same as any man. I went to the field and hoed cotton, pulled fodder, and picked cotton with the rest of the hands. In the winter I went to the woods with the men folks to get wood or sap from the trees to make turpentine and tar. We made charcoal to run the blacksmith shop with. I also helped my mammy with her work. Her task was too hard for any one person. She had to serve as maid to Mr. White's daughter, cook for all the hands, spin and card four cuts of thread a day, 144 threads to the cut, and then wash (Hurmence 32).

Whether children worked in large or small households for persons who owned or hired them, they performed a variety of chores. In the nineteenth century an estimated 5 to 10 percent of the slave population and nearly one third of urban slaves, depending upon the area, worked as hired hands (Schwartz 112). Based on a study of slaves hired in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, between 1782 and 1810, Sarah S. Hughes wrote, “before their childhood ended, most blacks spent at least a year working as a hired servant outside their home household” (Schwartz 112). Henry Bibb from Tennessee talked about his experiences as a hired hand, in his interviews for the Federal Writers' Project. “My duties included cleaning floors and polishing furniture, and I also had to work for my owner, who sometimes sat motionless in a rocking chair while I pushed it. She was too lazy to scratch her own head, and would often make me scratch and comb it for her” (Schwartz 114).

Slavery forced children to “grow up” fast and perform “adult” jobs including caring for children. Louise Jones, who was nearly ten years old when slavery ended, recalled caring for babies and using meat skin tied to a string around their necks as a pacifier. The Missouri born Mary Bell had a job that was somewhat unusual. “Dey put me on a pony at

meal time,” she said, “to ride out to the field and call de hands to dinner.” William Hutson, who lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when interviewed, said he carried a little black bag when his owner went “a-doctering folks” (King 65).

The little workers were in abundance. Between 1820 and 1860 the number of slaves under twenty years of age exceeded the number of those over twenty years old. Joseph Ingraham, an Episcopal minister, wrote: “The carriage driver must not only have his deputy hostler . . . The gardener has his aides; the farm nurse hers and all this army of juveniles are in full training to take the places, by and by, of those to whom they are apprenticed . . .” (King 66).

After ten years of age, children worked at more routine domestic, agricultural, or industrial jobs. The size and location of a house, farm, or shop determined the amount and kind of work performed. Cash crops such as indigo, rice, cotton, and sugar cane grew in the South. Wheat was grown outside the southern slave holding states following the nineteenth century. Most plantations also grew the food needed for their own consumption. Domestic and personal service work knew no geographical boundaries, and it was adaptable to private and public places such as inns, hotels, or taverns. The freedman Frank Bell, living in Texas when interviewed, used his housekeeping skills in the saloon where he worked as a child to keep “everything cleaned up after the patrons have all night drinking parties” (King 67). Slaves performed industrial work including spinning, weaving, milling, and ginning, in private homes and public establishments.

Housewifery and domestic work were the two distinct categories of work for house servants. Domestic work involved preparing food, cleaning and maintaining living quarters, caring for children, laundering and repairing clothes. Housewifery required the care of poultry and livestock, and the manufacturing of clothes and household items including soap and candles. The size of a household determined whether these categories were clearly defined or combined. These chores were gender blind; consequently, slave boys and girls cleaned, served meals, attended to the poultry, and assisted in making clothes.

Whether small children were purchased or raised at home, they performed duties expressly chosen to cultivate in them an awareness of the southern social hierarchy and their subordinate place within it. Many planters stationed little boys and girls at a gate, ready to open and shut it as members of the white family or their guests came and went. Although she was no larger than her charge, Luella Holmes Williams became a companion to “Miss Lucy,” her owner’s daughter. Master and mistress held the enslaved girl responsible for Lucy wearing a bonnet outdoors. All members of the white family, as well as the overseer and his wife, enjoyed personal services performed by slave children. Girls usually waited on women and their daughters, boys on men and their sons. Enslaved children fetched items ranging from shoes and desserts to mail from the town.

PLAY AND LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES OF ENSLAVED CHILDREN

Once children began working they “couldn’t play round at chillum’s doing” as easily, yet they found time to enjoy themselves after completing assigned duties. Evenings, Sundays, and holidays offered respite from work and chances for recreation. “At night let the negroes employ themselves as they please till the bell rings,” read a Marengo County, Alabama slaveholder’s 1860 instructions (King 43).

Slaves spent free time attending to personal needs, resting, or engaging in formal and informal social activities. The former included planned activities involving others in the family or slave community, such as religious services, dances, or corn shucking. The latter were spontaneous events including gatherings in the quarters after work and free play among children. In 1937, the former slave James Bolton was eighty-five years old when a worker for a government project interviewed him in Athens, Georgia:

Saturday nights we played and danced, sometimes in the cabins, sometimes in the yards. Sometimes the men and women would carry torches of kindling wood while they danced. It sure was a sight to see! We danced the turkey trot and buzzard lope, and how we did love to dance the Mary Jane. We would get in a ring, and when the music started, we would begin working our feet while we sang.

We would sing and pray Easter Sunday, and on Easter Monday we frolicked and dance all day long! Christmas, we always had plenty of something to eat. We ran up to the big house early Christmas morning and holler out, “Morning, Christmas gift.” (Hurmence 4)

Conditions permitting, enslaved youngsters amused themselves with play and playthings. Boys and girls often played together, but some games were more gender specific than others. Boys engaged in activities associated with male sports and strength. Marbles were overwhelming attractions for them, while girls played with dolls, participated in ring games, and jumped rope.

Without money to purchase toys, young slaves fashioned their own toys from whatever was available, and they used their imagination freely. The freed woman Candis Goodwin explained that she and her friends gathered brown pine needles to build a playhouse and used the green needles for grass around the imaginary abode. Children molded marbles from clay and baked them in the sun, while rags and string were basic materials for making balls and dolls. Acorns became tiny cups and saucers.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Slaves used their faith to ease their suffering, explain mysteries, and ward off adversities for themselves and their children. Those accepting Christianity often synchronized with African traditional religions. They found facts of Christianity, especially as practiced by the evangelicals, compatible with their lifestyle. Spirit possession and initiation, highly significant events for Africans, were not unknown in the evangelical church (Schwartz 120).

There were many opportunities for them to attend formal religious services or receive approved religious instructions. Slaves sometimes accompanied their owners to church and attended evangelical meetings.

There weren't any church for slaves on our plantation. We went to the white folks' church and listened to the white preachers. We sat behind a partition. The church was about nine miles from the plantation and we all walked there. Anybody too old and feeble to walk the nine miles just stayed home, because Master didn't allow his mules used none on Sunday. All along the way, slaves from other plantations would join us. Sometimes before we get to the church house, there'd be forty or fifty coming along the road in a crowd. Preaching generally lasted till about three o'clock. In summertime, we had dinner on the ground at the church. Everybody cooked enough on Saturday and fetched it in baskets (Hurmenca 5).

The dissatisfaction with facets of the white church caused some slaves to seek religious outlets by holding their own services, and they went to great lengths to keep them secret. They gathered in arbors and hollows called "hush harbors" to sing and pray. As a child in the plantation South, Charles Crawly recalled that "slaves met an' worshipped from house to house an' honey," he said, "we talked to God all us wanted" (Hurmenca 5). To worship undetected, they hung wet blankets across the room or placed an overturned iron pot on the floor to muffle sounds.

Anna Woods, a former slave, remembered that "grown folks used to have church . . . out behind an old shed. They'd shout and they'd sing." Singing was a major part of their worship. Whether catering to the beliefs of organized churches or traditional beliefs, slaves sang songs such as "Nobody Knows de Trouble I see, Nobody Knows but Jesus" and "Some Times I Feel Like a Motherless Child" and "member Don't Git Weary." Their songs reflected the misery of bondage and anticipation of a final reward in heaven (Hurmenca 4).

YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR LIVES IN THE QUARTER

The enslaved girl Harriet fell into James M. Torbert's well and drowned on August 30, 1855. The Alabama planter noted the loss in his farm journal: "She was four years three months and 3 days old. Anthony comes to the plantation after me. I come home. Made a coffin and buried my little Negro I am Sorry my little Negro is dead, but I can't help it."

In July, Torbert had fashioned a coffin for another enslaved child and recorded the event in his journal. One of his father's slaves, a little boy named Arthur, had died, and Torbert oversaw his burial. No one recorded the reactions of the children's parents or told what, if any, role they played in making the funeral arrangements. Perhaps they took comfort in knowing their children were at peace and would not experience life in bondage. More likely, they grieved and considered the loss to be theirs, not Torbert's.

Enslaved parents and slave owners both staked claims to slave children and experienced a feeling of loss when the slave children died. The infant and child mortality rates were appallingly high among the enslaved population, especially in the coastal rice growing area. Black babies born in bondage died at twice the rate of white infants, and enslaved children continued to experience a higher rate of mortality than white children living beyond infancy (Schwartz 75).

Plantation policies that gave children a chance to survive, even when this meant reduced short-term profits from crops, held additional advantages for owners. Slaves raised properly at the home plantation from infancy proved more loyal and obedient than slaves purchased on the auction block, owners believed. Those that have been born and reared up in the master's household, or have long been members of his family, think of the owner as their father, opined one group of planters, who believed the strong attachment linking owner and slave lasted a lifetime (Schwartz 77).

Situations in which owners expressed an individual interest in a slave's child's welfare held some benefits for individual boys and girls, but it also threatened the fragile existence of the slave family. On the one hand, parents welcomed better supervision or special favors for their sons and daughters. On the other, the owner's attention to the details of child rearing curtailed the capacity of the enslaved family to create a cultural space where slaves could be critical of servitude and slave owners and could teach their children standards of behavior that differed from those of the owners (Schwartz 80).

Little doubt existed in the minds of enslaved parents as to who should be in charge of their children. Their experience in nurturing sons and daughters taught enslaved parents that children did not thrive without parental care, particularly the mother's (Schwartz 82). Enslaved parents believed that children who survived years of neglect might never recover from the deprivation. Josephine Bacchus, who had been enslaved in South Carolina, blamed her inability to carry a child to term in adulthood on her lack of

mothering in childhood. She had been a small girl when her mother died, and Josephine attributed her lifetime of poor health to that cause.

Because parents and owners could not or would not devote much time to the care of children, they kept childrearing tasks simple. Youngsters ate plain foods that could be prepared easily. Parents had time to prepare milk mixed with bread, or mush, for younger children, who preferred it flavored with molasses. Another food thought especially suitable for small children was cornbread with pot licker, possibly served with greens. The dairymaid woman on one South Carolina cotton plantation fed the children clabber each day after she finished the churning. She poured the leftover clabber in a big wooden tray kept under a tree near the dairy for this purpose, and then called the children to come and eat.

The simplicity of enslaved children's dress and the informality of toileting arrangements indicated that children could be kept dry and toilet trained with minimal effort. Children of both sexes old enough to walk or crawl about wore one piece garments with no underclothes, although leggings of some type might be provided in winter. They learned to relieve themselves outdoors in imitation of their parents and other adults. The simplicity of bedding helped ensure that bed-wetting was more of a nuisance than a transgression. Mattresses usually consisted of ticking stuffed with grass, corn shucks, hay, or pine needles. They dried quickly outdoors or in front of the fireplace, and parents could easily replace their filling. The pallets used by many children for sleeping could be washed or air-dried readily (Schwartz 82).

When planters did not set aside adequate time for enslaved parents to perform these tasks, mothers resorted to bathing youngsters and caring for their clothes at night or during the noon rest period that many owners provided for slaves and also work animals. Plantation rules required slaves to turn in by a certain time each night so that hands would be well rested for work the next day, but mothers could not always finish their cooking and washing before bed time, so in many cases they completed their household chores quietly in the dark (Schwartz 83).

A planter's success in reassigning childcare duties from parents to other slaves depended on the number and ages of youngsters living on the plantation, the availability of slaves to serve as caretakers, the trust placed in potential caregivers by owners and parents, the perceived danger of leaving children unattended, and the cycle of cultivation associated with the market crop grown on a particular plantation. As a result, child-rearing duties varied from one slave holding to another and from season to season (Schwartz 81).

The majority of planters who shifted responsibilities for childcare from parents to caretakers relied on a variety of adults to help rather than one specially designated person. This kept any one slave from assuming charge and challenging the owner's

power to make decisions about children's care. Among large slaveholders, rice planters proved the most successful in shifting parental responsibilities to other slaves.

Neither owners nor parents understood the cause of malaria, which plagued slaves on rice plantations, but both understood that mortality rates rose for the children during the warmer months of the year. Consequently, wealthy rice planters sent young children for weeks or months at a time to "pineland camps," which they rented or purchased for this purpose (Schwartz 85).

SALE OF ENSLAVED YOUTHS

The risk of separation from their families through sale was relatively low for very young children. The risk increased when children became able to do adult work. Laws prohibiting the sale of young children affected the interstate slave trade only. Local officials rarely enforced the laws; consequently, slave youths worried whenever they heard owners discussing a need for cash, for fear they would hear something like: "John, Mary I want you to get ready and go to the courthouse with me in the morning" (Perdue, Barden and Phillips 264).

The girls matured sooner than the boys, so they were working in the fields at earlier ages than the boys. Preteen and teenage girls were prized as house servants. Slaveholders who purchased girls expected to benefit from the births of children during the girls' fertile years (Schwartz 158). Virginia planter Ben Tinsley acquired nine-year-old Martha Showvely with the intention of having her make beds, clean, fill water pitchers, perform other odd jobs, and help with the cooking (Perdue, Barden and Phillips 265).

Slaves considered adolescence a time of sorrow because the risk of being sold increased as the children approached their mid-teens, and peaked between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. In contrast, owners viewed this time in the lives of enslaved children as a positive money making period. The risk of sale in the international slave trade peaked between the ages of fifteen and twenty five, but the vulnerability of being sold began as early as age eight and certainly by the age of ten, when enslaved children could work competently on the fields. As slaves moved into their thirties, their chances of being sold diminished substantially, but by then many of them had borne children who were or soon would be at risk for sale (Perdue, Barden and Phillips 157).

Owners expected to recover the cost of buying slaves by putting them to work immediately. Slaves who were purchased from a different area of the country had to get accustomed to their new environment quickly. This discouraged the purchase of young children or slaves who were too old and frail. Planters preferred to buy teenagers or young adults, who were expected to labor for many years, and who would also choose spouses and rear their own children.

The prices paid to purchase slave children depended on their ability to perform agricultural or household chores, not their age. Owners expected each slave they purchased to excel in something, that is, to have been trained to work. Consequently, speculators who purchased children just to profit from their resale sometime taught them skills before putting them up for auction. The training also involved jobs outside of field work, such as weaving, cooking, sewing, and maid service (Schwartz 160). Records pertaining to sales of slave children, classified them by their physical development, height or weight. Purchasers relied on these qualities to measure a slave's ability to perform a job. Sellers assigned ages arbitrarily to the slaves reflecting their physical maturity. These practices cause a lot of confusion among many slaves as to their own exact date of birth. Anna Maria Coffee, traded eleven times in South Carolina and Virginia before she reached her twenties, never knew her true age. In later life, the former slave explained that sellers "made my age jus' what they wanted it" (Brown 282).

Being purchased together did not guarantee that family members would stay together, especially if the sale involved a speculator. Families sold to individuals usually went to live with their new owners. Those slaves purchased by speculators who bought and resold slaves for profit could end up scattered away from their family. Even slaves belonging to a planter migrating from one region to another might not stay with family members if the slaveholder deemed a sale necessary or desirable (Schwartz 162). Former Virginia slave Susan Keys remembered at age eleven or twelve walking in a drove of slaves, called a coffle, all the way from the District of Columbia to Mississippi, where she was sold to new owners. Some of her companions never made it to Mississippi because they were sold along the way (Jones 309).

Youths who were not subject to permanent separation from their families were subject to short-term relocations as long as they could perform jobs that needed to be done. Owners and overseers moved slaves from one plantation to another to complete tasks more efficiently. Most of these relocations were for short periods of time, sometimes even just part of the day. Such short time assistance often was lent without expecting remuneration from one planter to another. Sometimes slaves were sent to another plantation for the duration of the planting or harvesting, in these occasions the slaves' owner expected to be paid for their own slaves' assistance in the labor (Morgan 59).

EDUCATION PRACTICES

When enslaved children reached the age of five or six, they faced harsh consequences for any misbehavior, but they tried to avoid punishment as best they could. Enslaved youths in their middle years were no longer excused for shortcomings by their masters. Children as young as five or six could perform tasks of economic benefit to their owners. Both girls and boys drove the master's cows to pasture, fed his chickens, and gathered eggs. They fetched water and wood for the mistress and for use in cooking, cleaning, laundering, bathing, etc. Little distinguished the labor of boys and girls at the youngest

age, but as they grew older they became more likely to engage in separate tasks (Tadman 45).

Because of the jobs they performed for their masters, enslaved children were in a position where they could inflict considerable damage to their owner's properties and also to the master's children. "One master found his buggy ruined when he left his horses in the care of a young boy while he visited a neighbor" (King 66). With so much to risk, owners did not hesitate to use disciplinary actions against the enslaved children who did not perform their jobs adequately. Unable to determine which enslaved child had burned down his barn while playing with matches, a Virginia planter lined up all the children he could find and gave each one a whipping, which produced the desired result for him. Although the actual culprit avoided punishment by hiding in the field, she never again played with "fire sticks," according to her later testimony (Tadman 129).

Slaveholders were concerned not only with teaching the enslaved children a skill, but also with teaching them the proper attitude to carry themselves. The owners' methods of teaching included corporal punishment and religious teachings. They also had the aid of the parents and other slaves to help them achieve their objective – a docile, hard working, dependent slave. Slaveholders held the legal right to chastise enslaved children and employed corporal punishment liberally. For much of the nineteenth century, whipping or other types of hitting passed for "education" concerning the training and socializing of enslaved children (Schwartz 109).

Punishment of children for even minor infractions could be severe, but the harsher methods were reserved for the adult slaves. Owners often held a child's head between their knees and administered blows to the backside with a hand or paddle. Although this could hurt, the blows did not break the skin. Some owners used disciplinary actions that were severe but that did not disfigure the children permanently in order to retain the child's value in the slave market (Tadman 67). Children punished repeatedly by owners tended to be those who worked closest to masters or mistresses. Henry Bank's Virginia master disciplined him for many infractions; he was once beaten just for looking angry. Mistresses also punished children in their middle years, especially those who worked in the home. Offenses included performing jobs poorly, violating rules of racial etiquette and stealing. Delia Garlic's mistress knocked her out with a stick of wood for blackening her eyebrows with smut from the fireplace. The mistress, who had blackened her eyebrows in this fashion, considered the girl guilty of mocking her (Perdue, Barden and Philips 166).

Enslaved children accepted in principle the need for discipline, but usually they tried to avoid punishment, no matter who was in charge of them. When Nancy William's mother told her to pick up wood chips for a fire, the girl refused to. Anticipating punishment, Nancy ran to her master. She did not explain the situation to him, but stayed around for a while knowing that her master's presence would intimidate her mother. She succeeded in avoiding her punishment, but only briefly. According to Nancy's

recollection in an interview with a WPA worker, “My mother eventually caught me and beat the devil out of me.” Nancy’s mother, like other enslaved parents, preferred to keep the problem of disciplining children to herself, rather than risk the possibility that the owner would take the task from her.

CONCLUSION

There are many other aspects in the lives of enslaved children that I could have also included in my unit, but I decided to limit my self to those topics my students could relate to easily, such as games, toys, religion and education. By studying the daily life of enslaved children, their family units, their interaction with other people in their community, daily chores and the consequences for their actions, my students will compare and contrast their own lives to those of the enslaved children and come to their own conclusions about what it meant to be a slave. My purpose is to show my students a clearer picture of what it meant to be an enslaved child by creating a close connection to the subject through the readings, interviews and the activities in the lesson plans.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan 1: The Slave Trade

Student Objectives

Students will learn about the reasons, causes, and consequences of the slave trade. They will also learn how Africans were captured and transported to America. Students will make a connection to the kind of experience the captured people went through. Students will practice inference and summarizing.

Activity One

Students will read about the slave trade, and discuss the subject among themselves, in cooperative learning groups of 4 or 5. Using a graphic organizer, students will classify the causes and effects of the slave trade.

Activity Two

Students will read a fictional story of an enslaved person and his experiences on his voyage from Africa to America. Students will watch the first part of the film ‘Amistad’ and will discuss the topic in cooperative learning groups of 4 or 5. Then each student will write a fictional journal entry, where he or she is a captured African on a ship coming from Africa, to be sold in the New World. To end the activity, some of the students will share their writing with the rest of the class.

Activity Three

Students will analyze illustrations showing how the captured people were transported on ships from Africa to America. We will conduct a whole class discussion on the topic, how uncomfortable the slaves were, their restricted movement, lack of bathroom

facilities, etc. Students will then enact this scenario in the same fashion on the classroom floor as a role playing exercise to end the activity.

Evaluation

Using the information learned in class, each student will write an essay that summarizes what he/she has learned.

Lesson Plan 2: The Work of Enslaved Children

Student Objectives

Students will learn about the different jobs an enslaved child might perform. Students will also learn about the criteria that made an enslaved child eligible to do certain types of work. Students will learn about punishments and other consequences for enslaved children for not performing on the job. Students will develop their critical thinking skills, learn how to make inferences, how to classify topics, and write narratives.

Activity One

After having studied about the type of work enslaved children performed, students will be placed in cooperative learning groups, 4 or 5 students per group. Each group will create a chart dividing the labor of enslaved children into five major categories:

1. Domestic work.
2. Skilled work.
3. Unskilled work.
4. Field work.
5. Hired hand.

Under each section of the chart, students will make a list of the chores that correspond to each category. After that, each group will share their results with the rest of the class and compare notes, as well as discuss and analyze their results.

Activity Two

Each group will be assigned a different work function. Every student in all the groups will choose a job, and then describe the necessary skills he or she will need to accomplish the tasks at hand. Following this, students will detail the consequences for not finishing the job.

Activity Three

Each student will write a fictional journal entry describing an enslaved child's day at work. The description should include details learned in class on the topic. Students will share their writings with the rest of the class.

Evaluation

Students will write an essay summarizing what they learn in class. They will also add their own opinions on the subject of childhood slavery.

Lesson Plan 3: Plantations

Student Objectives

Students will learn about the different types of plantations. They will analyze diagrams of the plantations including the layout of crop fields, slave quarters, barns, and specialized shops such as the blacksmith shop, the overseer's house and the master's house. They will also study the plantation records and inventories. Students will analyze these in detail, as well as the duties of other people on the plantations that did not fall into the category of slave. These positions would include the overseer and the master's wife. Students will compare and contrast their findings, draw diagrams of plantation layouts, group and classify workforce information, and write letters portraying the voice of one of the many plantation inhabitants.

Activity One

Students will be divided in cooperative learning groups, and each group will be given a type of plantation to build, such as indigo, rice, tobacco, cotton or sugar cane plantation. They will decide on the size of the plantation, draw a diagram of the plantation and create their own detailed specifications depending on the type of production taking place at their particular plantation.

Activity Two

Students will write an inventory of the slaves at their own chosen type of plantation, giving specific information about the inhabitant's ages (approximately in many cases), gender and skills, including that of all children.

Activity Three

Students from each group will present their results to the rest of the class. Students will analyze, compare and contrast the differences and similarities from one plantation to another.

Evaluation

Each group will write a summary based on their assignment, explaining how their plantation was run. The summary will be written as a letter from someone at the plantation to a friend far away. This person could be the mistress, the master, the overseer or another employee, or a slave who knew how to write and was sending a secret letter to a relative or friend at another plantation or to someone who had escaped and might be living up north.

Lesson Plan 4: Play and Leisure

Student Objectives

After studying the life of enslaved children in the quarters, students will learn that enslaved children were also children, in the sense that they played games and had toys,

even if the toys were handmade at home by themselves or their parents. My students will establish a stronger connection and understanding of the lives of enslaved children by comparing what their own games and toys are to those of the enslaved children, making inferences and drawing their own conclusions.

Activity One

Students will choose a game to play based on the games the enslaved children played, and will be divided into groups based on the game they choose. They rotate and play all the different games, and then students will write about their experiences in their journals. Volunteers will share writings with the class.

Activity Two

From the readings on the subject of leisure time of enslaved children, students will choose a kind of toy to make. The teacher will provide the materials depending on the students' choices. Example of materials would be clay for marbles, straw and fabric for dolls, strings and sticks for 'horses,' etc. Students will work in centers depending on the toy they are making.

Evaluation

After finishing making their toys, students will write a detailed account of the process gone through in making his or her toy. Students will write a description and compare some of the games of enslaved children they played in the class to games they usually play with their friends. They will then draw their own conclusions from this in written form.

Lesson Plan 5: The Sale of Enslaved Youths

Student Objectives

Students will learn the reasons why some slaves were sold and others were not. What were the criteria for selling different slaves from each plantation? Students will also read interviews of former slaves, which will reveal the experience of being sold, the traumatic separation from parents, relatives and friends forever, and how the slaves had to make a new life for themselves, will be investigated upon looking at these interviews. They will also read other interviews in which the enslaved children were the ones remaining at the plantation, while their parents were sold and taken away. Students will make inferences, work on their critical thinking skills and do cause-and-effect diagrams regarding this topic.

Activity

After reading on the topic, students will be divided into cooperative learning groups. Students will discuss the causes and effects of all slave-selling actions at the plantation, and the effect on the enslaved children's lives. They will prepare a cause and effect diagram.

Evaluation

Groups will share their results and compare and contrast their findings. All the groups will then put their information together to create one diagram which includes all class findings on the causes and effects of the sale and separation of the enslaved children from their parents and relatives.

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