



Yale-New Haven
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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

Guide for Curriculum Unit 02.02.02
by Angelo J. Pompano

This unit explores the culture of Lebanon premised on the belief 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 Baalbek Festival. Our festival has music, arts and crafts, foods, and displays of students' projects. The intent of the unit is to promote diversity by discussing Arab culture as it relates to Lebanon, a country that is Arab but in which many of the Arabs are Christian. That coupled with a strong influence from the Western cultures and varying degrees of socio-economic status renders Lebanon a non-typical Arab country. The unit covers what the term Arab means and teaches a few basic Arabic words. However, the main emphasis is on Lebanese children. It discusses home life, school, food, religion, and recreation; giving the students the skills to celebrate the diversity between their culture and that of the children in Lebanon. By seeing the diverse Arab subcultures within the Lebanese culture the students will understand that it is impossible to make generalizations about Arabs just as it is impossible to make generalizations about any group.

(Recommended for Social Studies, Art, Music, and Language Arts, grades 1-6.)

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