The City and the Family

Guide for Curriculum Unit 81.01.04
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This curriculum unit deals with the family in the urban setting. Its major objective is to show the role of the family in the dynamics of city living. Family structure, conflicts and unity are discussed and students use their own families as role models. The unit has four major objectives. The students will become familiar with New Haven. They will read and discuss the history of the city. They will visit many areas and have guest speakers from different New Haven neighborhoods. The students will write and discuss their impressions. The students will learn about their families. They will tape record interviews with family members and trace back as many generations as they can. The students will look at themselves and will analyze their own feelings about themselves and their peers. They will compare these feelings with those of adolescents in other settings.

The curriculum unit is set up for twelve or more weeks. It emphasizes reading short stories, poems, essays and plays. Much of the reading is aloud with both students and teacher participating. Oral communication and listening skills are worked on, and interview skills are stressed. The students explore two large urban centers. New York and Chicago are featured, as the works of Langston Hughes, Carl Sandburg, Alfred Kazin, Lorraine Hansberry and James Baldwin are studied. At the conclusion of the unit the students should know the role that the city and family plays in their growing up and in molding their present values and shaping their future goals.

(Recommended for 11th and 12th grade English.)

Key Words

Urban Life Family