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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1990 Volume V: American Family Portraits (Section II)

The Family as Seen through Interpretive Dance

Guide for Curriculum Unit 90.05.03
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“The Family as Seen through Interpretive Dance” focuses on the differences and similarities of different ethnic groups from various economic levels that make up some of America’s families. It is a study of music and dances relevant to the different families’ history and preset life styles that will eventually be used by the students to choreograph dances that depict these families. This unit studies Hispanic, African-American, Jewish, and Chinese cultures. The students will note similarities between their own families and others, as well as the differences. There are many similarities shared or influenced by others represented by many American families regardless of ethnicity.

Through the experience of learning dance the students will learn to choreograph dances themselves and also learn to incorporate everyday actions and behavior into dance. The result of their choreography, along with their instruction in ballet, jazz, and modern dance forms, will be presented in a dance recital that will portray the American families in moving familial pictures. This unit will give the students a fun and innovative way to expand their awareness of others and themselves through a combination of music and vernacular steps.

(Recommended for Dance, grades 7-12)

Key Words

Family Dance Life American Literature

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