



Windows of Time Since 1492

Guide for Curriculum Unit 92.02.07
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This year I have developed a unit on the historical exploration of the New World in concert with the “celebration” of the Quincentenary of America. My unit seeks to reflect the thoughts and the diverse opinions of the discovery/conquest by both European and American nations alike since 1492. The issues of democracy and conquest as perceived by different peoples will highlight intellectual curiosity and controversy.

As an underlying theme, I have developed the theory of quest—that is, mankind’s search for itself. I have utilized this theme to lay the groundwork for Columbus’ exploration of the New World. Throughout recorded history, men have attempted to make sense of their lives, to create understanding through external means. This quest theme for Columbus and his crew seeks to answer such questions as why men leave home in search of things—things both material and spiritual.

As my unit develops, we follow Columbus on his New World expeditions as discoverer, explorer, conqueror, and entrepreneur. As his emphasis moves toward the coveting of gold and the development of slave trading, we gauge the reactions of the Spanish Crown. We also try to understand the Native Indians’ perspective of the invasion of their islands and the conquest and slaughter of their peoples.

As the centuries move along, we analyze Pope Pius IX’s position in the late 1800s as he seeks to beatify Columbus as a prelude to canonization, meeting heavy resistance from the Vatican. And, as we move into the 20th century, we approach the “celebration” of the Quincentenary with open minds, trying to better understand the perspectives of the descendants of Native Americans and Black Americans.

(Recommended for Social Studies and Reading, grades 7-9)

Key Words

Columbus Christopher History Latin American Hispanic

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