



## Discovering Persephone

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.02.08  
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“Discovering Persephone” is a curriculum unit aimed at producing a play in the Greek tradition while retelling the story of Persephone and Demeter. Demeter was regarded as the goddess of grain and earth and its mortals were affected by the kidnaping of her daughter, Persephone. The girl was abducted by her uncle, Hades, who was smitten by her beauty and longed for a wife to live with him in his underworld kingdom.

The story centers around a story of maternal love and distress when Demeter and Persephone's relationship is halted. Persephone longs for light, earth, and her mother but finds herself unable to hate her kidnapper. Hades is nice to her and offers her all he can produce but the girl still wants her mother. Demeter's wrath on earth causes all grain to cease growing and brings on fall and winter. Zeus is concerned about the fate of mankind and orders Hermes (the messenger god) to bring Persephone back to her mother. The girl is reunited with Demeter but because she ate food in the underworld (a pomegranate) she has to spend time in the underworld. Zeus declares a compromise where she'll spend half of the year on earth with her mother and half of the year in the underworld with her husband. As a result of this mythical story, the seasons come about.

This unit will also serve as a catalyst to the study of the original twelve gods of Olympus and the role of the mother goddess. The unit is intended for students in grades five through seven at West Hills Middle School. They (the students) will use the material studied when producing their reenactment of Persephone. they will also compare other mother goddesses like Isis (Egypt) and Hera (Greece).

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