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Lesson Plan: African American Culture: Baptism and Seeking (grades 9-12)

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Lesson Plan

Course/Grade Level:

- American History, African American History, American Studies

Topic/Title:

- African American Culture: Baptism and Seeking

Historical Time Period(s):

- The Development of Modern America (1865-1920)
- Modern America and the World Wars (1914-1945)
- Contemporary America (1945-present)

Thematic Question:

- How do seeking and baptism as practiced in traditional Gullah communities reflect a synthesis of African and Christian elements?

Standards/Benchmarks/Indicators:

- Social Studies: People and Societies

A, 2. Analyze the perspectives that are evident in African-American, American Indian and Latino art, music, literature and media and how these contributions reflect and shape culture in the United States.

- Social Studies: Social Studies Skills & Methods

7, A. Evaluate the reliability and credibility of sources.

7, B. Use data and evidence to support or refute a thesis.

Materials/Resources:

- Gullah Digital Archive: Jenkins Family Interview that contains Moselle Carroll's discussion of her seeking experience and baptism.

Motivation (Attention Grabber):

1. Individual reflection and discussion: Have students respond to the prompt: Describe a baptism, either your own or one you attended.
2. What did the baptism mean to the person being baptized? What did it mean to others who participated?
3. Ask students to share the experiences and discuss them looking for similarities and differences. What is the function of baptism for an individual and a community?

Activities:

1. Field research
 - a. For homework have students conduct an oral history interview to ask the same questions of an older member of the community, someone from another tradition, or someone who has migrated from another region or country.
 - b. Have students share and discuss the results of their research.
2. Gullah comparison
 - a. Play the selection the Jenkins Family Interview that contains Moselle's discussion of her seeking experience and baptism.
 - b. Discuss the interview. What are similarities and differences? What are some African customs that are part of the custom? Do they still exist? Why do you think things have changed? What generalizations can we make about Gullah culture and modern urban culture from this comparison?

Assessment:

- Students will be required to design a plan for a seeking custom for contemporary urban youth. The custom will need to include activities, experiences, and social roles to take the place of those in traditional seeking but that are embedded in contemporary urban families and communities. They will need to explain how the new seeking custom will identity and status of individuals who undergo the process.