

LESSON M-UI-L1

An American Moment

Unit I: Human Behavior

Grade Levels: 6-8

Time: 40-80 Minutes



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Objective

Identify and analyze different communities that make up American culture.

Key Terms

- civility
- community
- culture
- ethnicity
- humility
- immigrant
- inauguration
- invocation
- race
- religion
- subculture

Lesson Materials

- Quote from the Pastor Rick Warren’s invocation at the inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States (the full text of the invocation can be found at this web site: <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=86632> and video of the invocation can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-8R1OXWJz8>)
- Second Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln (found at <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html>)
- First Inaugural Address of Franklin Roosevelt (found at <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres49.html>)
- Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy (<http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres56.html>)

Note to Teacher: Although this is a quote from a religious figure, it should be used and analyzed in the context of the key terms and references that may be interpreted by the students for their particular applicability to the history of the United States and recent events.

Lesson Plan

- Group share/brainstorm/journal about the following:
 - Define the key terms.
 - Discuss the definitions and give examples of community, culture, subculture, immigrant, race, religion, and ethnicity.

- Have the students listen as you read the entire invocation by Pastor Rick Warren at President Obama’s inauguration.
 - Select a quote from the invocation (see example below):

... to remember that we are Americans, united not by race, or religion, or blood, but to our commitment to freedom and justice for all. When we focus on ourselves, when we fight each other . . . forgive us. When we fail to treat our fellow human beings and all the earth with the respect that they deserve, forgive us. And as we face these difficult days ahead, may we have a new birth of clarity in our aims, responsibility in our actions, humility in our approaches, and civility in our attitudes, even when we differ ...
- Have students discuss the following questions in small groups:
 - Explain the meaning of the quote.
 - How does this quote relate to the United States?
 - What do you think are the aims and responsibility of the United States?
 - What do you think are your aims and responsibilities as a citizen of this nation? Of this state? Of your community? Of your family?

Evidence of Understanding

- Have the students write a short essay, create a poem, or make a drawing that reflects the message about the nature of American unity.
- Check students’ understanding and participation in the small and large group discussions as well as in their journal entries.

Additional Activities and Resources

Read one of the following:

- Second Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln
- First Inaugural Address of Franklin Roosevelt
- Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy

Taking Action and Giving Service

- Read one of the inaugural addresses and ask the students to:
 - Identify the main cause of concern voiced in the inaugural speech you read.
 - Explain any message of hope in the speech.
 - List any particular idea or activity that the speaker is asking of the American people.
 - Using their responses to the points above, ask the students to think about what makes a good inaugural speech, or another type of speech by a leader. Discuss some current events that leaders, especially the President of the United States, might speak about. Have each student write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper about the important points the leader should speak about. Ask the students to share their letters with the class.