

MILWAUKEE'S CULTURAL CONNECT: IRISH AMERICANS

Teacher Guide

This program includes (1) your input (which can be modified any way you wish), (2) a video (divided into two parts) that describes the Milwaukee Irish experience presented by a Irish American anthropologist, (3) talking points with images you can print out from this site, (4) a game of jeopardy to help students retain information, and (5) a pre-/post-test survey to evaluate the program.

Small prizes may be offered. Or you might print out the cultural FACEBALL CARDS on this site as prizes.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Explain that students will be learning about the practices and history of Irish Americans
2. Show students where Ireland is located on a worldwide map
3. Explain the concept of “culture” to the students

Culture

Cultural traits are any kinds of behaviors or ideas or beliefs that are SHARED by a group—meaning that a high percentage of the people practice these behaviors or beliefs. The cultural traits develop because people are adapting or adjusting to something in their environment. For example, if the group lives in an area where people are at war all the time, they might become more of a warrior society themselves to protect their group, and they might then believe that the finest people are those who are good fighters. If a group is discriminated against, they might learn that their only way to survive is to really stick together as a group, as they can't rely on help from the outside.

4. Pass out Irish American timeline (if desired)
5. Conduct the pre-test survey (if desired)
6. Have students count off to divide into four groups (numbered one, two, three, four) and pick group leaders, for later discussions and game

PART TWO: EXPLAIN HOW THE VIDEO WILL WORK

1. Tell students that the cultural anthropologist is a Milwaukee Irish American
2. Tell them they will also see excerpts from a documentary where local Irish Americans discuss their culture in their own words
3. Tell them that parts of the video will be covered later in discussions and a game of Jeopardy—hence they might want to take notes
4. The video will be paused once so students can take part in discussions
5. Explain that you will write questions on the board for discussion later when the video is paused

PART THREE: VIDEO (FIRST SECTION)

While the video is on, write these questions (and any others you deem important) on the board:

1. The video talked about ways that the Irish experienced discrimination in Ireland and in America. What were some of these examples?

2. What other cultural groups have experienced discrimination in their home lands or in America? Explain what that discrimination was.

The video narrator will tell you when to pause the video

PART FOUR: STUDENTS RESPOND TO QUESTIONS

1. In their groups, students should come up with lists of anti-Irish discrimination.
2. In their groups, students should come up with lists of other groups that experienced discrimination.
3. Group leaders should report out, then hand in the lists with their group numbers on sheets of paper
4. You will introduce the Merrill Park neighborhood to the students. (If you have a neighborhood map of Milwaukee, show the students where this neighborhood is located.) "We will now return to the video and let you see a bit about a community that was once an Irish stronghold. It is called Merrill Park. The Irish moved there at the close of the 1800s when their old home, Milwaukee's Third Ward, burned down. They took jobs on the railroad, and built a large church called St. Rose's. But their biggest achievement was their ability to succeed in politics. This video will describe how they did this. Many, many local political representatives, including the likes of Mayor Barrett and Governor Doyle, have Irish backgrounds. This is also true in other US cities."

PART FIVE: VIDEO (LAST SECTION)

1. While this section is aired, you can tabulate the best responses on the lists.
2. Here you might give out Faceball Cards (or some other prizes) to the groups with the best lists.
3. You may select some topic in the previous section of the video to discuss when the video is over. Some might be the following:

PART SIX: TALKING POINTS

1. Do you remember the reference to St. Patrick?

You might first ask what the students already know about him.

St. Patrick (see image on this site)

Saint Patrick was known as the "Apostle of Ireland" and is the primary patron saint of Ireland (along with Saints Brigit and Columba). He lived during the fifth century. According to the *Confessio* of Patrick, when he was about 16, he was captured by Irish pirates from his home in Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland. There he cared for animals and lived for six years before escaping and returning to his family. After becoming a cleric, he returned to Ireland.

1. Do you remember the name of the neighborhood where the Irish lived?

You might first ask what the students already know about Merrill Park.

Merrill Park neighborhood (see images on this site)

Merrill Park is located just south of Wisconsin Avenue between 27th and 35th Streets. Today it is a primarily African American neighborhood. It's known for its mansion-sized houses. In addition to its being the home for so many politicians, famous actors once lived there. Examples are Greta Garbo and Spencer Tracy (show the Tracy home).

Its central point of gathering is St. Rose church.

PART SEVEN: GAME/EVALUATION

1. Engage the four groups in the game of Jeopardy, which can be accessed on this site (prizes or Facebook cards may be handed out, if desired).
2. Conduct the post-test survey (if desired), which can be accessed on this site.