

Lesson Title: Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

Grade Levels: K-3

Class Time needed: Two class sessions (Varies depending on the age of students)

Content Standards: See pages 16-19

Objectives:

1. Reveal stories of the Underground Railroad and its role in helping the enslaved.
2. Learn about Harriet Tubman, who helped 350 enslaved people to freedom.
3. Discuss slavery and its dehumanizing effect on African Americans.

Description of lesson/activity:

1. Read David A. Adler's A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman (New York: Holiday House, 1992) or Jacob Lawrence's Harriet and the Promised Land (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993). After the story, discuss the treatment of enslaved persons mentioned in the book. Discuss the events in Harriet's life that made her want to escape from slavery. Introduce the concept of the Underground Railroad and the definitions of "conductor, abolitionist, bondage, chattel, overseer, plantation, Freedom Seeker, and Underground Railroad." How did Harriet help enslaved persons gain their freedom?

2. Read another account of the Underground Railroad in Allen Jay and the Underground Railroad, by Marlene Targ Bull. This is a story about a young boy and his family who belonged to a religious group called the Society of Friends, or Quakers. This story deals with a boy, Allen Jay, and his relatives helping a Freedom Seeker escape to Canada. Talk about the danger to this family, as well as other people helping on the Underground Railroad. What were these dangers? Why were these people helping on the Underground Railroad? Why were these people willing to endanger themselves and their families?

Materials:

David A. Alder's book A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman

Jacob Lawrence's book Harriet and the Promised Land

Marlene Targ Bull's book Allen Jay and the Underground Railroad

Student Assessment:

Formal: Assess and evaluate students' ability to state the definitions of vocabulary words.

Informal: Observe comprehension of Harriet Tubman's role in the Underground Railroad and the danger involved with assisting freedom seekers.

