

Mardi Gras + Fundred Classroom Ideas

Celebrate New Orleanian culture and the future of the city's health with THE FUNDRED DOLLAR BILL PROJECT!

Rich Tradition in New Orleans



One of the many extravagant floats from the Mardi Gras parades!

The City of New Orleans is famous for its Mardi Gras celebrations. Mardi Gras, (literally Fat Tuesday) has ancient origins and came to New Orleans through its French heritage in 1699. Early explorers celebrated this French Holiday on the banks of the Mississippi River. Carnival quickly became an exciting holiday for both children and adults. Throughout the years, Orleanians have added to the celebration by establishing krewes (organizations) which host parades and balls.

The people of New Orleans look forward to the holiday with anticipation! During this time of carnival, work essentially stops, and schools are closed for the week! It is a holiday with fantastic parades filled with amazing floats, elaborate masked balls, costumes, royalty, Mardi Gras Indians, King Cakes and music everywhere. This celebration has something for everyone, young and old.

Plan a Mardi Gras Day in Your Classroom!

Mardi Gras is a great bridge to learning more about New Orleans.

Mardi Gras is a part of the history of New Orleans. This video by the History Channel offers perspective on Mardi Gras: the history, different krewes, king cakes, jambalaya, and the crazy party.

History Channel:

<http://www.history.com/video.do?name=culture&bcpid=1681694254&bclid=1672161034>

Mardi Gras and FUNDRED

...and Mardi Gras is a great time to introduce The Fundred Dollar Bill Project to your students. This is an occasion to bring focus to issues around New Orleans. One could explore the post-Katrina debate as to whether the city will recover from the devastation; will there be a safe place for the evacuees to return? Hurricanes will happen again, should the city continue to rebuild?! We contend that New Orleans has a rich history and robust culture that is enduring and New Orleans will remain an important city. The popularity of Mardi Gras is a testament to this vibrancy.

The Fundred Dollar Bill Project is a contribution to preserving the culture of New Orleans. Fundred supports the environmental health of this important city from below the ground up.

Below are a few lesson ideas to explore below:

FUNDREDS and the JAZZ GREATS

Andi Wong, our Operative at Rooftop School in San Francisco, California, suggests a lesson focused on the wonderful nicknames given to jazz greats, e.g. Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Lady Day, Satchmo, King Oliver, etc. These names suggest royalty!

Perhaps instead of presidents, children could decorate their Fundred Dollar Bills with jazz greats and learn a little about New Orleans as the place that gave birth to jazz.

Have resource material of photos of some famous musicians, along with the songs that they are associated with that have something to do with money or giving. Songs like Basin Street, God Bless the Child, or Pennies from Heaven, for example.

FUNDRED and the history of KREWE

Andi also suggests a collaborative activity that teaches the students more about the history of Mardi Gras.

Your students may be familiar with the expression "Krewe" often used in rap, but they may not be aware that the word that comes out of Mardi Gras tradition. The Rex Krewe website has great history of the tradition:

<http://www.rexorganization.com/Tradition/>

There are many more krewes that can be viewed here too:

<http://www.mardigrasneworleans.com/parades.html>

The students would get themselves into krewes. They would name their own krewes, select their colors, design their logos, and make posters publicizing their parades. They could have fun with a little friendly competition trying to get everyone to contribute Fundred Dollar Bills to their krewe's cache of Fundred artworks.

Again, you could play some music, like Iko Iko, for example. Here's a site with some Mardi Gras music that you can stream:

http://www.mardigrasdigest.com/Media/Digest_Top40.htm

Fundred and the "Spirits of Spring"

We on the Fundred team would love to see Fundreds that annotate the REX Krewe's theme:

<http://www.rexorganization.com/Downloads/2009/Rex2009NotesAndLinks.rtf>

The Rex Krewe has a great website: <http://www.rexorganization.com/> with history to explore and additional lesson plans as reference:

<http://www.rexorganization.com/Education/>

Fundred is an important gesture

These activities, from mask making to music and social studies are all rich subjects for the classroom. The simple act of making a Fundred Dollar Bill is, in and of itself, a gesture with profound implications that compliments any classroom activity or stands on its own.

At the end of the day, students have had a great time, and know that they have contributed to preserving the rich culture of New Orleans!

Other Mardi Gras Lesson Plan Resources

These sites are good for research and other lesson plans:

<http://www.siue.edu/education/aam/lesson/reiacs/mardi.htm>http://mardigrasday.com/lesson_k3.php
http://www.lessonplanet.com/directory/Social_Studies/Holidays/Mardi_Grashttp://www.classbrain.com/artteach/publish/article_140.shtml