

Student Activity

Title Indians and Pilgrims: A Simulation-Story

Level Grades K-5

Time One class period

Although this activity is simplistic and somewhat melodramatic, its general purpose is twofold: (1) to supplement the numerous accounts-generally from the European or Euroamerican point of view-of the "coming of the Mayflower" and the "settlement of the Plymouth Plantation," and (2) to supplant the traditional, romanticized acting-out of the "First Thanksgiving" by children dressed as Pilgrims and Indians.

Objective

Students will experience feelings and responses similar to those which may have been felt by the Native people of this land when Europeans arrived and settled here.

Materials

Teacher Resource Sheet: The Story

Procedure

1. Read part 1 of "The Story" and have the students reflect on and respond to the questions. During the discussion emphasize the *differences* of emotions experienced by the children, both in how they feel about the strangers and in what they think will happen to themselves. Native people differed in their reactions and responses to Europeans on their shores and understanding of these differences helps to eliminate the stereotypical judgment that all Native people responded the same way because they are "all alike."
2. Read Part 2 of "The Story," eliciting feelings and responses from the children with the questions at the end. Emphasize again that Native people in this land responded differently to the Europeans. Some, like Massasoit and others, were hospitable. Others felt differently about the people in their land and tried to drive them out. Children will see that, just as their feelings are valid, so too were the Native people's feelings valid for them.

Teacher Resource Sheet

Title	The Story
Activity	Indians and Pilgrims: A Simulation-Story

Part I

Imagine The Following:

You and your family live in a nice house with a huge yard, lots of trees, a big garden and a pretty little stream. You have lots of friends, lots of pets and plenty of good food to eat. You are safe and snug and very happy.

One day, when you are home alone, a strange object comes slowly into view in the sky. You've never seen anything like it before. It is a strange shape and very large. It lands in your own back yard! Soon very strange-looking people get out; they are dressed in clothes very different from yours and talk to each other in a way that you cannot understand.

You are hiding so that they cannot see you. You don't want them to see you because you are trying to figure out who they are and what they want. You have heard about people who look like this from your mother and father. They walk about, pick up your toys and pets and examine them closely. One gets into your car, turns the key and drives all around on the grass and through the garden. Others are helping themselves to the tomatoes in the garden and the apples and plums on the trees. Then they fill a lot of big baskets with the fruit and vegetables from your garden and put them in the big machine they arrived in.

Then they come straight toward your house! Without even ringing the bell, they come through the door and go through every room, picking up things and looking closely at them, talking and laughing among themselves. They really don't seem to be afraid or even embarrassed about being in your house.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE PEOPLE?

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WILL DO? WHY?

WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN TO YOU?

Part 2

The Story Goes On....

The strange people leave your house. You think they have seen you but you're not sure. It doesn't matter, though, because you're so glad to see them go. Maybe they'll just get into their big air ship and fly back to wherever they came from. Even if they *have* taken things that belong to you, you'll be happy to see them leave.

But as you watch, they don't seem to be leaving. In fact, they appear to like it in your big backyard. They begin to bring things out of the machine. They set up a saw and cut down one of the biggest trees! They are going to build a house with it, probably in that favorite spot of yours back there by the stream, because that's where they are clearing away the bushes and digging out the grass. They cut down another tree and another and another! They are building two, three, a half dozen houses. They have furniture and pans and dishes and rugs and curtains-everything that you have in your house and some other things that you don't even recognize. They also have big weapons that flash with a big bang. You think that they could probably kill you with one big *bang* just as they have killed some of the pets in your yard.

You stare at all the activity going on out there in your backyard. Suddenly you start to cry. These strange people who have come from somewhere far off and who are so very rude are *not* going away-ever. They are going to stay. They are going to live in your own backyard and use your garden and your toys and fish in your stream and cut down your trees and act as if it all belonged to them!

Then a very strange thing happens. A group of the strangers has been talking together and pointing toward the very place where you are hiding. Do you think they could have spotted you? Yes! They are coming right toward you, talking and smiling. You don't know what to do. Should you run? Call for help? Stay perfectly still? One, who is closer to you than the rest, takes your hand and pulls you out to stand in front of them. They are smiling and pointing at your favorite place by the stream where they are building their houses. They want you to come with them!

As you do, the one holding your hand says: "We like you. We like this place. We are going to live here from now on." Without asking if you are surprised or if you want them here, that person points to a table set with a great feast, smiles and says: "Come. Celebrate with us because we have reached the end of our long journey and have found a wonderful place to live."

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHO YOU AND THE STRANGERS WHO TOOK OVER YOUR BACKYARD REALLY ARE?