

COLUMBUS DAY

By Kathy Aldridge

Learning Objective(s): The students will:

1. Explain the significance of Columbus Day.
2. Understand some of the events and accomplishments associated with Christopher Columbus.
3. Obtain information about Christopher Columbus by singing a song.
4. Become familiar with the four cardinal directions.

TEKS: SS K.2A, K.15B, 1.2A, 1.4A, 1.17B, 2.5A, 2.18B

Materials Needed: A large classroom world map or overhead transparency of a world map, a children's literature book about the voyage of Christopher Columbus such as In 1492 by Jean Marzollo, an 8" x 11" paper copy of a world map showing the continents of Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and Antarctica only

Vocabulary: continent, Europeans, explorer, map, ocean, voyage

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce the lesson by telling students that people who search for or investigate new places are called explorers. Ask students if they have ever searched or investigated a new place. Have them relate their exploration experiences. Ask them why they like to explore.
2. Explain to students that Columbus Day is celebrated the second Monday in October in the United States to honor a great explorer from the past, Christopher Columbus. Ask students to share anything they know about him.
3. Show students a classroom size map of the world with North and South America covered up. (The teacher may prefer to use an overhead transparency of a map of the world exposing all of the continents except North and South America.) Tell students that this map represents the world, as Europeans knew it, during Columbus' time, over 500 years ago. Emphasize that the United States of America did not even exist then.
4. Indicate the continent of Europe on the large map/overhead. Draw a compass on the board and explain how it is used. Ask students what direction Asia is from Europe. Tell students that Europeans wanted to travel to the Indies (Asia) for gold and spices. Ask them to look at the map, figure out different ways Europeans could travel

- to the Indies by land or water, and share their ideas with the class.
5. Explain that Columbus wanted to discover a western route to the Indies (Asia). To illustrate this principle, the teacher should bend the sides of the paper copy of the world map, which doesn't include North and South America, backwards until the sides touch. Forming this tube by simulating a globe should enable students to see why Columbus thought he could reach the Indies (Asia) by going west.
 6. Share that Columbus asked King John II of Portugal to sponsor his voyage, but was turned down. Columbus then asked for support from Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain. After being rejected several times over quite a few years, Columbus finally received the support of the King and Queen of Spain. Indicate the country of Spain on the large map/overhead.
 7. Using an appropriate children's literature book about Columbus, read students a story about the historic voyage. Point out that Columbus kept a log about each day of the voyage, so that is how we know what happened.
 8. After students are told that Columbus discovered a "New World," reveal that his discovery was somewhere in the Bahamas, instead of the Indies. Uncover the continents of North and South America on the large world map/overhead. Indicate the location of the Bahama Islands. Trace the route Columbus took from Spain to the Bahamas and point out how it was logical for Columbus to assume he had reached Asia.
 9. Explain that though Columbus didn't reach the Indies, the Bahamas still had riches that Columbus could take back to Spain. Columbus made three additional voyages to the Bahamas and many other Europeans sailed there, too. Columbus even took horses to the new world on his second voyage.
 10. Tell students Columbus Day is a holiday celebrated in the United State to celebrate Columbus' voyage from Spain to this new land/world in the west.
 11. Teach students the song "Christopher Columbus" on the next page.

Evaluation:

Assign each student a verse from the song to illustrate with a picture. Duplicate complete sets of the pictures for each verse, and have students, working in groups, put the pictures in sequential order.

Christopher Columbus

(Sung to the tune of Frere Jacques or Are You Sleeping?)

Teacher: Christopher Columbus

Children: Christopher Columbus

Teacher: Wanted to explore.

Children: Wanted to explore.

Teacher: He crossed the Atlantic Ocean

Children: He crossed the Atlantic Ocean

Teacher: In 1492

Children: In 1492.

Teacher: He took 90 men

Children: He took 90 men

Teacher: On 3 Spanish ships;

Children: On 3 Spanish ships;

Teacher: The Nina and the Piñta

Children: The Nina and the Piñta

Teacher: And Santa Maria.

Children: And Santa Maria.

Teacher: They sailed for 2 months.

Children: They sailed for 2 months.

Teacher: The crew was getting tired,

Children: The crew was getting tired,

Teacher: But on October 12th,

Children: But on October 12th,

Teacher: They finally saw land.

Children: They finally saw land.

Teacher: Columbus thought it was the Indies.

Children: He thought it was the Indies.

Teacher: But he was wrong.

Children: But he was wrong.

Teacher: He landed in the Bahamas.

Children: Landed in the Bahamas.

Teacher: He'd found a new land.

Children: He'd found a new land.

Teacher: He met American Indians.
Children: He met American Indians.
Teacher: They traded many things.
Children: They traded many things.
Teacher: He made the voyage again,
Children: He made the voyage again,
Teacher: Again and again.
Children: Again and again.

Teacher: Christopher Columbus
Children: Christopher Columbus
Teacher: Discovered a "New World."
Children: Discovered a 'New World.'
Teacher: This is why we honor him
Children: This is why we honor him
Teacher: On Columbus Day.
Children: On Columbus Day.