Chinese Thematic Unit

by Linda Allison

Theme: China

Purpose: Students will be exposed to the customs and culture of China and the Chinese people.

Grade Level: Elementary (unit can be adjusted for a specific grade level). My unit has been written geared toward K-3rd. Most of the lessons use Goal 2 Standards 1-3. This Unit is academic with room for social activities, too.

Objectives: After this unit the students will:

* Understand several details about China such as its size, population, capital, and geographic features.

* Understand aspects of Chinese culture such as, language, art, music, food, games, and toys.

* Understand the Chinese family & Community life that includes traditional respect of elders and community celebrations.

Materials & Resources:
Butcher block paper, construction paper, paint, paint brushes, water cups (for cleaning the brushes), crayons, markers, pencils, glue, scissors (for making maps & art projects).

Chopsticks, Chinese menus, and samples of
Chinese characters.

Chinese Guest speakers.

Chinese Games: Yo-yo, Chinese Checkers, Ping-Pong, Spinning top...

Chinese & American Flags and recordings of Anthems.

Reproducible activity pages for students to color.

Maps (World Map & Map of China)

Chinese Money (Coins & Paper)

Red Chinese New Year envelopes.

List of recommended books and videos on: China, stories from China and Chinese Language.

List of On-line sites for information on China.
Examples of famous Chinese Artwork (video/poster/realia).

Student Activities:

* Students will learn about the World Map and focus on the country of China. They will compare its features with the United States (size, states, languages spoken, population...).

* Students will learn about the History of China and Chinese Inventions (Abacus, Compass, Gun powder, Firecrackers, Kite, Paper, Printing, Umbrella & Wheelbarrow).

* Guest speaker can bring realia to the classroom. Students can interact with the guest by asking specific questions about the realia and about school in China. The speaker can teach the children a few phrases in Chinese.

* Student will see many photos (maybe a video) of the 'Great Wall'. The entire class will work as a team by each person drawing and coloring a section of the 'Great Wall' (Butcher Block paper or construction paper). The "Great Wall" can be hung to span around the classroom wall.

* Students will each receive a menu and a set of chopsticks. We will discuss some of the dishes found on the menu & compare them to food eaten in the United States. Student will use chopsticks to try to pick up several small items (a peanut, a dry piece of cereal, and cooked noodle).
*Students will learn the value of the Chinese currency compared to the United States Currency. Show students Chinese money and explain how many Chinese dollars equals one American dollar.

*Student can learn to count (1-10) in Chinese. They can learn the Chinese characters for these numbers and the Pinyin form of spelling.

*Students learn what games Chinese children like to play: Eagle & Chicks (a tag game), Ping-Pong, Chinese checkers & Yo-yo.

*Students will look at & compare the Flags & Flag songs of China and the United States.

*Students will view Chinese Artwork and can try to make a painting in the Chinese style.

*Students will listen to Traditional Chinese Music (Erhu/Pipa) compared to American Ragtime style (Scott Joplin) Music. They can describe how the songs are similar &/or different.

**Bibliography/Sources:**

Translation & Chinese information given to Linda by Mr. Tom Huang.

"Small Ants Love to Work" words by Mr. Kan Ho Wong and sung by Mr. Tom Huang.

"Best of China & Japan" CD of traditional Chinese music. c. 1996, ARC Productions, Inc. Ltd.

Map Lesson:

Overview: Students will learn about the world map and recognize where China is on the world map. New vocab: map, continent, country, capital, China, Beijing, Panda & "Great Wall".

Materials Needed:

Overhead

Overhead transparencies of Map of China, comparison maps of China & USA

Overhead markers

Photo copies of map of China

Photo copies of "Great Wall"

Photo copies of "Panda"
Objectives:

1. Students will be able to recognize where China is on the world map.

2. Students will be able to recognize the shape of the map of China.

3. Students will compare the size of China to the United States.

4. Students will learn 3 facts about China (Beijing is the capital, the Panda is the National animal of China & the Great Wall can be seen from the Moon).

Procedure:

1. Today we are going to talk about China. Let’s look at the World Map. Does anyone know where the country of China is located on this map?

2. After students are shown where China is on the World Map, the teacher will pass out the map of China. The teacher will use the overhead to show a map of China. And, she will ask students if the United States is bigger or if China is bigger. After they try answering, show them the size comparison maps. China is bigger.

3. Ask students to look at their maps & the overhead map of China. Ask if they can see a city name that begins with the letter “B”. Tell them it is called “Beijing” and it is the capital of China. The capital is where the leader lives.

4. China is very famous for the biggest wall in the world. "The Great Wall" was built to cover nearly 1/2 of the country. It is so, big that if you where standing on the Moon you could see it on the Earth.

5. China is famous for a big, furry black & white animal. Can you guess what that animal might be? Yes, it is the Panda. The Panda is the animal symbol of China just as the Eagle is the animal symbol for America.

Closure: What map did we look at today? What is the capital of China? What is the name of the biggest wall in the world? What is the National animal symbol of China?