

# ***The Folklorists***

## **Curriculum Supplement**

### **Episode 5: Las Brujas de La Petaca**

#### **Lower Grades**



#### **BASIC INFO**

- LOCATION:** LA PETACA, NUEVO LEÓN, MEXICO
- RELIGION:** BUT MOST BRUJAS /WITCHES ARE SPIRITUAL HEALERS WHO USE THE ELEMENTS (EARTH, AIR, FIRE, AND WATER) TO CLEANSE, PROTECT, AND HEAL. ALSO, MANY BRUJAS/WITCHES PRACTICE RELIGION AS TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALITY TO MORE FORMAL WELL AS THEIR ANCESTRAL SPIRITUALITY!
- **WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO MEXICO?**
  - **LEGEND: LAS BRUJAS DE LA PETACA**
    - BRUJAS OR WITCHES HAVE GOTTEN A LOT OF NEGATIVE ATTENTION DUE TO A SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALITY TO MORE FORMAL

#### **ART PROMPT**

- DRAW THREE DIFFERENT WITCHES: ONE YOU THINK OF AS "BAD" OR "SCARY," ONE THAT YOU THINK OF AS "GOOD" OR "HELPFUL," AND ONE MORE THAT MIGHT HAVE A LITTLE BIT OF EACH IN HER. WHAT DIFFERENCES DO YOU NOTICE BETWEEN THEM? WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES SOMEONE "SCARY" OR NOT?

#### **DRAMA GAME: HEALING FOOD PANTOMIME**

- IN A CIRCLE (OR FROM TABLE TO TABLE OR DESK TO DESK, OR USING EQUITY STICKS OR A RANDOMIZER - WHATEVER WORKS BEST FOR YOU!) HAVE EACH LEARNER IDENTIFY ONE FOOD ITEM THAT MAKES THEM FEEL BETTER. THIS CAN BE SOMETHING THEIR GROWNUPS GIVE THEM WHEN THEY HAVE A COLD OR A TUMMY ACHE OR PERHAPS A SPECIAL TREAT WHEN THEY ARE SAD.
- EACH LEARNER THEN INTRODUCES THE FOOD ITEM AND INVITES THE CLASSROOM TO PANTOMIME EATING OR DRINKING IT.
- CONTINUE UNTIL EVERYONE HAS GONE ONCE! IF THIS IS POPULAR OR GOING WELL YOU CAN HAVE THEM DO A SECOND FOOD ITEM!

#### **GROUP ACTIVITY**

TRY PLAYING MAGIC ROCKS TO TURN INTO WITCHY FAMILIARS!  
WHEN THE LEADER SAYS "MAGIC ROCKS!" EACH STUDENT MUST PUT THEIR HEAD DOWN AND GET SMALL LIKE A ROCK. ONCE EVERYONE IS LITTLE LIKE A ROCK THE LEADER CAN SAY "MAGIC ROCKS TURN INTO..." AND TRY OUT DIFFERENT FAMILIARS SUCH AS FROGS, BLACK CATS, OWLS, CROWS, ETC. AT THE END HAVE STUDENTS REFLECT ON WHICH ANIMAL THEY THINK MIGHT BE THEIR FAMILIAR/WHAT ANIMAL FELT MOST NATURAL TO TURN INTO

#### **REFLECTION**

- DO YOU KNOW ANY WITCHES? IF YOU DO NOT, IS THERE ANYONE YOU THINK MIGHT SECRETLY BE A WITCH BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID TO LET OTHERS KNOW?



# ***The Folklorists***

## **Curriculum Supplement**

### **Episode 5: Las Brujas de La Petaca**

#### **Upper Grades**

#### **BASIC INFO**

**LOCATION: LA PETACA, NUEVO LEÓN, MEXICO**

- **WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO MEXICO?**
- **LEGEND: LAS BRUJAS DE LA PETACA**

- **BRUJAS OR WITCHES HAVE GOTTEN A LOT OF NEGATIVE ATTENTION DUE TO A SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALITY TO MORE FORMAL**

**RELIGION. BUT MOST BRUJAS /WITCHES ARE SPIRITUAL HEALERS WHO USE THE ELEMENTS (EARTH, AIR, FIRE, AND WATER) TO CLEANSE, PROTECT, AND HEAL. ALSO, MANY BRUJAS/WITCHES PRACTICE RELIGION AS WELL AS THEIR ANCESTRAL SPIRITUALITY!**

#### **WRITING PROMPT**

- **WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH WITCHCRAFT? DOES YOUR FAMILY FEEL THE SAME AS MARTA'S FAMILY AND THINK IT IS DANGEROUS AND SCARY? OR ARE THEY MORE LIKE ANGIE'S FAMILY, PASSING DOWN TRADITIONS TO ONE ANOTHER? WHERE DO YOUR BELIEFS RESIDE?**

#### **DRAMA GAME:**

**HANDSHAKE ASSASSIN (AS HANDSHAKE CURSE)**

- **LEADER EXPLAINS THAT ALL STUDENTS MUST CLOSE THEIR EYES. WHILE THEIR EYES ARE CLOSED, THE LEADER WILL TAP SOMEONE ON THE HEAD OR SHOULDER (THE STUDENTS MAY SAY WHICH THEY PREFER). THE PERSON TAPPED IS THE MALEVOLENT WITCH.**
- **ONCE THE MALEVOLENT WITCH HAS BEEN CHOSEN, EVERYONE MAY OPEN THEIR EYES. ONCE THEIR EYES ARE OPEN, THEY MUST WALK AROUND SHAKING HANDS WITH EACH OTHER. THE MALEVOLENT WITCH MAY CHOOSE TO "CURSE" PEOPLE BY SQUEEZING THE PERSON'S HAND TWICE OR SCRATCHING THEIR PALM WITH THEIR INDEX FINGER.**
- **ONCE A STUDENT HAS BEEN "CURSED" THEY MUST SHAKE HANDS WITH AT LEAST 3 MORE PEOPLE. THEN THEY MUST ACT OUT HOW THEY HAVE BEEN CURSED.**
- **NOTE: IT MAY BE USEFUL TO DO A BRAINSTORM BEFORE THE LESSON TO IDENTIFY WAYS YOU CAN BE CURSED (ITCHY ALL OVER, CAN'T STOP SNEEZING, FILLING WITH HELIUM AND FLOATING AWAY, ETC. ALLOW THE LEARNERS TO BE CREATIVE WITH IT!)**
- **IF A STUDENT THINKS THEY KNOW WHO THE MALEVOLENT WITCH IS, THEY MUST RAISE THEIR HAND AND SAY: "I HAVE AN ACCUSATION!" IF THE ACCUSATION IS CORRECT THE MW MUST PRETEND TO MELT. IF THE ACCUSATION IS WRONG, THE ACCUSER MUST BE THE ONE TO MELT.**
- **THE GAME CONTINUES UNTIL EITHER THE MW HAS KILLED EVERYONE, OR THE MW HAS BEEN CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED.**

#### **ART PROMPT**

**TAKE LEARNERS OUTSIDE AND TRY TO IDENTIFY ANY PLANTS AROUND THE SCHOOLYARD. PARTICULARLY FOCUS ON PLANTS LIKE DANDELION OR MUGWORT THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED "WEEDS" BUT ACTUALLY HAVE MEDICINAL PROPERTIES. HAVE LEARNERS PRESS THE PLANTS IN A BOOK TO BE RETURNED TO IN A WEEK. WHILE THE PLANTS ARE PRESSING, HAVE LEARNERS DO SOME INDEPENDENT RESEARCH ON THE VARIOUS USES FOR THAT PLANT AND WHERE IN THE WORLD THOSE TRADITIONS MAY COME FROM (AND/OR HOW INDIGENOUS PEOPLES USE THOSE PLANTS) INCLUDING WHETHER OR NOT THE PLANT IS NATIVE OR BROUGHT IN BY COLONIZERS AND MISSIONARIES. AFTER THE WEEK HAS PASSED HAVE LEARNERS COLLAGE OR DECOUPAGE WITH THE PLANTS AND INCLUDE FACTS ABOUT THE PLANTS AND THEIR MAGICAL POWERS!**

#### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

- **WITCHES ARE TYPICALLY PORTRAYED AS WOMEN, BUT CAN BE MEN, AS WELL, AND ARE ALSO QUITE OFTEN NONBINARY PEOPLE. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK GENDER DISCRIMINATION PLAYS IN THE TRADITIONAL FEAR OF WITCHES?**