

## Lesson Description Format

Name: Matt Smith

Lesson: Maintaining the Great Mosque at Djenne

7<sup>th</sup> Grade World History

Unit: West African Kingdoms

Objectives:

1. Academic: I can describe the importance of the mud mosque at Djenne and the “Festival of Plastering.”
2. Social/moral: I can evaluate whether our personal freedom to spend time as we please takes precedence over our obligation to continue community traditions that might become extinct if we don't actively continue them.

Lesson Summary:

In this lesson, students consider the obligations of young people in Djenne to maintain the city's historic mosque. Without tremendous human labor, the mosque, which is constructed of mud, will soon fall into disrepair. Students must weigh their personal autonomy against their obligations to their community, both past and present.

Lesson Procedure:

For a “Do Now,” students will respond to the following “Hook” question (5 minutes):

*Your family has entrusted you with hundreds of photographs that date back for generations. Most of them, however, appear that they will fall apart soon. Which of the following would you do?*

- 1) *Do nothing, hope that they don't fall apart, and wait for someone else to take responsibility*
- 2) *Throw them away and forget about them.*
- 3) *Scan all of them into a computer, taking up many hours of your time.*
- 4) *Donate them to a goodwill store.*

*Explain your response.*

Students will then do a think-pair-share with their responses (3 minutes).

Tell students that they will learn about a similar situation that people in the city of Djenne, Mali face.

To give students background information, show the following video:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Na-uIQ1Fdoc&playnext=1&list=PL61F90857BE312364&feature=results\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Na-uIQ1Fdoc&playnext=1&list=PL61F90857BE312364&feature=results_video)

After viewing, discuss what makes the Great Mosque so valuable to the people of Djenne (5 minutes).

Next, distribute the attached handout. Students read the paragraph with additional information about Djenne's “Festival of Plastering,” then respond to the prompt asking

them what they would do if they were a young person in Djenne: 1) help with the festival; 2) stay in Djenne, but not help with the festival; or 3) move out of Djenne (5 minutes).

Students then work in groups to record the strongest reasons for choosing each of the three reasons above (5 minutes).

A full class discussion ensues (5 minutes).

As an exit slip, or for homework, students can answer the following question:  
*Which is more important: 1) my personal freedom to spend my time in ways I want; or 2) my responsibility to continue traditions of my community that might die if I don't actively continue them?*

#### Managing Learning Environment

Students will remain in individual seats through direct instruction and the think-pair-share. They will then transition into heterogeneous groups to discuss the decision facing the young people of Djenne.

#### Instructional Materials

Student handout is attached.