

Lesson and Activity Excerpted from the Tanenbaum Curriculum *Passages to Immigration*

# Immigration and Me

**Objectives:** Students will interview their families to investigate the history of immigration in their families and determine where their family traditions come from.

**Grades:**  
2–6

**Materials:**

Markers, Paper, Art Supplies, World Map, Multi-colored tacks

**Concepts:**

Exploring Multiple Identities;  
Preventing Prejudice; Teaching and Learning about Cultures and Religions; Teaching All Students

**Skills:**

Reading Maps; Making Inferences;  
Interviewing; Organizing Information;  
Identifying Main Events

## **PROCEDURE:**

This lesson asks students to research the history of immigration in their own families. The class creates a heritage map that represents the diversity of its members.

### **Activity 1: Class Cultural Heritage Map**

To start this lesson, help students understand the meaning of the term “immigration” and encourage them to think of moves that they have made. You can use the outline as a starting point for the discussion.

- 1) Ask students to raise their hands if they have moved from one place to another.
  - Have volunteers share their experiences.
  - Point out the places that students identify on the map.
- 2) Ask if any students can define the word “immigration.”
  - Make sure students understand that to immigrate is to move from one country to another country with the intent of staying permanently.

*Do students need more background information?* Here is some information on the United States:

Native Americans were the first inhabitants of the Americas. Almost all of the people in the United States other than Native Americans immigrated here or have ancestors who immigrated here from another country. Many people were forced to come here as slaves or servants, and others came to find work so they could support themselves and their families. Still others came because it was unsafe for them to live in their countries because of their religious or political beliefs, or as refugees from war in their home countries.

Help students begin to think about reasons why people immigrate to the United States, in the present and in the past. Also introduce the idea that not all people that have come to the United States did so by choice.

## Creating a Class Cultural Heritage Map

- Encourage students to respond to the following questions.
- Acknowledge that some of the students' ancestral history may have been lost or erased.

**\*\*\* Students can respond to as many questions as they wish \*\*\***

1) Ask the following questions one by one. Any student that identifies with the statement can pick up the tack with the correct color and place it on the map in the appropriate place. Allow students to place tacks as they wish, and **do not** single students out if they choose not to share.

- Does anyone here identify as Native American? If so, please place a **blue** tack on the place that best represents your tribe or nation on the map.
- Have any of you immigrated to the US from another country? If so, please place a **green** tack on the country from which you came.
- Has anyone's parents immigrated to the US from another country? If so, please place a **yellow** tack on the country that your parents came from.
- Has anyone's grandparents immigrated to the US from another country? If so, please place an **orange** tack on the country where they originated.
- Has anyone's ancestors immigrated to the US from another country? If so, please place a **red** tack on the country from which they came.

2) Once all the students who wish to share have shared their answers, debrief the activity using the following questions:

- How many students in our class identify as Native American?
- How many students or their family members came to the United States from other countries?
- What do you notice about the map? What does this tell you?