Note: Please review all materials prior to use and adjust accordingly to your own classroom needs and sensibilities.

Lesson Title: Iowa in the Era of Slavery & Civil War

Essential Question: How is Iowa's history connected to the institution of slavery and the events of the American Civil War?

Lesson Abstract: This is a series of lessons that will introduce slavery, the Underground Railroad, and the causes of the Civil War to elementary students, and Iowa's role in each of these. It will teach the students about the issues that influenced the history of our state and had long-term effects.

Grade Level: 3rd - 4th Grade, social studies & language arts
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Learning Objectives:

- To understand what slavery was and the role it played in our nation
- To understand how enslaved people were treated in contrast to their lives with their owners
- To gain an understanding of the Underground Railroad
- To learn the causes of the Civil War
- Make an Iowa connection to these historic events

Iowa Core Standards

RI.3.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, and text relevant to a grade topics or subject area.

RI.3.5 Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).
RI.3.8 Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).

RI.3.9 Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.

>>G3B Apply Catholic social justice teachings to life and serving others.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand the relationship of the individual to the components of society and culture. (SS.K-2.BS.4)

Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand how geographic and human characteristics create culture and define regions. (SS.3-5.G.2)

Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development of society and the movement of populations. (SS.3-5.G.3)

Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand historical patterns, periods of time and the relationships among these elements. (SS.3-5.H.1)

Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand how and why people create, maintain, or change systems of power, authority, and governance. (SS.3-5.H.2)

Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand people construct knowledge of the past from multiple and various types of sources. (SS.K-2.H.1)

Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand the role of individuals and groups within a society as promoters of change or the status quo. (SS.3-5.H.4)

**Learning Activities:**

Introduction to slavery in 19th century America:

1. Watch this [brief video](#) about the origins of slavery in North America.
2. Explore the social conditions of plantation slavery by reading aloud *Life on a Southern Plantation*, contrasting lives of plantation owners and enslaved people. Be sure to note that the conditions of slavery, which began almost instantly upon
European settlement of the Americas, changed over time, and that we are looking in particular at what it was like in the 1800s.

3. View the film and read along "Slavery in America" on TrueFlix (subscription service available to Iowa educators through their AEA)

4. Analyze photographs of contemporary reconstructions of living quarters and historic photos of plantations to better understand the physical environments of enslaved people:

Picking cotton, Savannah, GA
Negro slaves 1862 Edisto Island, S.C.
Green Hill, Slave Quarters & Woodhouse, Cecil County, MD

History Channel Photo Gallery: Slave Life (note: the slideshow contains advertisements)

The Underground Railroad:

1. Discuss the roots of the Underground Railroad, which operated roughly from 1830-1861 as one arm of the abolition movement.

2. After reading aloud "Harriet Tubman: A Woman of Courage" (Time for Kids Biography Series, 2005), have students explore the language, songs, and quilts that may have been used to convey secret messages among people attempting to escape slavery.

3. Using the Iowa Pathways resources, students can visualize the route that enslaved people followed across Iowa as they traveled from Missouri. Learn about the famous abolitionist, John Brown, and his activities in Iowa, as well as those of other "free-soil" activists from Kansas, and view some of the Iowa stations listed by the National Parks Service.

4. Guide students in looking at the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 broadside to better understand just what was at stake for runaways and those who aided them, and how some in the North viewed the law. Alternatively (or additionally), you can use this more simple broadside from Boston to address similar topics.

Iowa in the Civil War:

1. Use first section of Civil War book in TrueFlix

2. Have students explore the causes of the war and its early days through the Iowa Pathways resources online, as well as the role of Iowa and Iowans in the war.
3. Select letters written by Civil War soldiers from Iowa and their families that have been transcribed in DIY History and choose excerpts most appropriate to student reading level. Using the Teaching with Primary Sources Analysis tool, have students draw conclusions and form questions about life as a soldier during the war.

Additional readings about teaching this topic:

Teaching Tolerance: "Tongue-Tied"

Scholastic: Teaching about Slavery in the Elementary Classroom

BlogHer: How Parents and Teachers Should Teach Children About Slavery

Books for Young Readers about Slavery, Civil War & the Underground Railroad

A Place Called Freedom by Scott Russell Sanders (1997)

Aunt Harriette’s Underground Railroad in the Sky by Faith Ringgold (1992)

Follow the Drinking Gourd by J. Winter (1988)

Henry’s Freedom Box by Ellen Levine (2007)

In the Time of the Drums by Kim L. Siegelson (1999)

Narrative Of The Life Of Frederick Douglass by Terry West (1999)

Pink & Say by Patricia Polacco (1994)

Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt by Deborah Hopkinson (1993)

Unspoken: A Story from the Underground Railroad by Henry Cole (1994)