

# LESSON FIVE

## CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

This lesson will provide an overview of many of the different traditions which are maintained by Gypsy and Travellers. This lesson shows that whilst there are many traditional aspects to a Gypsy's and Traveller's life, they are like everyone else in many other ways.

## LEARNING QUESTIONS

- What is a tradition?
- What different traditions do the pupils follow with their families?
- What traditions do Gypsies and Travellers follow?
- How are traditions formed?
- Where do our Culture and Gypsies and Traveller Culture merge?

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Pupils should be able to:

- Have a broad understanding of some of the traditions of Gypsy and Travellers.
- Understand what the word "Culture" means.
- Understand that Gypsies and Travellers have similar ways of living to other's in the UK, but that their traditions are important to them and are celebrated.

## ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Assessment of the pupils' understanding of traditions through activity 1, the feedback about their own traditions, and through the plenary activity.
- The research activity will provide an opportunity to assess pupils understanding of each specific topic area.
- Students to fill in the topic self review sheet which can be added to after each lesson during this topic.

## CURRICULUM LINKS

21, 4b, 4e, 4f

## PRIOR LEARNING

Lesson Plan 1

## RESOURCES REQUIRED

You will require access to the internet for a whole class for this Lesson Plan.

- Resource Sheet 1 – Traditions Fact Sheet.
- Resource Sheet 2 – Gypsy and Traveller Information Sheet.
- Resource Sheet 3 – Agree or disagree statements.
- Resource Sheet 4 – Art Lesson - How to make a Wreath.

## LESSON PLAN FIVE

### KS2 CULTURE & TRADITIONS

#### 0-5 minutes

What is a tradition? What traditions do you have in your family? Do you have traditions around Christmas, weddings, particular food and pastimes?

Use Resource Sheet 1 – Traditions Fact Sheet

#### 5-15 minutes

Show a short film about some of the traditions of Gypsy and Travellers filmed in Lincolnshire. Lottie/photos etc.

#### 15 – 40 minutes

Split the class into small groups of four and give them a topic each to research using computers from the following list:

- Horse and Horse Fairs
- Birth and Weddings
- Death and funerals
- Family
- Religion
- Hygiene
- Circuses and Fairs
- Famous Gypsies and Travellers

In addition hand out copies of Resource Sheet 2 as a starting point.

#### 40 -50 minutes

From the research gathered from the small groups' feedback to the teacher who collates it on the board to review with the class.

#### 50mins- 1 hour – Plenary

'Move to the answer'

Taking turns, pupils pick a statement from a box or hat using Resource Sheet 3 and the class must move according to what they think of the statement to agree or disagree.

Dedicate an area of the classroom for an "Agree" group and one for a "Disagree" group.

This should be done as a quick exercise to ensure multiple facts can be pulled out of the hat.

## **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### **ART**

#### **WREATHS**

The Holly tree and moss has long provided a source of income during the winter months for many Gypsies through the creation of wreaths. Holly and molly is collected and wreaths are made and taken to sell at various markets.

Make your own wreath for your classroom or for home using recycled materials using the instructions on Resource Sheet 4.

#### **ADDITIONAL ART TASK**

From the researched material in Lesson Plan 5, each group could create a collage on a large piece of card with images, key words, photos and information about the topic they have researched.

### **LITERACY**

Traditionally Gypsies and Travellers have foraged on the land to collect food and ingredients.

Our Hedgerows contain a bounty of fresh fruits and berries which can be used.

This is a simple jam recipe which uses strawberries but which can be adapted to use any fruit available.

This lesson needs to take place in the school kitchen. This activity focuses on following instructions:-

Working in small groups, follow the instructions below to create

#### **FAST JAM RECIPE**

- cups strawberries, hulled
  - 1/4 cup sugar
  - 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1. Place the strawberries in a food processor or blender and process until smooth or chunky, whichever way you like.
  2. Put strawberries, sugar and lemon juice into a non-stick skillet and bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
  3. Let boil rapidly until reduced and thickened, approximately 10 minutes (you'll know once it's thickened, so if you're doubtful keep on cooking).
  4. Pour into a jar and allow cooling to room temperature before covering and storing in the fridge.
  5. Refrigerate for up to 10 days or freeze for longer storage.

# LESSON PLAN FIVE

## KS3 CULTURE & TRADITIONS

### **0-5 minutes**

What is a tradition? What traditions do you have in your family? Do you have traditions around Christmas, weddings, particular food and pastimes?

Use Resource Sheet 1 – Traditions Fact Sheet

### **5-15 minutes**

Show a short film which shows some of the traditions of Gypsy and Travellers filmed in Lincolnshire. Lottie/photos etc.

### **15 – 40 minutes**

Split the class into small groups of four and give them a topic each to research using computers from the following list:

Hand out copies of Resource Sheet 2 as a starting point and with a caution to those working on Births and Weddings to not rely on BFGW as many will already be familiar with this type of media representation.

- Horse and Horse Fairs
- Birth and Weddings
- Deaths and Funerals
- Family
- Religion
- Hygiene
- Circus and Fairs
- Famous Gypsies and Travellers

Based on their research the students should create some statements which can be put into a hat and read out. They should make an equal number of true / false statements. For examples and guidance look at Resource Sheet 3

### **40-55 minutes**

Students pick statements out of the hat and read them out. If it is one they have worked on they observe (without influencing) – if they didn't write it they participate in forming an opinion line between (at one end) agree, 'it's true' and the other end disagree 'it's false'...they should be prepared to state their reasons for where they stand, including if they choose to stand in the middle: this could be because they genuinely 'don't know' or because they think a statement is partly true, partly not.

This is a very useful, non-judgemental way for students to have to commit to a point of view, without fear of ridicule in front of their peers (or the teacher) for 'getting it wrong'. The teacher can question the source material for the information/statements if they wish to – questions such as: 'what website/source did you find that out from?' and 'how certain can we be that we can trust this source of information?'

55-60 minutes Plenary

Which statements most interested you and why?

Which sources (or voices) should we most listen to when learning about Gypsy and Traveller traditions and culture?

## **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### **ART & DESIGN**

Produce a series of images based on the 'true statements about Gypsy and Traveller culture and traditions. This could be in the form of a digital presentation such as powerpoint or a poster.

# RESOURCE SHEET ONE

## TRADITIONS

Traditions are practices and beliefs that are passed down between generations of a certain family, culture, or community. Lots of holidays are associated with traditions, such as watching fireworks on the 5 of November or eating turkey at Christmas. Unlike laws and rules which we have to observe for our safety and well-being, traditions are usually things we do through personal choice because they are customary and meaningful to us. Most traditions are enjoyable things that help people to observe an occasion or feel unified with a certain group, such as their religion, group, or fellow citizens.

The word tradition also means that a certain practice has been around for some time and is observed regularly. The tradition for a culture to eat specific foods, for example, usually goes back to parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and beyond! However, new traditions are made all the time and sometimes even replace old traditions. For something to become a tradition, it just has to be done once, and then done again and again after that!

# RESOURCE SHEET TWO

## GYPSY AND TRAVELLER TRADITIONS INFORMATION SHEET

Gypsies and Travellers have their own languages, traditions and customs that guide their way of life. These are passed down through the generations, but are also adapted as time and life changes. Cultural values are very strong, though like other groups, each family and individual may have their own special ways of putting them into practice.

### HORSES AND HORSE FAIRS

Horses are a key part of Gypsy Traveller cultural heritage. Some are still used to pull carts and wagons, though obviously this is not now as common as in previous eras. Many people keep horses, breed them and sell them at traditional fairs (e.g. Stowe, Appleby). Harness racing is also very popular activity.

At one time every town in the Country had a horse fair as horses were the main transport. As horse fairs died out they became specialist and a Gypsy tradition.

### BIRTH AND WEDDINGS

These are very special events within the community. During the woman's pregnancy it is not generally appropriate to refer to her condition, especially by and in front of men. Once the baby is born however, there is much celebration of the new addition to the community.

Most women prefer to go into hospital in order to give birth as a trailer birth would be seen as polluting the caravan.

Many Gypsies and Travellers marry at a relatively early age. It is extremely rare for women to marry outside the community. It is more common, though still not widespread, for men to do so. Much of the information relating to weddings on the internet is from 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' TV show, try to also look for weddings traditions which are not from this source.

### DEATH

If a person is dying, many relatives will travel in order to visit their bedside. After death a fire is lit outside the trailer, which will continue burning until the deceased has been buried. The deceased will usually remain 'lying in state' inside the trailer until the funeral.

Many relatives will travel to the funeral, and the funeral procession will often stop at certain places that held meaning for the deceased.

Following the funeral, all possessions not transferred to another in the deceased's lifetime will be burned or ceremonially broken. Even trailers may be burned, although they are more likely to be sold now.

### **FAMILY**

The family is extremely important to Gypsies and Travellers. Extended families support and look after one another. Older members of the community are respected and cared for within the family and Gypsies and Travellers would not contemplate putting elderly relatives into care homes. Children are at the centre of the lives of Gypsy and Traveller families.

Children are expected to help out with daily chores from a very early age, and to help out with the family business. There is usually a strict division of labour between the sexes, with women remaining on site to look after the children and trailer, while men go out to work during the day.

### **COLLECTING CHINA AND GLASS**

Collecting glass and china and gold, particularly Crown Derby and Waterford, is another tradition. This can be a way of storing money without using a bank and in hard times the treasured belongings can be sold. White gold is now preferred over yellow gold.

### **RELIGION**

Religion is of great importance to many Gypsies and Travellers. Irish Travellers are often devout Roman Catholics and their children attend Catholic schools. Many go on pilgrimages to Lourdes or in Ireland. Large numbers of Romany Gypsies are now born-again Christians. They find love and solidarity in the Church and in meeting up with others from across Europe at large Christian conventions.

### **FORTUNE TELLING**

Fortune telling or Dukkering is one of the many traditions of Gypsies and for some, it forms a part of their daily working life. The fortune teller is always a woman, called a drabardi.

It remains part of the British seaside and fairground culture and history.

### **HYGIENE**

Gypsies and Travellers have special hygiene rules, which are in some ways stricter than those of settled people but are not well understood by people outside their community.

They take great pride in cleaning their caravans daily, even when getting moved on, and have gleaming displays of china and glass. Gypsies and Travellers are often assumed to be dirty and called names which is opposite to the truth.

To have a toilet in the same place where food is prepared is considered distasteful and unhealthy so Gypsy Trailers do not have a chemical toilet like a holiday caravan would.



There are cleanliness rituals that many Gypsies and Travellers still observe (in some form) which are practices rooted in Hindu laws of cleanliness. 'Mochadi' refers to anything considered spiritually unclean.

Examples of this include:

- Trailers do not have showers in them to keep them free from spiritual uncleanliness
- A range of bowls are used for different washing such as food, clothes, dishes or personal use
- Toilets in a trailer are seen as mochadi
- Nothing that has been on the floor can be put on a table
- Most animals are seen as mochadi apart from the horse

Although Irish Travellers have no history of mochadi regulations, many have adopted practices similar to Gypsies in order to preserve the health of the family.

### **FAMOUS GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS**

There have been many Gypsies over the years who have been famous for their contribution to society. These include the actors Sir Charlie Chaplin, Sir Michael Caine and Bob Hoskins, Nobel Prize winner Mother Theresa, footballer Eric Cantona, and singer David Essex.

# RESOURCE SHEET THREE

## PLENARY AGREE OR DISAGREE STATEMENTS

### AGREE

1. Stow Horse Fair dates back to 1427
2. Horse Fairs are an opportunity for a collective celebration of what it means to be a Gypsy
3. The traditional food of Gypsies and Travellers reflects their nomadic way of life and includes wild plants fish and game
4. Gypsy and Travellers eat hedgehog
5. Gypsy and Travellers always cook outside
6. Gypsy and Travellers value their families
7. Gypsies and Travellers have developed their own traditions in music, story-telling, poetry, art and design, and dance.
8. Peg-making, flower carving, wagon building and painting, blacksmith and leather work and fortune telling are all traditional crafts
9. In the winter traditionally Gypsies and Travellers make wreaths

### DISAGREE

1. Gypsy and Travellers traditionally make and sell cakes
2. You can only attend a horse the fair if you have a horse
3. Gypsy and Travellers have poor hygiene
4. Gypsy and Travellers who run fairgrounds do not live in trailers
5. Gypsy and Travellers who tour with circuses are not from Britain
6. Gypsy and Travellers wash their clothes in the same bowl as their pots and pans
7. Dogs live in a Gypsy and Traveller's trailer
8. Gypsies and Travellers do not shop at the local supermarket

# RESOURCE SHEET FOUR

## MAKING A WREATH

1. Cut a large shopping bag full of holly from your garden in 6-inch-long trimmings. If it is not winter use other green foliage for the base.
2. Create a frame from a wire coat hanger. (Simply unbend it and twist into a circle)
3. Attach floral wire anywhere along the wire wreath frame.
4. Select several stems of the 6-inch holly pieces and place them together in a bunch with the stems at one end.
5. Place a stem that has some berries on top of the bundle of holly.
6. Place the bundle on top of the frame where the floral wire is connected.
7. Hold the bundle in place and wrap the floral wire around the bundle and frame.
8. Wrap the floral wire around the bundle a second time and then pull it tight. Make sure to leave the wire attached to the frame.
9. Gather another bundle of holly and place it so that the leaves overlap the first bunch and cover the stems, making sure that the stems on both bunches face the same direction.
10. Continue overlapping the bunches of foliage and wiring them to the frame until you complete the circle.
11. Lift the first bundle that you wired onto the frame and tuck the last one under it.
12. Twist the wire tightly around the last bundle. Knot the wire onto the frame, leaving 1 inch of wire to hang the finished wreath.
13. You can add Ribbon and other items to brighten your design at the end.

# **REVIEW SHEET**

**WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?**

**WHAT DID I FIND EASY?**

**WHAT DID I FIND HARD?**

**WHAT MORE WOULD I LIKE TO KNOW?**

**WHAT IDEAS HAVE CHANGED?**

**HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE MYSELF?**