

Ritual as Remembrance

Based on the project **Altar: Prayer, Ritual, Offerings**, exhibited at Photoville from September 13-23, 2018 in Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Through exploring our own legacies and ancestries, we delve into understanding how and why people around the world have documented and celebrated their stories and rituals.

Students will be able to:

- See and compare artists' different points of view
- Understand the meaning of "ritual" in the context of other histories and cultures
- Use photography and interviews to reflect on the role of ritual in their own lives

Session 1: Intro & Exploration of Ritual

Ice Breaker: Silence as Ritual

1. Facilitator will model a moment of silence for 3-5 minutes (as long as it takes for students to also become silent, and to notice the silence in the room).
2. Ask students:
 - What just happened?
 - What did that feel like?
 - How did it change the classroom atmosphere?
3. Explain the role that silence can play in creating a sacred space and in ritual.
 - What other rituals do we have in our classroom?

Gallery Walk

1. In small groups, students will analyze the photographs by MFON women as seen in MFON Altar: Prayer, Ritual, Offerings. Photographs will be set up at stations with writing utensils and Post-Its available.
2. Students will use inquiry-based tools to analyze and investigate the photographs, placing Post-Its with their comments and questions at each station:
 - What do you see? (What details stand out?)

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Featuring photography by Régine Romain and artists from MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora

Grade Level: 5th - 12th grade, Adults

Subjects: Photography, Visual Arts, English Language Arts, Social Studies

Time Required: 2-3 sessions

Key Images:

- [MFON Image Bank](#)

Materials Needed:

- Post-Its
- Markers
- Printouts of images
- Artist statements/bios
- Laptops
- Phones/cameras
- Audio recorders
- See, Think, Wonder discussion questions

Additional Resources:

photoville.com/edu

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- What do you think is going on? (What makes you say that?)
 - What does this make you wonder?
3. Form groups at each station, designate a scribe and a facilitator for the group, and record the findings on Post-It notes.
 4. Share out findings collectively with the class.

Standards Addressed:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3
NY State VA:Cr1.1.6
NY State VA:Pr6.1.6

Gallery Walk

1. Ask students: what is a ritual? Use chart paper to collect student responses from the room about how to define "ritual" and create a working definition for the word.
2. Students will turn and talk to a partner and develop answers to the following questions:
 - What are some of the rituals you have in your own life, at home?
3. Individually, choose one personal ritual and write down/ brainstorm ideas to the following:
 - Who is involved in this ritual? Is it family? Just yourself? Friends? Ancestors? Someone else?
 - What does it look like? What objects are involved? What symbols?
 - Where and when does it usually take place?

Homework

1. Interview and record someone who is familiar with this ritual. This could be a family member, a friend, a neighbor (or yourself, if no one else is involved!)

Session 2: Visual Storytelling

1. Students will end up with 5-10 photos that illustrate a personal ritual.
2. Brainstorm the content of these photos. These photos can be a landscape of a place that reminds them of the ritual they want to represent, a still life of a symbolic object etc. Make a list of

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to represent, a still life of a symbolic object etc. Make a list of the SPACES, ITEMS, PEOPLE and ACTIVITIES related to the ritual.

3. Create a storyboard of 5-10 images that represent the ritual. Draw and imagine what those photos will look like.
 4. Homework: Create 5-8 photographs relating to your ritual. These can include objects related to the ritual, the location of the ritual, the people involved, etc. If you can photograph the ritual itself (if it's happening this week!), capture it in action.
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Session 3: Editing & Sharing

1. Pair students to review each other's work.
2. Based on feedback they received, students should work individually to edit their image selection down to 3-5 images.
 - Begin the review by asking the artist to share about their ritual.
 - Remind the reviewer to actively listen to the artist. Take note of something they like, something they wonder and something they wish.
 - Have the reviewer share their feedback with the artist in the form of three statements.
 - I like....
 - I wonder...
 - I wish....
3. Students should also edit their interviews down to 3-5 quotes and use them to caption images.
4. Optional: Provide space for students to share their work in a culminating event such as a gallery walk or final presentation.