

### **Cultivating Changemakers in the Social Studies: An Inquiry-Based Exploration of Forgotten Places**

Take your students to an abandoned cemetery, with cracked headstones hidden among overgrown grass and weeds. Allow them to explore the crumbling grounds and generate questions to investigate. Give them time to discover and learn through primary sources. Help them draw connections between what they've seen and the past and present of the place where they live. Encourage them to connect empathetically over the decades and think about how they can become changemakers for a better future. The following lesson plan, developed by Center for Inspired Teaching, may serve as a template for an engaging, inquiry-based social studies project with your class.

Center for Inspired Teaching is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1995 to build a better school experience for students by shifting the role of the teacher from information provider to *Instigator of Thought*<sup>®</sup>. An *Instigator of Thought* teaches students how to think, not what to think; engages students in serious play; and designs classrooms so students are engaged intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Inspired Teaching trains preK-12 teachers to provide standards-aligned, inquiry-based instruction to improve education for thousands of children in high needs communities.

Aleta Margolis, the Founder and Executive Director of Inspired Teaching, has been an Ashoka Fellow since 2001. The Inspired Teaching Demonstration School, which she co-founded in order to demonstrate the impact of Inspired Teaching's instructional model, has been an Ashoka Changemaker campus since 2012. Inspired Teaching's close relationship with Ashoka is grounded in its commitment to preparing students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To thrive in an unpredictable and complicated future, students must master content alongside the skills of a changemaker: problem-solving, creative thinking, empathy, teamwork, self-directed investigation, and perseverance among them.

To accomplish this goal, Inspired Teaching trains teachers to focus on building the 4 I's<sup>SM</sup> in every student: Intellect, Inquiry, Imagination, and Integrity. We help them create a classroom environment that supports the growth of the 4 I's by incorporating 5 Core Elements: Mutual Respect; Student as Expert; Purpose, Persistence, and Action; Joy; and Wide-Ranging Evidence of Student Learning.

The following lesson plan incorporates the 5 Core Elements in the service of building the 4 I's, which speak directly to the skills of changemakers. The lesson is derived from a curricular unit created through BLISS: Building Literacy in the Social Studies, an Inspired Teaching program run in partnership with DC Public Schools that trains cohorts of Teacher Leaders to become *Instigators of Thought*; to write inquiry-based, standards-aligned curricula; and to lead professional development for all of their peers in DCPS.

For more information about Inspired Teaching and our inquiry-based instructional model, please go to [www.inspiredteaching.org](http://www.inspiredteaching.org).

## **Mt. Zion Cemetery Field Trip Protocol (Teacher Guide)**

Located at 27<sup>th</sup> and Q Streets NW

Background Info: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc10.htm>

### **Materials Needed:**

1. Clipboards or any hard surface for students to write on
2. Paper
3. Earbuds/headphones
4. Source documents\*
  - a. Female Union Band Society brochure
  - b. 1969 *Washington Post* article on Mt. Zion
  - c. 1974 *Washington Post* article on Mt. Zion
  - d. 1979 *Washington Post* article on Mt. Zion
  - e. Court case documents
  - f. Thank-you letter from a citizen to Judge Gasch
  - g. Excerpt from Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) Report on Mt. Zion, 2008
  - h. Mt. Zion Photos

*\*If you would like copies of the documents, please contact [sammy@inspiredteaching.org](mailto:sammy@inspiredteaching.org).*

### **Protocol:**

1. All students should have something to write on, paper, and a writing utensil, as well as headphones
2. Students are allotted 15 minutes to walk independently or in pairs to observe the space and to write at least 10 questions they have based on their observations (no source documents yet).
3. Students will all reconvene with you at a pre-determined location after the 15 minutes.
4. Hand out the various sources to students (each student gets one).
5. Give students 10 minutes to examine/read the document
  - a. Instruct students to:
    - i. Write a summary of their source
    - ii. Put a check mark by any questions that were addressed by their source.
    - iii. Write one NEW question that they have after reading their source
6. Instruct students to meet in a group with their peers who read the SAME document. In this group, students will discuss their summaries and help each other to further understanding of the source.

7. Instruct students to find one partner who read a different source.
  - a. In pairs, students will
    - i. Share the summary of their sources with each other
    - ii. Each students will again check off any questions that were addressed by their partner's source
    - iii. Each students will again write one new question *based on their partner's source*.
8. Students will then take out their headphones and phones and google "WAMU Mt. Zion cemetery" to get to:  
[http://wamu.org/programs/metro\\_connection/11/10/28/the\\_location\\_the\\_winding\\_history\\_of\\_mt\\_zion\\_cemetery](http://wamu.org/programs/metro_connection/11/10/28/the_location_the_winding_history_of_mt_zion_cemetery)
9. Students will listen to the whole story (7 minutes) and once more check off any questions that may have been answered by the WAMU story.
10. Lastly, teacher will facilitate a whole-group discussion (consider gathering in the grass near the brick burial vault). Some ideas to guide student thought:
  - a. How have demographic changes in DC in the 1800s affect this cemetery?
  - b. How did demographic changes in the 1900s affect the cemetery?
  - c. What should happen to this space (the cemetery)? What is worth preserving? What should it be developed and how?