



Aunt Flossie's Hats: and Crab Cakes Later

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Two little girls visit their Aunt Flossie and, while trying on some of her many hats, listen to the memories that each hat brings.

Each reminiscence paints a portrait of some aspect of African-American history, but the girls' favorite is the day the wind blew Aunt Flossie's best hat into the river.

- Spark student's interest by asking them to think about something special that they did or that happened to them. Ask students: What were you wearing during this special time? Encourage children to tell what happened and what they were wearing at that time.
 - Write the question on chart paper and record children's responses below it. Then explain to children that the story they are going to listen to is about Aunt Flossie. When her two nieces come to visit, Aunt Flossie tells them stories. Each story comes to mind because she remembers the particular hat she was wearing at that time.

Aunt Flossie shares her memories with her nieces as she shares her hats.

- Do you have any memories (pictures, mementos, journals, etc.) that you can share with your students?
 - Encourage students to share their memories in small groups or with the whole class. Be aware that students might choose to bring in items from home that might be valuable.
- Discuss the importance of preserving memories with your students.
 - Why do we want to have something to hand down to the next generation, to our children and grandchildren?
 - This would be a good opportunity for your students to start a small scrapbook. You may want to scrapbook one event or an entire season (or even an entire year) together.

Hospitality is kindness in welcoming guests or strangers. Aunt Flossie greets the girls warmly. She says, "Come in, Susan. Come in, Sarah. Have some tea. Have some cookies. Later we can get some crab cakes!"

- How do we react when someone knocks on our door? Do we welcome them and offer them something to eat and or drink?
- We should be hospitable to those who come to visit us.

- Brainstorm to make a list of special kindnesses to give to those who visit your home?

No one is sure when hats were first invented. Hats vary widely in material and style, depending on climate and customs. The three main reasons people wear hats are protection, communication, and decoration.

- Protection
 - Protection from the sun (Mexican sombrero)
 - Protection from the cold by providing extra warmth in the winter (fur or wool hats)
 - Protection from injury (football helmet, construction hard hat)
- Communication
 - Communicate occupation (state trooper, firefighter)
 - Communicate position (king, bishop, etc.)
 - Communicate religious belief or affiliation
- Decoration
 - Accessory for an outfit
 - Display of tradition

During the 1900s, hat styles varied more than ever before. In the 1920s women wore a drooping, bell shaped hat called a cloche, In the 1930s, they wore a harlequin hat that had a wide upturned brim. Many different hats were worn in the 1940s and 1950s, but in the 1960s hats became less popular.

- Have students, in small groups; research some of the hats, time periods and countries listed below. Add some of the countries represented by the diverse population in your class.
 - 1200s
 - German headdress and cap
 - 1400s
 - Hennin
 - 1600s
 - European Cavalier Hat
 - 1700s

- Gainsborough
- 1800s
 - American top hat
 - American poke bonnet
- Greece
 - Pelos
- Scotland
 - Tam-o'-shanter
- Persian
 - Turban

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