

Lesson Plan on Korea

Topic: The teachings of Confucius

Purpose: The teachings of Confucius have been and continue to be the foundation of life in Korea. This lesson will help students understand what Confucianism is and how it has shaped life in Korea.

Target Age: This is developed for use at the sixth grade level. It is appropriate, however, for grades four through eight.

Time frame: This is designed to be a one-period (45 minutes) lesson plan that is part of a longer unit on Korea.

- Objectives:
1. Students will understand who Confucius was and when he lived.
 2. Students will be able to explain the basic ideas of Confucius, his plan for a good government, and his ideas on harmony in society.
 3. Students will be able to explain the impact of Confucian teachings on contemporary Korean life.
 4. Students will compare and contrast a society based on the teachings of Confucius with our society in America.

- Lesson:
1. Ask students to share what they know (or think they know!) about Confucius.
 2. Teacher will present an overview of the teachings of Confucius, making a list on the board as ideas are presented.

Main ideas discussed:

- a. The way to have a good government
- b. The five virtues of a gentleman
- c. The five relationships
- d. The importance of each person fulfilling his role
- e. The highest calling (government service)
- f. Family life
- g. The ultimate goal: harmony

Application and Assessment:

After discussing the teachings of Confucius, teacher asks the class to look at the list on the board. Then the teacher asks what a society would be like based on those principles. Both pros and cons will be discussed. What weaknesses would this society be likely to have? What would happen to individuality? How about equal rights? Would it foster openness and honest?

Next, the teacher will ask the class to evaluate American society and government. Which of those principles are foundational to the American way of thinking? What do students think accounts for the differences? How could we make changes?

Homework Assignment:

Students will select one of the quotes or literature selections listed below and write a couple of paragraphs about what they believe is being communicated. They will include their own personal reaction to the selection they have chosen.

1. From the *Shijing*, one of the Five Classics:

*So he bears a son,
And puts him to sleep upon a bed,
Clothes him in robes,
Gives him a jade sceptre to play with.
The child's howling is very lusty;
In red greaves (leg armor) shall he flare,
Be lord and king of house and home.*

*Then he bears a daughter,
And puts her upon the ground,
Clothes her in swaddling clothes,
Gives her a loom-whorl to play with.
For her no decorations, no emblems;
Her only care, the wine and food,
And how to give no trouble to father and mother.*

2. Confucius believed:

"The world should be ordered in a moral way to bring about order and harmony."

3. From *The Book of Rites*:

"Only when one knows where one is to rest can one have a fixed purpose. Only with a fixed purpose can one achieve calmness of mind. Only with calmness of mind can one attain serene repose. Only in serene repose can one carry on careful deliberation. Only through careful deliberation can one have achievement. Things have their roots and branches; affairs have their beginning and end. He who knows what comes first and what comes last comes himself near the Way..."

4. From the *Analects*:

"At fifteen I thought only of study; at thirty I began playing my role; at forty I was sure of myself; at fifty I was conscious of my position in the universe; at sixty I was no longer argumentative; and now at seventy I can follow my heart's desire without violating custom."

5. From Mencius, a follower of Confucius:

"Men are in the habit of speaking of the world, the state. As a matter of fact, the foundation of the world lies in the state, the foundation of the state lies in the family, and the foundation of the family lies in the individual."

6. From *The Book of Rites*:

"The wise kings of old knew that the rules of ceremony could not be dispensed with, while the ruin of states, the destruction of families and the punishing of individuals are always preceded by the abandonment of these rules."

Background information for this unit came from the book Confucianism, by Thomas and Dorothy Hoobler, and was published by Roundhouse Publishing in 1993 in New York.