

HAITI

CARE FOR CREATION
PROVERBS

TEACHER
GUIDE

LATIN AMERICA
AND **CARIBBEAN** SERIES

SELECTION 1**LEARN A HAITIAN GREETING****OBJECTIVE**

To acquaint children with Haitian Creole, also spelled *kreyol*, a language unique to Haitians.

INPUT

Haitians speak their own language, Haitian Creole or *kreyol*. Creole is based heavily on French, although many of the words have been shortened and are written as they sound, so they often look quite unlike the corresponding French written word. Haitian Creole is constantly evolving. (For more information on this evolution, see page 14.)

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

Have students use some of these Haitian phrases to greet one another.

Good morning **Bonjou** (bohn JOOH)
 Good afternoon **Bonswa** (bohn SWAH)
 Good night **Bonnwit** (bohn NWEET)

How are you? **Ki jan ou ye?** (key JOHN ooh yeah)
 Fine, thanks **Byen, mèsì.** (BYEN messy)
 Not too bad **Pa pi mal.** (pa pee MALL)

What's your name? . . **Ki jan ou rele?** (key JOHN ooh ray LAY)
 My name is ____ . . **Mwen rele ____.** (mwèh ray LAY)

God bless you. **Bondye bèni ou**
 (bon DE-YEAH ben-EE ooh)

Please **Souple** (su PLAY)
 Thank you **Mèsì** (messy)
 You're welcome **Padekwa** (pa dee KWA)

SELECTION 2**LOCATION/OVERVIEW OF HAITI****OBJECTIVE**

To give students a sense of Haiti's size, location, type of land and economic activity, as well as some basics about the Haitian people and their worship services.

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

Before locating Haiti on the map, ask the children what they already know about Haiti: Where is it? What do you know about Haiti? Do you know any Haitians or Haitian-Americans? What do they do for a living? What would you like to learn about Haiti?

Chart the children's replies about what they already know and what they would like to know. Ask a librarian for help in researching topics not addressed here.

INPUT

Display laminated map of Western Hemisphere from resource box and share information from the following topics on "Haiti Fact Sheet" (pages 6 to 7) — "Capital," "Location," "The Land," "Economy," "The Haitian People" and "Religion."

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

1. Make photocopies of the Haiti coloring map (page 5) and ask the students to:

- Draw a small star where Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, is located. (Note: it is at the base of the "alligator's opened mouth.")

- Label and color the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.
- Label the Artibonite River.
- Label and color Gonâve Island and Tortuga Island.

2. Discuss some or all of the following questions:

- What kind of weather would you expect in Haiti? Why?
- What are some reasons why Haiti is the poorest (moneywise) country in the Western Hemisphere?
- What do you think often occurs in countries where a small part of the population holds most of the wealth and power?
- How is a Haitian church service similar to and different from yours? How would you remain absolutely quiet for 1½ to 2 hours without books or toys? (Show teaching photo of church service, in box)

3. Plan a harvest celebration at your church based on the Haitian way of celebrating this important event (see page 7). Decorate your church with crepe-paper flowers and fruits and vegetables. Try praying as Haitians do. Invite guest musicians to provide special music. Plan a meal afterwards, serving Haitian foods (see page 23 for some ideas). Sing a Haitian grace before the meal (see page 22).

HAITI FACT SHEET

CAPITAL

Port-au-Prince.

POPULATION

An estimated 7 million, not including Haitians living in the United States, the Bahamas and elsewhere.

CURRENCY

The Gourde. (In Creole, *goud*) See samples below.

FLAG

Top half is blue, bottom half is red. In the center is a coat of arms (palm trees, drums and cannons) on a small white square. The Haitian flag has been varied several times since the first flag was created by Jean-Jacques Dessalines at the time of Haiti's struggle for independence. Dessalines, a black Haitian, helped lead a black army against Haiti's French rulers in 1802.

To make the new Haitian flag, Dessalines removed the middle white stripe from the French flag, symbolizing the defeat of Haiti's white colonizers.

LANGUAGE

Until 1987 French was Haiti's only official language. But Haitian Creole (also spelled *kreyol*) is the language of the people and all Haitians speak it. Some 90 percent of Creole words are derived from French, although pronunciation is quite distinct. The rich Creole language also has words of African origin, some Spanish, English and Dutch, and some words from the

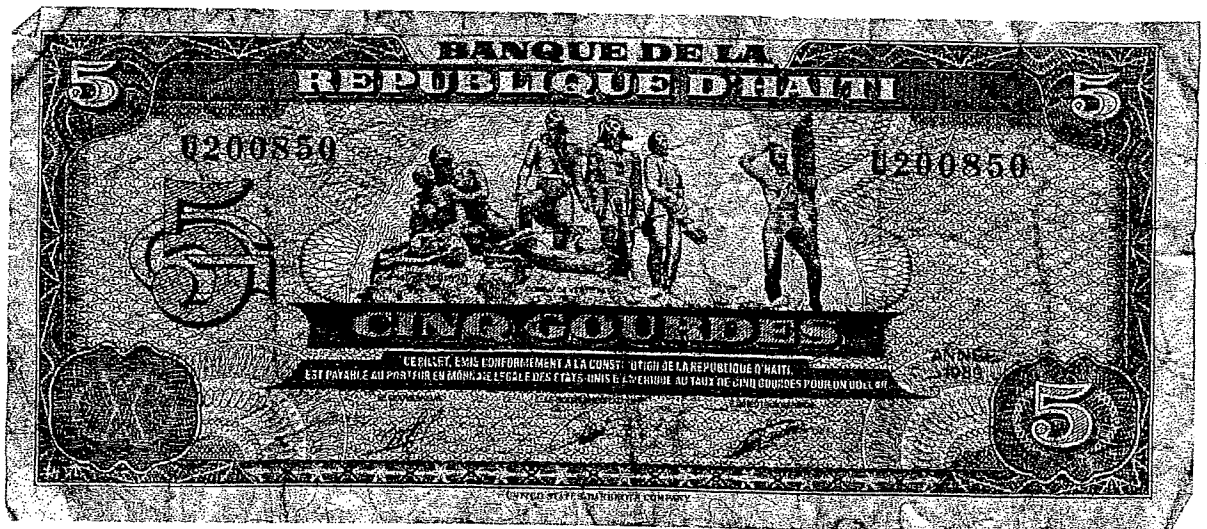
native peoples who lived on the island before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Creole is constantly evolving, with the spelling of words becoming more phonetic (written according to how they sound).

LOCATION

Haiti is one of two countries sharing the island called Hispaniola. The other is the Dominican Republic.

Hispaniola, an island in the Caribbean Sea between Cuba, Jamaica and Puerto Rico, resembles a short, fat alligator with a wide-open mouth. Haiti is the "alligator's" head and jaw—about one-third of the island. Haiti's Gonâve Island looks like a fish "the alligator" is about to swallow. It's second-largest island, Tortuga, looks like a luckier fish that was able to swim away above the opened jaw.

Haiti is some 966 kilometers/600 miles from southern Florida; in a jet, one can reach Haiti from Miami in about one and a half hours.



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THE LAND

Haiti gets its name from an indigenous Arawakan word meaning "mountain." Haiti is covered by mountains, some as tall as 2,700 meters/9,000 feet. The Artibonite River, 174 miles or 278 kilometers long, runs through the center of Haiti east to west, emptying into the Gulf of Gonâve. Most of Haiti's crops are produced in the Artibonite Valley. The valley is often referred to as Haiti's "breadbasket," although rice is the main crop. Haiti is about the size of the state of Maryland, or half as large as Nova Scotia.

ECONOMY

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. One reason for its poverty is its long history of political instability. Another is the country's scarcity of natural resources—or difficulty in getting to them. Haiti's poor northeast region, for example, contains deposits of various minerals, including copper and gold. But without roads to get to the deposits, they are difficult to mine.

Haiti's non-mineral natural resources—its soil, trees, water—are virtually exhausted. Haiti's mountains are almost completely deforested, causing massive land erosion. Even so, 70 to 80 percent of Haitians are subsistence farmers trying to eke out livings on small plots of unproductive land.

An African tradition of cooperative labor, called a *kombit*, is still used for the heaviest farm work—clearing fields, planting and harvesting. Neighbors come together to do the job, and the host provides food and drink. A leader will often drum, chant or sing so that the work, such as hoeing, is synchronized. Singing, joking and eating together help lighten the hard work.

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

Some 80 percent of Haitians are direct descendants of the 480,000 African slaves who won their freedom in 1804. But although they represent the greatest portion of the population, Haitians of African descent are the poorest and least powerful of all Haitians.

Haiti has a small elite—some 10 to 15 percent of its people—who are proud descendants of French colonists. Most have intermarried to various degrees with black Haitians and are known as "*mulattos*." This group holds much of the

RELIGION

Roman Catholicism has been Haiti's official religion since 1860. Most Haitians practice a mixture of Christianity and Vodou. Vodou, which has its roots in African beliefs, was recognized as a legitimate religion in Haiti's 1987 constitution. Haitians enjoy freedom of religion and many Protestant and evangelical groups have begun churches in Haiti. These churches are growing.

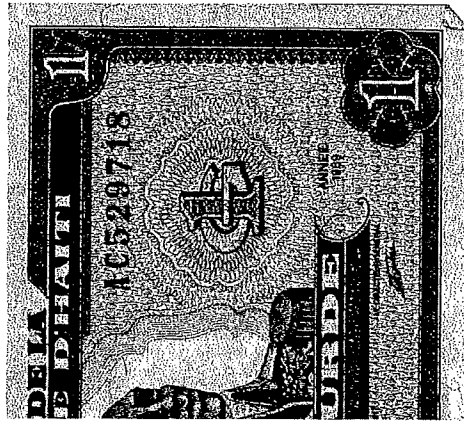
A Protestant or evangelical church service is usually 1 1/2 to 2 hours long. It begins with singing. In most churches, the hymns are old gospel songs that were translated from English into French or Creole. Church-goers know the songs well, without hymn books, and sing them slowly. Some churches are beginning to adopt original Haitian songs of praise, as well as newer choruses and Bible songs translated from English.

Following singing comes an important part of the Protestant church service—prayer time. Everyone recites his or her own prayer—out loud—at the same time. While it may seem confusing to the outsider, it's a deep emotional experience for the Haitian worshipper. Each one can cry out to or praise the Lord as they want, without feeling "put on the spot" to share their concerns with the other church members, although they may share them if they wish.

More singing, perhaps some special music, and an offering come next, followed by the reading of Scripture, for which everyone stands. Lastly, the pastor presents a sermon or teaching.

Children may move about during the long service but they must remain quiet—and they do, even without toys or books to entertain them. Children also attend Sunday school before the church service. Sunday school is important and is taken seriously in Protestant churches. The Sunday school classes have frequent competitions—for the class with the best attendance, for the one in which the students have learned the most Bible verses, for the class whose members all brought their Bibles, etc. As a reward, the winning class may be able, for example, to hang a banner in their room until another class wins and they must pass the banner on.

A special event in the life of every Protestant church is a celebration in the spring, after harvest. Each church chooses its own date and invites guest speakers for the evenings before



SELECTION 3**LEARN ABOUT HAITI'S HISTORY****OBJECTIVE**

To briefly share some of Haiti's turbulent history, with a special emphasis on the forgotten indigenous people who inhabited the island at the time of Christopher Columbus' arrival.

INPUT

Use the history fact sheet (pages 10 to 11) to learn about Haiti's history.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

1. Continue working with the Haiti coloring map (page 5):
 - Label Cap Haïtien, the current-day city closest to what was Villa de Navidad.
 - Label the part of Hispaniola that is now the Dominican Republic. (Only a small portion of it is shown on the map.)
2. Make a model of a Taino village.

3. Act out the Taino-Spaniard encounter or write stories from the viewpoint of a Taino child at the time of Columbus' arrival.

4. If you know Haitians who live in your community, invite one or more to share their feelings about Haiti's current economic, social and political situation. Ask the guest to reflect upon the lives of Haitians now residing in the United States. (About 1 million Haitians now live in the United States.)

5. Complete the crossword puzzle (page 8).

SELECTION 4**MEET WALDEK, A HAITIAN CHILD****OBJECTIVE**

To give students a view of the daily life of Waldek, a 13-year-old rural Haitian child.

INPUT

Read the article "Waldek: A Haitian Child," located on pages 6 to 7 of "It's God's World," a Weekly-Reader-type newsletter enclosed in the box. Also display photo (in box) of Waldek holding his baby sister, Veniz.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

Discuss the article, adapting the following questions to your age group:

1. In what ways is Waldek's life the same as yours? In what ways is it different?
2. What things make Waldek's life difficult? Do these same things affect you? In what ways?

3. Do you think you feel as grateful to God for your meals as Waldek does for his? Why or why not?

4. When he gets big, Waldek would like to farm like his father does. Do you think you'll follow in your mom or dad's footsteps when you grow up? Why or why not?

5. Waldek helps others. In what ways can you help "carry the burden" of people who endure poverty and hunger?

6. Have you ever met or do you know someone like Waldek who is "no lightning bug"? Tell us about this person.

OBJECTIVE

To acquaint students with Haitian culture through some of its popular stories and story characters.

INPUT

In Haiti, people commonly weave stories into the routine fabric of their days. While Haitians may sit down with the express purpose of telling a story, it's equally customary for parents and grandparents to tell stories to children as they work together throughout the day.

When the story is a sit-down affair, the expression *Krik-krak* is often used to signal that the story is beginning. Either the storyteller says "*Krik-krak*" or he/she simply asks, "*Krik?*" and the audience responds, "*Krak!*"

In Haiti, a storyteller is a performer. The storyteller gives each character its own voice, and often sings songs as part of the story.

Two stories appear on page 17.

"Malis, Uncle Bouki and Sweet Potatoes," was told to MCC worker Rhonda Miller by Nerlange Jean, a mother and the secretary for MCC's office in Port-au-Prince.

The two characters, Ti Malice (or Malis, for short) and

Uncle Bouki are popular Haitian story figures. Uncle Bouki is boastful, greedy and foolish. Malis is smart and full of tricks, as you shall see...

The story, "Lazy Little Frog," was told to MCC worker Rhonda Miller by Enese Deceus Burkhalter who lives in Desarmes, Haiti. Enese is a Haitian woman who works for MCC.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

After reading the story or stories, discuss the following:

- Compare Uncle Bouki (the greedy, foolish man) and Malis (the trickster) to the fools and tricksters in North America folk tales.
- Compare "Lazy Little Frog" with "Little Red Hen" or other familiar stories.

OBJECTIVE

For North American children to catch some of the rhythms and games that keep Haitian children entertained and happy.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**A game for younger children:**

MCC worker Rhonda Miller learned this game, called "*Ti Poulet Tag*" or "Little-Chicken Tag" from boys who live at a home for street boys in Port-au-Prince called "*Lafanmi Selavi*" (Family is Life). It's a lively game played with singing accompaniment.

Choose one child to be the "chicken" and another to be the "cook." All the other children stand in a circle holding

hands. The "chicken" stands inside the circle and the "cook" outside of it as the game begins.

When the children begin to sing, the "cook" chases the "chicken," both of whom may move inside and outside of the circle. The children in the circle can hinder or help the chase by raising or lowering their arms.

The children in the circle continue to sing until the "chicken" is caught. Then a new "chicken" and a new "cook" are chosen and the game continues.

Games for older children:

- Play beanbag hacky sack or soccer with a homemade ball. See page 25, activities #4 and #6, for instructions.
- Try *batey*, the Taino game. (See page 10, History Fact Sheet)

TI POULET TAG

Ti pou- let la- ge Pran ban mwen dlo nan di- fe. Pran ban mwen Ti pou- let la- ge Pran ban mwen dlo nan di- fe.
Put the water on, little hen will soon be gone. Little hen, Put the water on, Little hen will soon be gone.

OBJECTIVE

To acquaint students with Haiti's basic foods and Haitian meal patterns, and to have them make and try some Haitian dishes.

INPUT

Haitian families usually eat two meals a day. A breakfast is served between 7 and 8 a.m. It is substantial—boiled plantain or spaghetti with a creole sauce made from tomatoes, green peppers, onions and spices. Ideally the sauce also contains some protein—herring, goat liver or some other fish, poultry or meat.

A main meal, served around 3 p.m., consists of cooked grain (sorghum, ground corn or rice) and beans with a vegetable sauce. If the family can afford meat, they will have it at this meal.

Between meals and at bedtime, bread makes a quick snack. If peanuts are grown in the area, children may put peanut butter on their bread. Children also snack on fruits if they can find them. Mangos grow plentifully in Haiti and become a staple for rural children during the dry spring season when other foods are unavailable.

Another popular snack is sugar cane. A child may even carry a stalk of sugar cane to school to eat during break. Often the stalk is taller than the child carrying it! Sugar cane may seem like a food that is hard on the teeth. Surprise! It's actually good for the choppers! The sugar cane juice is dilute and does not stick to the teeth. Further, the sugar cane fiber, which the child chews to extract the sweet juice, is one of nature's best toothbrushes!

Whenever they get a little money, children also like to buy hard candies or fried fitters, called *marinads*, in the market.

Two common songs of grace sung before meals are below.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

Make and serve some Haitian foods:

1. Simple Snacks
 - a. Bread (*pen*) and peanut butter (*mamba*)
 - b. Fruit—mango, pineapple, oranges, grapefruit, melons of many varieties.
2. Special banana fritters, called *benye* (ben YEAH), are fried around Mardi Gras or Carnival time, right before Lent begins.
3. Haitian Bean Sauce or *Sòs Pwa* (sohss PWAH)

This thick bean gravy is eaten over cornmeal porridge from tin bowls in poor families' homes, and over rice in fancy Haitian restaurants. Haitians mash, mix and strain the beans several times to remove all the hulls for a smooth sauce. When farmers host *konbits*, or cooperative work parties, they serve *Sòs Pwa*.

LE-A RIVE...

Le-a ri—ve, Man—je pa—re. Me—si Bon Dye ki bay man—je. A—men.
Translation: The hour has arrived, the food is ready. Thanks to God who gives us food. Amen.

MANJE SA-A...

Man—je sa-a ou vo-ye bay nou-a Pa-pa— Man-je— ki bay la-vie.
Translation: This food you send us Father. Food that gives us life.

BENYE

Combine in a medium-sized bowl:

- 3 ripe bananas, mashed (1 to 1-1/2 cups mashed banana)**
- 1 cup milk**
- 1 egg, beaten**
- 3 teaspoons vanilla**

Add to the banana-milk mixture and beat well:

- 1 cup flour**
- 1/4 cup sugar (optional)**
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt**

Heat oil the recommended amount of time or until 350 degrees in a deep-fat fryer. Dip out about 1/4 cup batter (a metal soup ladle works well) and gently pour it, all at once and quickly but smoothly (so that hot oil doesn't splatter) into the hot oil.

Turn when brown on bottom (should take 2 to 3 minutes), using a slotted spoon, and let other side brown. Remove from oil and drain on paper towels. May sprinkle with granulated or powdered sugar. Makes about 12 fritters, each the size of a small potato.

Note to teacher:

Deep-fat frying in an open pot on the stove with a group of children is not recommended. An appliance designed for deep-fat frying (with a short cord) is a safer alternative. Children should stand back from the pot; it's a good idea to post an adult who knows how to deep-fat fry at the appliance. Children old enough to try their hand at frying should be instructed to gently lower or pour batter into pot, not drop it.

SÒS PWA

In large saucepan, sort and soak overnight or by quick method*:

- 1 1/2 cups dried red, black or white beans, pigeon peas, or a mixture of beans**
- water to cover**

Before cooking add:

- 3 cloves garlic, diced or mashed**
- 8 whole cloves or 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves**
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper**
- 1/2 cup onion, diced**
- 1 tablespoon oil**

Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer until beans are tender. Drain off liquid and reserve. Remove 1/2 cup cooked beans and reserve.

Puree in blender:

- cooked bean mixture**
- 2 cups bean broth**

Return pureed sauce and reserved whole beans to saucepan.

Add:

- 1 hot chili pepper, chopped, or 1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper**
- salt to taste**
- 1 tablespoon margarine**

Bring to a boil and simmer, uncovered, until thickened to gravy consistency. Serve over rice or thick cornmeal mush (recipe below).

* Quick Method: Bring beans to a boil for two minutes and soak one hour before cooking. Cook beans in soaking water.

CORNMEAL MUSH

Boil in large soup pot:

- 6 cups water**

Mix in bowl:

- 1 cup yellow cornmeal**
- 1 cup water**

Stir until smooth, then add to boiling water. Simmer 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add, about 1/2 cup at a time:

- 2 1/4 to 2 1/2 cups additional cornmeal**
- 1 teaspoon salt (optional)**

After each 1/2 cup of cornmeal, stir well with wooden spoon until all dry particles disappear and all lumps are smoothed. Continue stirring vigorously a few more minutes until mush is stiff enough to handle easily without dripping off spoon. Remove from heat, cover and let stand 10 minutes. The longer it sits, the stiffer it becomes. Stir again before serving.

Serve by spooning cornmeal mush into bowl with bean sauce on top. Garnish with slices of avocado or lemon.

(These recipes and explanation are taken from *Extending the Table...A World Community Cookbook* by Joetta Handrich Schlabach and Kristina Mast Burnett. Scottsdale, Pa., Waterloo, Ont.: Herald Press. 1991. Pages 170, 151.)