

Understanding the Past: Rituals of the Peranakans

Focus Tour for Secondary Level: Lesson Plan for Teachers

Tour size

1 facilitator to 20 students

Objectives

By the end of this tour, students will:

- 1) understand the concept of ritual
- 2) be given an insight into the unique hybrid Peranakan culture as seen from the rituals they practised
- 3) be probed to reflect on the role of rituals for the society, the community and the individual

Relevance to curriculum

- 1) Lower Secondary History on understanding traditions
(Secondary 1: Culture; Secondary 2: immigrants settling in Singapore)
- 2) Upper Secondary Social Studies on social cohesion and harmony
- 3) All Levels: Civics and Moral Education on understanding customs and beliefs of different cultural groups and the theme of racial harmony (National Education)

Actual Tour

Duration: 1.5 hrs (last 15 minutes for debriefing/discussion)

Brief synopsis of the tour

Examining the Peranakans as a case-study, this tour takes the students on the exciting journey of rediscovering the role of rituals i.e. traditional beliefs and customs, to the community and society, their relevance to real world context and more intimately, to their lives.

Through exploring the rich and elaborated rituals of the Peranakans, students will have a greater understanding and appreciation for traditions, especially in this increasingly modern society where such rituals may be dismissed by some as irrelevant.

After The Tour

Activity sheets are given at the end of the tour. Students are tasked to relate what they have learnt to their lives as well as what they see/experience in society. Key issues such as the role of traditions vis-à-vis progress and the seemingly diminishing role of rituals in modern society can also be discussed by the teachers after the museum visit.

Suggested post-tour student activities

- Have students in groups to investigate further into the Peranakan culture and examine other aspects such as their food, language, dressing, festivals etc and share their findings
- Have students investigate their own or selected cultures/traditions or perhaps (seemingly) lost traditions. Students can also conduct interviews with their family members, senior citizens, members of a particular community etc.

Recommended websites

- www.peranakanmuseum.sg
- www.peranakan.org.sg
- www.peranakanplace.com
- *Sonia Kolesnikov-Jessop, On exhibit: The Straits Chinese Peranakan, International Herald Tribute, April 23, 2008: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/04/23/arts/jessop.php>*
- *Teaching resources on Southeast Asia: http://www.cseas.niu.edu/outreach/teaching_modules.htm*