



Bound Children Activity Instructions

1. Letter from an Indentured Servant

Imagine that you are a bound girl or boy living in Colonial America. Write a letter to your best friend describing why you were bound out to another family and what your life is like. Be as descriptive as possible.



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2. Orphan Trains WebQuest

In groups of five to eight students, search the Web and offline sources for information about orphan trains. The following resources should provide a good start.

Between 1854 and 1929, hundreds of thousands of neglected or abandoned children were removed from the streets of Eastern cities and sent west to new homes. They tell their stories in the PBS documentary "The American Experience: The Orphan Trains." For more information about this program, including a transcript, visit <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/orphan/>

The Orphan Train Riders Heritage Society of America, Inc. web site includes all kinds of relevant information from books, magazine articles, newspaper articles, photographs, and interviews. <http://www.orphantrainriders.com/Menu.html>

Connie Dipasquale and Susan Stafford at the University of Kansas produced this web site, which contains information specific to Orphan Trains that arrived in Kansas. <http://www.kancoll.org/articles/orphans/index.html>

Information about Orphan Trains to other states include:
Nebraska - <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/sites/mnh/orphans/>
Iowa - <http://www.iagenweb.org/iaorphans/history.htm>

Orphan Train Riders tell about their experiences at these sites.
<http://www.orphantrainriders.com/riders11.html#menu>
<http://www.hamilton.net/subscribers/hurd/artsmith.htm>
<http://www.hamilton.net/subscribers/hurd/index.html>

Additional information can be found here:
<http://www.studerhistory.org/content/orphan.shtml>
<http://www.outfitters.com/~melissa/ot/ot.html>
<http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/about/train/#top>
<http://www.cis.yale.edu/amstud/inforev/riis/contents.html>
<http://www.alhn.org/~ahtopabp/orphanages/>

You can see photographs of children and adults in New York here:
<http://www.idbsu.edu/socwork/dhuff/history/gallery/Gallery-JR/welcome.htm>

The book *Orphan Trains to Missouri* documents the history of the children on those Orphan Trains that stopped in Missouri -- their struggles, their successes, and their failures. Touching stories of volunteers who oversaw the placement of the orphans, as well as stories of the orphans themselves make this a rich record of American and Midwestern history. By Michael D. Patrick and Evelyn Goodrich Trickel, University of Missouri Press, ISBN 0-8262-1121-6.

Author Joan Lowery Nixon wrote a popular young adult novel about the orphan trains:

A Family Apart, ISBN 0440226767.

As a group, use your research to plan and present a program where orphan train riders are reunited with their parents and with Charles Loring Brace on a talk show. Each person in the group should play one of the following roles:

- ~~✍~~ The talk show host
- ~~✍~~ Charles Loring Brace
- ~~✍~~ A parent who surrendered his or her child to the Children's Aid Society
- ~~✍~~ An adult who had been an Orphan Train Rider as a child
- ~~✍~~ A foster parent who adopted an Orphan Train Rider

Your group may include more than one parent, foster parent, or Orphan Train Rider.

To prepare for your presentation, write a biographical sketch of the person you are portraying. Read accounts of Orphan Train experiences from the perspective of the type of person you are portraying, and try to answer the following questions. What are the common threads that tie these people together? How are they different? What sort of decisions did this person have to make during the Orphan Train movement? Why might they want to participate in this reunion? You may refer to your notes during the program.

If you are the host, do the same sort of research, but instead of a biographical sketch, write a list of questions that you would like to ask the people who will appear on your "show." You may refer to your notes during the program.



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3. Autobiography of a Bound Girl

Imagine that you are the teenaged girl who grew up to be Mrs. Grimes, the old woman in the story "Death in the Woods." You are living on the German's farm as a bound girl. Write an autobiography of your life so far. Where were you born? How did you come to live on the farm? How long have you lived there? What is your life like now? Feel free to be creative and use your imagination.