

## Why is the Past Important?: Background

### Teacher Script

Theme: Identity

Community 3 is going to become a family over the course of this next school year. Some of us know each other already, but others we still need to get to know. We will adventure on this journey, together. With each new interaction, we will better understand the identities of our personal self, but also our community's identity.

To understand our personal selves now, we have to look back into the past to see who we've been before. [show kindergarten picture with glasses] What did I wear? [show tech-deck or card deck] What did I play with? [show cup of noodles and peaches] What did I eat? [show menorah or dreidel] What were my family's traditions?

How do we find out about the past, so we can better-understand ourselves today? Sites [show picture of archeological site] and artifacts [show a necklace or tool] can be messengers from the past. If we know how to read their messages, they can tell us about the identities of people who made and used them and then left them behind. Although the owners of the artifacts and the inhabitants of sites may have lived hundreds or even thousands of years ago, they undoubtedly had many of the same needs and concerns, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows that we have today [show meme about joy/identity].

The messengers from the past belong to everyone. Everyone has a right to know how the world came to be and know his or her place in the world. Material traces and their context play a universal role "in providing cultural continuity and perspective, and hence in linking the past, present, and future within the experience of any given human generation" (Lipe 1984, p. 2, emphasis added) [show a picture of grandmother, mother, and daughter].

The link to the past is provided through scientific analysis as well as through traditional heritage values place on *archeological sites* and artifacts. For example, Old Salem in Winston-Salem provides a tangible link to the colonial history of North Carolina, and it is valued for that reason [show state map of NC, put a labeled dot on Durham, and one on Winston-Salem]. By examining Old Salem's historical buildings, objects, and residents' personal diaries, archaeologists hope these items will provide scientific information about the lives of the Moravian people who lived there. Similarly, the prehistoric sites throughout North Carolina represent aspects of the heritage of American Indians who lived here before European settlers, and are valued as well. These sites are also capable of providing scientific information about the history of the region.

Community 3 is going to become a family. Some of us know each other already, but others we still need to get to know. Throughout this quarter, and for the rest of the year, we will be on this journey, together. With each new interaction, we will better understand

the identities of our personal self, but also our community's identity [Show picture of C3 from yearbook last year or picture of C3 students from my phone].

**Your task is this: for tomorrow, please bring your own artifact to class. This can be an object, a photograph, or drawing of an object that represents your past. We will be doing an activity with this object tomorrow. This object should be meaningful to you and exemplify something about your personal identity that you are comfortable sharing with other people.**