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**Broad Based Thematic Unit
The Flood**

Theme: How is the flood represented as a metaphor or symbol for change, tragedy, rebirth, destruction, anticipation, and judgment?

Projected Timeline: 2 weeks

Grade Level: 6-12

Teacher: 1

Students: about 30

Objectives & Instructional Focus:

1. To gain historical knowledge and understanding of the flood of 1927.

- A. Geography of the Delta
 - Reasons or man-made causes of the flood
 - Wrath of the flood & human cost
- B. Chronology of the flood
 - Results
 - Responses
 - Effects on various populations within The Delta

2. To understand the flood as reflected in artistic expression.

- A. Music:
 - High Water Everywhere* by Charlie Patton
 - Hard Rain's Gonna Fall* by Bob Dylan
 - When the Levee Breaks* by Led Zeppelin
- B. Pictures: List of archived photos at the end of document.
- C. Video (Weather Channel, American Experience videos)
- D. Poetry (Flood as metaphor)

3. To develop an understanding of the aftermath (long term implications) of the flood.

- A. Broaden the role of government in disaster relief (prelude to New Deal)
- B. Inspired a new wave of migration north as well as from rural to city
- C. Motivation to bolster and coordinate the levee system.
 - Cooperation of different groups in working together (individual, state, regional, federal authorities)
 - Continued discrimination
 - Impediment of agricultural production for two growing seasons

4. To develop an understanding of the flood on the psyche of The Delta.

- A. Denial of urgency to seek higher ground (belief that the levee would hold)
- B. Keeping the painful experience in one's consciousness
- C. Losing one's 'place' in the world
- D. Choosing to leave or stay

5. To develop an understanding of 'flood' and 'crossroads' as metaphors reflected in literature.

Flood:

- A. "Noah and the Ark" – Hebrew Bible
- B. "The Flood" – Greek myth
- C. Native American Creation myths
- D. Literature and music dealing with Hurricane Katrina August 2005
- E. 2005 Tsunami
- F. "Loot" - Nadine Gordimer
- G. 'Flood' as emotional release

Crossroads:

- A. Robert Frost "Road Not Taken"
- B. Robert Johnson Myth
- C. 'Levee' as emotional barriers

Evaluation:

- Exam with objective short answer and multiple choice questions
- Two or more open-ended essay questions
- A creative form of evaluation
 - documenting an oral history
 - performing a Blues tune (AAB poetry form)
 - personal narrative of applying metaphor of crossroads and/or flood to students' own lives

1927 Flood Photographs

For more information about the Mississippi River flood of 1927 and to view archival photos from the Delta area, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.deltaculturalcenter.com/geography/>

<http://www.weather.com/tv/programs/When-Weather-Changed-History.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/flood/>

http://www.classzone.com/books/earth_science/terc/content/investigations/es1308/es1308page05.cfm

<http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/brs/nwind15.htm>

http://www.rms.com/Publications/1927_MississippiFlood.pdf

http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/1927flood/

http://www.calvin-coolidge.org/html/1927_flood1.html

<http://www.weather.com/tv/programs/When-Weather-Changed-History.html>