

*International Education/Character Education:
Preserving the Basque Culture through a
Nurturing Attitude*

- C. Listen and learn to recognize the unique musical style of traditional Basque music
- D. Watch and learn some of the different Basque dances practiced and performed by the Oinkari Basque Dancers

IV. Materials and Equipment

Teacher: **Teacher Handout #1:** Basque Language Teachers Guide
 Computer for accessing and watching audio and video clips
 of Basque music and dancing
 Teacher Handout #2: A Brief History of the Basques in Idaho
 Teacher Handout #3: Interview Summaries of Basque Oral
 Histories. Located at Website:
 <http://www.basquemuseum.com/>

Student: **Student Handout #1:** Basque Language Student Handout
 Student Handout #2: Nurturing the Basque Culture
 Student Handout #3: Eight Habits of the Heart “Questions for
 Reflection”
 Teacher Handout #2: A Brief History of the Basques in Idaho

V. Instructional Procedure:

- A. Prior to this lesson, teachers should lecture to their students on the concepts of immigration and migration and the various cultural groups that immigrated to Idaho from around the world and why these groups have come to Idaho
- B. Distribute **Teacher Handout #2** - “A Brief History of the Basques in Idaho”
- C. Read the paper together as a class
- D. After reading the text discuss with your students the key points of the paper
- E. After discussing the paper, introduce the concept of a **nurturing attitude** to the students.
 - 1. Read students the following quote from Clifton Taulbert’s *Eight Habits of the Heart*: “In the community, a nurturing attitude is characterized by unselfish caring, supportiveness, and a willingness to share time.”
- F. Discuss with students what it means to have a **nurturing attitude**.
 - 1. Offer examples to the students of people in your community or school community who possess a nurturing attitude
 - 2. Ask the students to offer other examples from their community or school community of people who possess a nurturing attitude
- G. Introduce your students to the brief story of Joseph Eiguren and his **nurturing attitude** for the survival of the Basque language in Idaho’s Basques
 - 1. Remind students of the information from “A Brief History of the Basques in Idaho” (**Teacher Handout #2**) regarding Joseph Eiguren

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| 4.SS.1.2.1 | Identify the major groups and significant individuals and their motives in the western expansion and settlement in Idaho. |
| 4.SS.1.2.3 | Analyze and describe the immigrant experience in Idaho |
| 4.SS.5.1.1 | Analyze the roles and relationships of diverse groups of people from other parts of the world who have contributed to Idaho's cultural heritage and impacted the state's history. |
| 4.SS.5.1.2 | Investigate the contributions and challenges experienced by people from various cultural, racial, and religious groups that settled in Idaho from different parts of the world. |
| 6-9.GWH.5.1.2 | Give examples of how language, literature, and the arts shaped the development and transmission of culture in the Western Hemisphere. |
| 6-12.US.1.1.2.1 | Analyze the religious, political, and economic motives of European immigrants who came to North America. |
| 6-12.US.1.1.5.1 | Examine the development of diverse cultures in what is now the United States. |

VIII. Follow Up or Extension Activities:

- A. Share another aspect of Basque culture with your class by bringing in Basque food such as Chorizos
- B. Take a field trip to the Basque Museum and Cultural Center in Boise:

Location 611 Grove Street Boise, Idaho 83702 USA (208) 343-2671	Museum Hours Tuesday - Friday: 10:00am to 4:00pm Saturday: 11:00am to 3:00pm Sunday, Monday and Holidays: Closed
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- C. Have students make a list of personality traits that would be needed or useful to survive if you were an early Basque American shepherd in Idaho. Have the students analyze how those personality traits could help them cope with the challenges they face as teenagers in our modern society
- D. Bring in an individual from the community familiar with Basque Dancing to teach the students the steps of the Jota (a traditional Basque dance)
- E. Introduce your students to aspects of other cultures prominent in Idaho such as the Irish, Chinese, Portuguese, etc.

Basque Language Teacher Guide



•Consonant Sounds in Basque:

- x = “sh” as in shout
- Tx = “ch” as in China
- Tz = “zz” as in Pizza
- Z = “s” as in Saint

•Vowel Sounds in Basque: Similar to vowel sounds in Spanish

- “A” = “a” as in father
- “E” = “e” as in get
- “I” = “ee” as in meet
- “O” = “o” as in go
- “U” = “oo” as in moon

•Counting to six in Basque:

- One = Bat (Baht)
- Two = Bi (Bee)
- Three = Hiru (Iroo)
- Four = Lau (Lao)
- Five = Bost (Bost)
- Six = Sei (Say)

•Some common Basque words to use in daily life:

- Kaixo (Kisho, pronounce the I as you would in the English language) = Hello
- Agur (Agoorr) = Goodbye
- Egun on (Eggoon) = Good Morning
- Gabon (Gabon) = Good Night
- Eskerik asko (Eskerik asko) = Thank you
- Bai (Bye) = Yes
- Ez (Ess) = No
- Etxe (Etche) = House

A Brief History of the Basques in Idaho

The Basques originally come from an area in Western Europe, which they call Euskadi or Euskal Herria. This name, Euskal Herria, means “Region of the Basques,” while Euskadi means the “Nation” of the Basques.¹ The Basques call themselves Euskaldunak, meaning “speakers [literally lovers] of the Basque language.”² The Basque Country is divided into two areas by the Pyrenees Mountains. One of these regions lies within the northern part of Spain, while another smaller region, lies within the southern part of France. The Basques are thought to have inhabited this region from 5000 to 3000 B.C., making them the oldest permanent residents in Europe.

When various groups came into contact with the Basque people throughout history, they found them speaking a language called Euskera, which still cannot be classified and belongs to no known linguistic group. Some suggest that it may have been the original language spoken by the post Ice Age people and that the Basques may be direct descendants of such people. Many Basque words that are related to tools that deal with cutting, such as knives, have the root *aitz*, meaning stone. This leads some to speculate that the Basque language came from the Stone Age. This strange, unidentified language has only been written since the late Middle Ages, which makes it nearly impossible to trace. “Idaho is unique in that more Basque is spoken in and around Boise than in any other similar sized area outside of the Basque country.”³

During the Industrial Revolution, the Basque people experienced great industrial progress, which was attributed to their hard work ethic. It was this same work ethic that would later help Basque men to become leaders in the sheep herding industry in Idaho and throughout the Pacific Northwest. This success caught the attention of the Spanish crown and the Basques were looked at as a very important part of the Spanish state. The Basque people played an integral part in Spain’s conquest to extend its control and power throughout the world. Basques were contracted to build ships for the Spanish crown and many Basque navigators and crewmembers were present on key voyages throughout the world, including that of Christopher Columbus.⁴ A Basque man named Juan Sebastian Elcano, after the death of Magellan, assumed command for the rest of the expedition and became the first man to circumnavigate the earth.⁵

While the Italians were settling into New York, Croatians to Pennsylvania, and Germans into Wisconsin, the Basques were beginning to migrate and stake their claims in Idaho. Most of the early Basque immigrants to Idaho were single men. The first wave of Basque immigration to Idaho was not an easy experience. From the long burdensome trip with several forms of travel, to the much-dreaded port of entry, every Basque immigrant found another obstacle that had to be overcome. Language barriers are an example of one such obstacle. Many Basques found their family name altered or lost altogether as officials tried to translate and record these names.

¹ Patrick J. Bieter, *Basques In Idaho* (Idaho Yesterdays, 14.2, 1997), p. 22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³ P. Bieter, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵ Joe V. Eiguren, *The Basque History Past and Present* (Boise: The Offset Printer, 1972), p. 35.

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Despite these hardships, the Basques kept moving into Idaho. Between 1900 and World War I, hundreds of Basques had found their way to Boise.⁶ Most, if not all, of these immigrants did not plan on staying in the United States. They planned on making enough money to return home, buy some land, get married, and settle down in Euskadi. Some of these people found work in the mines while others worked in the construction of canals and the Arrowrock Dam. A majority however found work in the sheep industry. Contrary to popular belief, Basques were not well suited to the style of raising sheep that was taking place in America, they were used to tending small flocks. Despite this obstacle, the Basque work ethic helped them to succeed, for they had come from a land where hard work was held in high regard.

Basque immigration was further spurred on by their close family ties and ethnic trust among Basques. Through a system of profit sharing, in which herders were allowed to take some of their pay in sheep, Basques were able to build their own herd and eventually break off on their own. When one Basque had gained enough wealth to acquire his own flock, he would hire relatives or friends from the Old Country as herders. This process continued over time. Other events and traditions that spurred immigration was the practice of giving an entire inheritance to only one son or daughter in the family. This in turn forced the rest of the children to search for other means of income and these other means were found in the United States, in sheep herding.⁷

Despite their early setbacks Basques continued to congregate in Boise and Idaho in general. “By the time the United States became involved in the First World War, Boise was the Basque center of the Northwest.”⁸ Soon, labor-intensive jobs began to replace the demanding lifestyles of herding. As this transition took place, Basque settlements began to form. At the center of every one of these settlements was the Basque boarding house. When a sufficient number of Basques congregated, a Basque boarding house or hotel was soon to follow. During this time there were boarding houses throughout the state in towns such as Hagerman, Gooding, Shoshone, Twin Falls, Mullan, Pocatello, Mountain Home, Caldwell, and of course Boise. However, these boarding houses and hotels were much more than just a place to eat and sleep, they were a home away from home. They served the purpose of a bank, social club and counseling center and many of them had “frontons where handball could be played.”⁹ To a young Basque immigrant these boarding houses were their only source of familiarity. They provided a link to their homeland that was so many thousands of miles away. Not only did these boarding houses provide a center of comfort for Basque immigrants, they also were headquarters for preserving the Basque culture and heritage.

Despite the influence of the Basque boarding houses, many young Basques in Idaho were growing up distant from their native culture. Many of the traditions and critical cultural elements that define a Basque were slowly being swept away and forgotten. One such tradition was dancing. The Basques were world-famous dancers, but the young boys and girls growing up in Idaho were unable to dance the jota and other traditional dances. Juanita Uberuaga Hormaechea saw this and was determined to do something about it. She began giving weekly lessons at the Basque Center in Boise teaching these traditional dances. Later on, a group of her students visited the Basque Country to learn and further refine their native dances. They were taught by a group

⁶ Richard W. Etulain, *Basque Beginnings in the Pacific Northwest* (Idaho Yesterdays, 18.1, 1974), p. 29.

⁷ Etulain, p. 27.

⁸ *Op. Cit.*, p.30.

⁹ P. Bieter, p. 28.

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called Oinkari, which means “people who dance with their feet.”¹⁰ Prior to leaving the Basque Country, the group of dancers from Idaho asked how they could ever repay the Oinkari Dancers for their hospitality. The Oinkari dancers stated that the biggest favor that the Idaho group could do for them was to name their group after them. To this day the Basque Dancers in Boise, Idaho are called the Oinkari Basque Dancers. In 1962 the Oinkari Basque Dancers were one of five groups to represent Idaho at the Seattle World’s Fair. In 1964 they were selected to be the official ambassadors for Idaho at the New York World’s Fair. They were Idaho’s sole representatives. Since then the Oinkari Basque Dancers have traveled throughout the country and the world performing. “The Oinkaris are now an Idaho institution and a unique element of the state’s ethnic and racial diversity.”¹¹

The success of the Oinkari Basque Dancers gave life to another aspect of the Basque heritage that was being washed away. During their travels throughout the country the Oinkari Dancers were often asked several questions about their culture, religion, and language. They were all embarrassed at their inability to speak and have an understanding of Euskera. Joseph Eiguren had seen this trend forming and had found that many young Basques born in Idaho were unable to speak Euskera. Joe, who was born in Jordan Valley, Oregon, was raised in the Basque Country but returned to America as a teenager to herd sheep. Joe wrote a grammar and method book for teaching and learning the Basque language. He also wrote a Basque-English dictionary that aided in the learning of this very difficult language. Joe began to hold lessons in the Basque Center, teaching Basques an integral part of their heritage in what was probably the first class of Basque in America.¹²

As the Basques are to sheepherding, Jimmy Jausoro is to Basque dancing and music. Born and raised in Nampa, Idaho, Jimmy’s passion for music was sparked at an early age while living and working in his family’s Basque boarding house. Jimmy bought his first Button Accordion with money that he had saved up selling newspapers and he was asked to play at boardinghouses and private parties when he was only 12 years old.

Jimmy’s passion and dedication to the Basque culture and music flourished over the years and was relevant as he volunteered his time to play for the Oinkari Basque Dancers and other Basque dancing groups starting in 1947 until he passed away in 2004. In addition to playing for Basque dancing groups, Jimmy also shared his love of music with young inspiring musicians. At Basque music camps and as part of the Idaho Commission on the Arts, Jimmy taught several young Basques how to play the piano accordion over the years.¹³

Basques in Idaho have succeeded in preserving their culture and heritage and have developed new ways to celebrate their Basque-American culture. Beginning in 1987, a four-day Basque festival called *Jaildi* has been celebrated every five years. Thousands of people flood into Boise from all over the country and even from the Basque Country itself, to celebrate their Basque heritage by singing, dancing, playing traditional Basque sports, and enjoying Basque food. Not only does this festival work to help celebrate and

¹⁰ J. and M. Bieter, p. 116.

¹¹ P. Bieter, p. 30.

¹² Joseph Eiguren, *Kashpar* (Caldwell: Caxton, 1988), p. 178-179.

¹³ Patty A. Miller, *Idaho Loses One of its Great Treasures* (<http://www.sfbasque.org/jausoro.htm>, 2004).

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preserve the Basque heritage, but it has also introduced thousands of Idahoans to the Basque culture.

Basque Language Student Handout

Name: _____

Date: _____



Consonant Sounds in Basque:

- x = “_____” as in shout
- Tx = “ch” as in _____
- Tz = “_____” as in Pizza
- Z = “s” as in _____

•Vowel Sounds in Basque: Similar to vowel sounds in Spanish

- “A” = “a” as in _____
- “E” = “e” as in _____
- “I” = “_____” as in meet
- “O” = “o” as in _____
- “U” = “_____” as in moon

•Counting to six in Basque:

- One = _____
- Two = _____
- Three = _____
- Four = _____
- Five = _____
- Six = _____

•Some common Basque words to use in daily life:

- Kaixo = _____
- _____ = Goodbye
- Egun on = _____
- _____ = Good Night
- Eskerik asko = _____
- _____ = Yes
- Ez = _____
- _____ = House

Nurturing the Basque Culture

Name: _____

Date: _____



Directions: The three Basque Americans, Joseph Eiguren, Jimmy Jausoro, and Juanita Hormaechea, personified the idea of a **nurturing attitude** towards their culture, striving to keep it alive for future generations to enjoy and foster. From what you have learned in this lesson, list three examples in which these three Basque Americans exemplified or portrayed a **nurturing attitude** towards their culture.

Basque American	Examples of a Nurturing Attitude
Joseph Eiguren	1. 2. 3.
Jimmy Jausoro	1. 2. 3.
Juanita Hormaechea	1. 2. 3.

Questions For Reflection

Name: _____

Date: _____



Directions: The following questions are to help you reflect on the idea of a nurturing attitude as one of the habits of the heart. Please read each question carefully and answer using complete sentences on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Think about the people who have helped you build a nurturing attitude in your life. What are some of your accomplishments that are a result of developing this “habit”?
2. When you consider where you are in your life today, whom can you reach out to with a nurturing attitude? What steps do you need to take to ensure that you provide them with a nurturing attitude?
3. Take a moment and reflect about how you will build a nurturing attitude at home, at your school, and in your community. Be specific in your plans.
4. Are there other ways you see to make a nurturing attitude a significant part of your life? How can you take this ideal and make it your own?