

Civil War Activity Plans

1. **Letter Home/Characterization/Social Studies /Language Arts-** Students read primary source documents from the civil war, look at a Civil War artifact kit, and study The Shaw Memorial. Pick a person depicted in the sculpture and write a letter “home,” pretending to be that person. Add interesting details about yourself, or your family, and the life you are now leading as a soldier. Have the letter refer to at least one other person in the sculpture, describing that person, how you got to know them, and how you are alike or different from them. What experiences in the war have made you feel closer to that person? Your letter might include whether you are writing the letter yourself, or whether someone else is acting as scribe because you don’t write or do not write well.
2. **Copying a master artist/ drawing profiles-the illusion of depth/Art-** Students will copy and draw one line of profiles of the marching men they see in the Shaw Memorial, including hat, collar, and shoulders if visible. They will take note of how to create an illusion of depth on a flat surface by using the techniques of overlapping, size and position, shading and detail. Next, they will model for each other; drawing a profile of one of their classmates in line with the soldiers.
3. **Civil War tunes/Music-**Popular music of the Civil War period. Students will be taught a civil war tune (i.e. Sojourner Truth’s rendition of “Battle Hymn of the Republic”.) Divide students into teams of 3-4. Each team will write an additional verse to the song they’ve learned. The whole song including student verses will be sung. Teachers can video their performance in front of the Shaw. * Or you may wish for students to create verses that capture their feelings about the current war the United States is in.
4. **Victorian Dance/PE/Social Studies-** Everyone danced during the Civil War period. Dances were done in circles, lines, and squares. Couples danced with other couples and everyone switched partners often. Formal rules of etiquette applied at a ball. Students will be taught a Victorian dance and will need to be sure to follow all the rules of etiquette that apply.
5. **Civil War Currency/Math/Art-** Discussion of coinage used during the Civil War and Saint-Gaudens tribute to the United States’ emerging greatness after the Civil War through the coins he designed for Theodore Roosevelt. What are the symbols that must be present on a U.S. silver or gold dollar? Students will be asked to think of an image, possibly of an allegorical figure, that could symbolize a **value or virtue** that could inspire citizens of our country today. Students will design on paper, and then create in clay, a low relief of that image as their proposed coin.

We are the valiant soldiers

by Sojourner Truth

Written for the 1st Michigan Colored Regiment. It was sung by her in Detroit and Washington to the tune of “John Brown’s Body” or “Battle Hymn of the Republic”.

We are the valiant soldiers who've listed for the war;
We are fighting for the Union, we are fighting for the law;
We can shoot a rebel farther than a white man ever saw,
As we go marching on.

Chorus--

Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah, as we go marching on.

Look there above the center, where the flag is waving bright;
We are going out of slavery, we are bound for freedom's light;
We mean to show Jeff Davis how the Africans can fight,
As we go marching on.--**Chorus.**

We are done with hoeing cotton, we are done with hoeing corn;
We are colored Yankee soldiers as sure as you are born.
When massa hears us shouting, he will think 'tis Gabriel's horn,
As we go marching on.--**Chorus.**

They will have to pay us wages, the wages of their sin;
They will have to bow their foreheads to their colored kith and kin;
They will have to give us house-room, or the roof will tumble in,
As we go marching on.--**Chorus.**

We hear the proclamation, massa, hush it as you will;
The birds will sing it to us, hopping on the cotton hill;
The possum up the gum tree couldn't keep it still,
As he went climbing on.--**Chorus.**

Father Abraham has spoken, and the message has been sent;
The prison doors have opened, and out the prisoners went
To join the sable army of African descent,
As we go marching on.--**Chorus.**