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| **Park Program Description** | This program is designed for students to evaluate and explain in their own words what freedom means to them using first person accounts, pictures, letters and props they can touch. They should be able to explain freedom in a written letter about the process it takes to gain freedom as well as a drawing exercise to explain freedom through a quilt. |
| **Props or materials provided by park** | * Photographs of African Americans on the canal and the canal itself

**African American History Month Underground Railroad Lesson Plan****for Special Events*** Excerpts from James Curry’s narrative
* Printouts of runaway slave advertisements and letter of payment for services by an African American man
* Props: rope, food, fake knife, forged paper that says you are free, cans of food, can opener, old historic money, historic candle, tinder box, etc
* Worksheets
* Pencils
* Lined paper
* images of freedom quilts
* freedom quilt worksheet
* freedom quilt childrens book
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| **Outline** | 1. Rangers will give vistior brief history of African American involvement on the C&O Canal.
	* Hello! Would you like to learn about the C&O Canal and the Underground Railroad and do an activity?
	* We are here from the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The park goes along the Potomac River all the way from Washington D.C. to Cumberland Maryland, halfway to Pittsburgh. We work at great falls less than an hour from here. You could get there by boat from here taking the Chesapeake bay down to the Potomac river.
	* If a visitor is particularly interested, you can go into more depth with:
		+ The C&O Canal began as a dream of passage to Western wealth. Operating for nearly 100 years the canal was a lifeline for communities along the Potomac River as coal, lumber and agricultural products floated down the waterway to market. It ran in the 19th and early 20th centuries and goes from Georgetown in DC to Cumberland Maryland for 184.5 miles. It is called C&O because it was intended to go all the way to the Ohio River but they stopped in Cumberland because it cost more money and took more time than they expected. Today it endures as a pathway for discovering historical, natural and recreational treasures!
		+ The C&O canal began construction in 1828 and completed in 1850. During that time the canal was mostly built by Irish immigrants and indentured servants but some enslaved people did help build the canal. We know this from letters for payment of services and 12 newspaper advertisements (show students the images). So African Americans were involved in the canal by helping build it and they also ran away along it as part of the Underground Railroad (which you will learn more about today). Eventually, there were African American boat captains and workers who restored and rebuilt the canal in the 1930s and 40s. But for now, we are going to focus on the time period of 1830s, 40s and 50s.
2. Take out a map of the C&O Canal and of the DC/Baltimore area and talk about it with visitors
	* Option: Point out where we are and where Baltimore is
	* Option: Ask what bodies of water the C&O Canal was intended to connect.
	* Option: How would you get from here to the C&O via boat?
3. Begin a discussion about the underground railroad with students
	* Link it to where they are standing now
	* Option: Show adults images and slave advertisements for runaways
	* Option: Ask if they know what the underground railroad is and why it started?
	* Option: Ask if they know the difference between enslaved and indentured people. What does freedom mean to you?
	* Option: Ask students what was happening during 1830-50 and what happened after. Is this before the Civil War? What was the Civil War? Who fought? What were they fighting for?
	* Option: Introduce James Curry (man born in slavery in the south whose father was a free man, he always dreamed of freedom in his life and eventually he escaped)- we have excerpts for people to read if interested
	* Option: Show children maps of the C&O canal and a geographic of the Potomac river highlighted for the length the canal is next to it and ask them why would the location for the canal have been important to the men and women seeking freedom? If they were able to get to the end of the towpath, what would be waiting there for them?
4. Now children plan their own escape on the C&O canal
	* Show the students all the materials on the table and ask what they would take with them. Remind them they need this stuff to survive but they don’t want to look like they are running away.
	* Ask children to look around the room and say spots they would hide in
	* Tell students that their plans are great and they have made it to freedom
5. If time: freedom quilt activity
	* Explain that sometimes to facilitate the underground railroad slaves made quilts that had directions on where to go and how to escape (show images in children’s book)
	* Students will design a freedom quilt using the worksheet provided. Students will list what symbols they included on their quilt and what it means to them and runaway enslaved people.
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| **Outline** | 1. Teachers will give a brief history of African American involvement on the C&O Canal.
	* The C&O Canal began as a dream of passage to Western wealth. Operating for nearly 100 years the canal was a lifeline for communities along the Potomac River as coal, lumber and agricultural products floated down the waterway to market. It ran in the 19th and early 20th centuries and goes from Georgetown in DC to Cumberland Maryland for 184.5 miles. It is called C&O because it was intended to go all the way to the Ohio River but they stopped in Cumberland because it cost more money and took more time than they expected. Today it endures as a pathway for discovering historical, natural and recreational treasures!
	* The C&O canal began construction in 1828 and completed in 1850. During that time the canal was mostly built by Irish immigrants and indentured servants but some enslaved people did help build the canal. We know this from letters for payment of services and 12 newspaper advertisements (show students the images). So African Americans were involved in the canal by helping build it and they also ran away along it as part of the Underground Railroad (which you will learn more about today). Eventually, there were African American boat captains and workers who restored and rebuilt the canal in the 1930s and 40s. But for now, we are going to focus on the time period of 1830s, 40s and 50s.
	* Show students pictures of African Americans on the canal and the canal itself
2. Ask what bodies of water the C&O Canal was intended to connect.
	* make sure students understand that the Ohio river is near Pittsburgh and it was intended to connect DC and Pittsburgh
3. Gauge background knowledge with the students and clear up the timeline with them.
	* Discuss the difference between enslaved and indentured people
	* Ask students what was happening during 1830-50 and what happened after
	* Is this before the Civil War? What was the Civil War? Who fought? What were they fighting for?
4. Introduce James Curry (man born in slavery in the south whose father was a free man, he always dreamed of freedom in his life and eventually he escaped)
5. Teacher or ranger will read the excerpt from the narrative of James Curry to help students have an understanding of what slavery was like and why someone would long for freedom (excerpt below). As they read, students will follow along with their own copy.
6. Teachers will ask the students to describe the concept of freedom if they know what it means already. As students suggest their ideas, the teacher will write them down ona board for the class to see (alternatively students could write their answer on a post it note then put them up). Once the teacher has made sure that the students understand the difference between freedom and enslavement, the teacher will ask the students what they would do if they had no freedom.
7. Teacher will explain that enslaved people often ran away but were easily caught and severely punished which caused the Underground Railroad to be established.
8. Show children maps of the C&O canal and a geographic of the Potomac river highlighted for the length the canal is next to it and ask them why would the location for the canal have been important to the men and women seeking freedom? If they were able to get to the end of the towpath, what would be waiting there for them?
9. Now children plan their own escape on the C&O canal on the worksheet “escaping from slavery on the C&O canal: your escape plan” (includes reading excerpt #2 from James Curry’s narrative and using props in the materials section)
10. Tell students that their plans are great and they have made it to freedom. If you have time, give the students 15 minutes to write a letter to the friends and family that they had to leave behind about how they are coming back for them and telling them about their experience on the underground railroad and canal based on the worksheet
11. If time: freedom quilt activity
	* Explain that sometimes to facilitate the underground railroad slaves made quilts that had directions on where to go and how to escape (show images)
	* Teachers will have the students brainstorm together what symbols might have been on freedom quilts that meant freedom. Teachers will show the different designs used on Freedom Quilts and what they meant. (Really Good Stuff handout- which I can’t find)
	* Students will design a freedom quilt using the worksheet provided. Students will list what symbols they included on their quilt and what it means to them and runaway enslaved people.
	* If time, come back together and have students share out their design and what freedom means to them
12. Teachers can assign “Civil War Dilemma” or “Underground Railroad Situations” as homework/ post activities.
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| **Excerpts from James Curry** | **James Curry Excerpt #1- the desire for freedom**“From my childhood, the desire for freedom reigned predominant in my breast, and I resolved, if I was ever whipped after I became a man, I would no longer be a slave. When I was a lad, my master's uncle came one day to see him, and as I was passing near them, the old man took hold of me and asked my master if this was one of Lucy's boys. Being told that I was, he said, 'Well, his father was a free man and perhaps when he gets to be a man, he'll be wanting to be free too.' Thinks I to myself, indeed I shall. But if he had asked me if I wanted to be free, I should have answered, 'No, Sir.' Of course, no slave would dare to say, in the presence of a white man, that he wished for freedom. But among themselves, it is their constant theme. No slaves think they were made to be slaves. Let them keep them ever so ignorant, it is impossible to beat it into them that they were made to be slaves. I have heard some of the most ignorant I ever saw, say 'it will not always be so, God *will* bring them to an account.' I used to wonder why it was that our people were kept in slavery. I would look at the birds as they flew over my head or sung their free songs upon the trees, and think it strange, that, of all God's creatures, the poor negro only was held in bondage. I knew there were free states, but I thought the people there did not know how we were treated. I had heard of England, and that *there*, there were no slaves; and I thought if I could only get there and tell my story, there would immediately be something done which would bring freedom to the slave.”“A deaf and dumb miller, who ground my master's wheat, gave me one time when I went to mill, two nice little pigs, which I fatted on the produce of my little patch of ground. When they were ready, I killed one of them, and presented my master with a nice piece for his family. In a few days, he ordered me to kill the other and salt it down in his barrel. I did so, but cut out a small piece for my own use, not privately for I considered it mine, and carried it to our cabin, where we cooked and ate it at night. The next day, my master gave me a whipping for doing it, and my mother for allowing me to do it. I afterwards bought one, and was fattening it for sale, when, one time, when I was not present, he ordered it put into his pen.”**James Curry Excerpt #2- Escape along the Tow path**James Curry made up his mind in 1837 to escape from his master and run away to freedom.“I therefore concluded it was wisest to take quietly whatever he choose to inflict, but as the strokes fell upon my back, I firmly resolved that I would no longer be a slave. I would now escape or die in the attempt. They might shoot me down if they chose, but I would not live a slave. The next morning, I decided, that, as my master was preparing for one of his slavedriving expeditions to Alabama, I would wait until he was gone; that when he was fairly started on his journey, I would start on mine, he for the south, and I for the northHe started with some friends but unfortunately they were almost caught and his lost his brothers he traveled with. He continued on his own towards freedom.“At Alexandria, I crossed the Potomac river, and came to Washington, where I made friends with a colored family, with whom I rested eight days. I then took the Montgomery road, but, wishing to escape Baltimore, I turned off, and it being cloudy, I lost my course, and fell back again upon the Potomac river, and travelled on the tow path of the canal from Friday night until Sunday morning, when I lay down and slept a little, and then, having no place to hide for the day, I determined to go on until I could find a place of safety. I soon saw a man riding towards me on horseback. As he came near, he put his eyes upon me, and I felt sure that he intended to question me. I fell to praying to God to protect me, and so begging and praying fervently, I went forward. When he met me, he stopped his horse, leaned forward and looked at me, and then, without speaking, rode on again. I still fully believe it was at first his intention to question me. I soon entered a colored person's house on the side of the canal, where they gave me breakfast and treated me very kindly. I travelled on through Williamsport and Hagerstown, in Maryland, and, on the 19th day of July, about two hours before day. I crossed the line into Pennsylvania…” |

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Escape to Freedom- Design Your Own Freedom Quilt**

What does freedom mean to you? Write it here.

Using the images you’ve seen and brainstormed design your own Freedom Quilt in the space provided.

What images did you use in your Freedom Quilt? What do these images mean to you and runaway enslaved people?