“Who’s Coming to Dinner?” – Understanding the Middle East Culture [6th grade]

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Abstract
The goal of this unit is for students to understand the cultures and conflicts that result from these cultures in the Middle East. Students will begin by learning about the geography of this region of the world through various mapping activities. They will begin to learn how the culture of this region is influenced by its geography and climate. Students will be able to explain how the predominance of Christianity, Judaism and Islam has led to conflicts in this region of the world. Students will also learn about the major impact that oil has had in the Middle East and how its discovery has led not only to economic growth but challenges as well.

The performance task “Who’s Coming to Dinner” will provide a means for students to demonstrate their understanding of the unit by planning a dinner party that will include people from this region that represent different religions and cultures. In groups, customary food, clothing, and cultural traits will be portrayed through art, drama, and writing in preparing for this “dinner party”. Individually, students will also write an announcement for the school news program that airs daily, explaining what their experience was like from the perspective of an American student who’s returned back from this dinner party. Similarities and differences between the cultures as well as likes and dislikes of the region will be included in the report.

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