

## **Meet Me At the Pitt-At Fort Pitt School**

By

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Fort Pitt Elementary School

This unit is designed for the pre-kindergarten student ages three to five years old. There are three goals I would like to achieve through this unit:

1. To explain the history of Fort Pitt School;
2. To acquaint students with the community of Garfield (a hilly, middle-class, pre-dominantly African-American neighborhood, with traces of Vietnamese and Irish-Catholic families sprinkled in for good measure).
3. To further acquaint students with the city of Pittsburgh, more specifically, by talking about Fort Pitt located at what is now the Point. (This will be done by briefly explaining the history of Sir William Pitt and creating a model of the fort).

Because all of the students do not live in the community of Garfield, I will give a general overview of Garfield, but focus more on Fort Pitt School as a whole. Also, because many students come from other neighborhoods, I want them to become familiar with not only the neighborhood of Garfield, but to know Fort Pitt School as a whole. It is very important that students view Garfield as a community that is thriving with learners of all ages and that works together to educate all students.

For teachers who would like to use this unit for a guide to study and explore other neighborhoods, there are several websites that offer excellent information on other Pittsburgh communities. (See "Teacher Resources") All you would have to do is go to that website, and use this unit activities or lesson plans, substituting your neighborhood for Garfield.

Also, much or most of this unit can be adapted to elementary or middle school students. (Especially the lesson on famous Pittsburghers.) Many of the activities also list field trip ideas or suggest bringing in a speaker from the community to broaden and extend the learning. And, what I like about this unit is that teachers can pick and choose exactly what they want students to study about the history of Pittsburgh, such as the shaping of the Point. (Because there were other forts at the Point in the early frontier days, the focus could be on Fort Duquesne or Fort Necessity, and not just Fort Pitt). By the way, Mayor Murphy has plans to rebuild Fort Duquesne once funds are available.

### **Unit Objectives**

1. To foster student curiosity about themselves, their school, and the community (whether it is Garfield or another neighborhood);
2. To foster a positive attitude about Fort Pitt School and the community of Garfield;
3. To promote school pride;
4. To promote pride in the city of Pittsburgh.

Before I go any further, let me clarify a few things. First, since this unit will be used by other Pittsburgh Public School Teachers, it is in no way intended to be boastful about Fort Pitt School, or to suggest that any other Pittsburgh public school is somehow lacking in any way. Personally, as a proud product of the Pittsburgh

Public Schools, I can honestly say that all of these schools have wonderful qualities that make each one unique and special.

Moreover, the intent of this unit is to help other teachers find creative, fun ways to promote school pride, introduce students to the surrounding school neighborhood, and give historical information about the city of Pittsburgh. Although some teachers may approach the topic of their neighborhood differently, most of the activities contained in this unit can be adapted for another neighborhood.

(Incidentally, during my research for this unit, I found some very helpful websites that offer tons of information on various Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Simply type in the neighborhood name and voila! instant information). See "Teacher Resources".

This unit also will contain activities that are adaptable to various grade levels. You may even think of many other ways to promote school spirit or Pittsburgh pride while reading this unit. ( At least, I hope so. If not, read on for more ideas).

### **Neighborhood History of Garfield**

This area's rich history began before the Revolutionary War. George Croghan and Casper Taub, Sr., believed to be the first landowners first settled the neighborhood around the late 1700s. Then much of the land was sold to Taub's son-in-law, John Conrad Winebiddle Sr.

For the next one hundred years, there were only two residences in the area, the Winebiddle and Schenley Estates. However, in 1881, the land was divided into lots, and the first buyer chose the name Garfield because the initial purchase happened on the day the assassinated President James Garfield was buried.

Many ethnic groups settled in Garfield, the first being Irish, who founded St. Lawrence O'Toole Roman Catholic Church. They were followed by Slavic and German immigrants, and, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Italians. Many workers earned a living in factories, warehouses, and foundries near the Allegheny River below Butler Street. (This was a 20-40 minute walk from Fort Pitt School, depending on the pace of the walker).

In the mid-1960s, the 632-unit Garfield Heights public housing project was built, and the number of African-American households greatly increased.

Garfield is the home of Fort Pitt, Rogers, and Lawrenceville Catholic Schools, and a YMCA Outreach Program.

### **Garfield Neighborhood Description**

Fort Pitt School is located in the neighborhood of Garfield. Geographically speaking, Garfield starts on the edge of downtown Pittsburgh at the Greyhound bus station. (This is near the Strip, a unique, open-air market where you can buy anything from fruit to flowers to cheese). From the Strip, Garfield meets with Lawrenceville as you go up Liberty Avenue. From Liberty Avenue, Garfield moves up the Allegheny River to 40<sup>th</sup> Street. It then extends from Liberty and Penn Avenues to Atlantic Avenue. This wedge shape continues through Larimer Avenue in East Liberty and lower Lincoln-Lemington. Garfield's neighboring communities are Stanton Heights, Bloomfield, Friendship, East Liberty, Central Lawrenceville, and Highland Park.

### **The History of Fort Pitt School**

Fort Pitt School is located at the corner of Hillcrest and Winebiddle Streets, on top of one of Pittsburgh's highest points. On a clear day, one can see the communities of Oakland, Lawrenceville, Bloomfield, to

downtown Pittsburgh and beyond. Built in 1907, it was designed to resemble a fort, since it was built adjacent to Lafayette Fort. (This fort is no longer there). Named for William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, its school colors are royal blue and gold, and its mascot is the panther.

Fort Pitt has a population of 675 students from the neighborhoods of Lincoln-Lemington, Larimer, Garfield, Bloomfield, and Lawrenceville. Fort Pitt is affectionately called "The Castle on the Hill," because the clock tower on the front makes it look like a castle. This tower, although not in use today, was used during war times as a warning for air raids and drills. The original building had stained glass windows, marbled floors, wood paneling, and a beautiful central staircase. In 1966 an addition to the building doubled the classroom spaces and added a regulation-sized gymnasium/auditorium.

In 1990 Fort Pitt School became the model child development center for the Pittsburgh Public Schools. This special emphasis meets the needs of children ages 3-5 years old. There is an Early Intervention program that serves children with severe physical handicaps, cognitive, and social-emotional delays. A special language program, SPARK, meets three days a week for language enrichment activities taught by a certified speech and language teacher. Also, there are three Head Start classrooms. Two meet for two half-day sessions each, one at Fort Pitt School and one in the Garfield Heights Housing community. The third Head Start classroom is an extended-day program partnered with Louise Childcare, also located at Fort Pitt School. (I teach one of the half-day sessions at Fort Pitt. My classroom participates in the MOSAIC program, where children with special needs are included in my classroom. I participate in team teaching-in my classroom there is a Head start teacher (me), a Head Start Teaching Assistant, An Early Intervention MOSAIC teacher, and a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. [COTA])

### **Teaching Strategies**

These strategies will include using books to introduce the following concepts:

Schools - what they are, what happens there, and who works in one.

A community - what it looks like, what businesses are located there, etc. (In this case it would be the community of Garfield).

Fort Pitt School - observe and tour the school, discuss what it looks like inside and out.

Field trips to Pittsburgh places - including the Carnegie Library, Frick Park, The Heinz Plant on the Northside, The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, etc.

Guest speakers who come to the classroom - whether from the community or are a school worker in the building.

Parent involvement, especially with learning activities that emphasize listening skills.

### **Lesson Plan 1-What Is A School?**

**Objective:** To identify a school, name the workers found there, familiarize or introduce students to the school.

**Materials:** A camera, crayons, paper, colored pencils.

**Procedure:** Read a book, lead the class in a discussion, then go on a walking tour of the school. If you want, you can invite school workers to visit your classroom and talk about their job and what they do. For this

lesson, I would choose a book about school. (I like Starting School by Allen and Janet Ahlberg, but you could choose any book you wish). First, I would read the book to the children and then discuss the following:

What is a school? ( A place where children go to learn.)

Who works at a school? (Teachers, principals, librarians, nurses, custodians, office workers, etc.)

What do each of these workers do? (Teachers plan lessons to help children learn, principals make sure children (and teachers) follow the rules, custodians help keep the building clean, nurses give children medicine, office workers help run the school.)

What do we find there? (Paper, pencils, chalkboards, books, desks, crayons, students, teachers, classrooms, computers, etc.)

What is the name of our school? Where is it? Who is your teacher? What is your classroom number? (Fort Pitt School in Garfield, Mrs. Cleveland, our classroom number is 37.)

Then, I would teach students a song called "My School." Have the children repeat the following: (This song is sung to the tune of "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow") "I go to Fort Pitt School, I go to Fort Pitt School, I go to Fort Pitt School, I go to Fort Pitt School, Hooray!" Let the students make up their own verses. (Example: The principal is Dr. Griffin, My teacher's name is Mrs. Cleveland, etc.)

If you like, or as time permits, you could also talk about how each child comes to school-by bus, on foot, or in a car. This is a great time to invite parents into the classroom. They can talk about their school experiences, what subjects or teachers they liked, where they went to school, etc.

Then, in the dramatic play area, set up a school. Include props like pencils, paper, books, chairs, desks, etc. Let children role play being a teacher or student. Demonstrate if necessary. What a great way to stimulate language development! And, in the listening center, you could have several books or songs about school. Let kids listen and talk to the class about what they heard.

This lesson can be adapted to older students by doing the following:

Let them bring in pictures of when they started school. Make a game or contest-see if students can match the baby pictures with students as they look now.

Ask them to design their own school. They can draw it or make a model of one out of clay or Popsicle sticks. Students can also create a model of the school they now attend.

Let them make a tape of themselves or their parents talking about their school experiences.

Write a poem or short paragraph about school.

**Pre-Kindergarten Standards:** 1A) Students will listen to, experience, and interpret a wide variety of high quality, age-appropriate literature. 1B) Students will be exposed to and begin to comprehend and interpret a wide variety of age-appropriate literature. 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 1) All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies. 4) All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and

persuade, in all subject areas. 7) All students listen to, understand complex oral messages, and identify the purpose, structure, and use. 9) All students communicate appropriately in business, work, and other applied situations.

## **Lesson 2-School Tour**

**Objective:** To further acquaint students with the school.

**Materials:** Crayons, paper, colored pencils, and camera.

**Procedure:** Take students to the front of the school. What does it look like? Are there any special features that make it look distinctive or unique? (Fort Pitt's clock tower makes it look like a castle-thus the nickname, "The Castle on the Hill.") Has it always looked that way? What has changed about the school? (Fort Pitt added on more classrooms and a gymnasium/auditorium in 1966). Take students to the newer part of the building. How is it different from the original? How can you tell? Have students draw a picture of the school. ( For my pre-schoolers, I would have them choose objects found outside the school and use their crayons to create a rubbing. Simply have them put a piece of paper over an object and rub with the side of a crayon. Then, go inside the school and take students to the library, gymnasium, auditorium, the main office, and the nurse's office. Talk about the people there and what they are doing. If they have time, let them talk to students about their jobs. If not, schedule a time for them to come and visit you in your classroom. Take pictures of each worker-with their permission, of course.

After the tour, discuss the people you saw and their roles. List their names on a poster or chalkboard. (If you took pictures, leave space to place them next to each worker). Emphasize that each of these workers help to run our school. Let students know that we must all work together to make our school a clean, safe, fun place to learn.

**Activities:** After a few days, takedown the pictures from the school worker display. Students can practice finding the picture to match the names. You could also create a matching game, too. Encourage the children to draw pictures of what they saw on the school tour. Students could also draw pictures of the school. Let them share their pictures with their peers and parents. This activity is a fun way to help students improve their observation, language, and cognitive skills.

This lesson can be adapted to older students by doing the following:

Take students to the library. Let them find old pictures of the school, if available. Tell students to make a collage of past and present pictures of the school. (Your school library may have old pictures of the school, if not see "Teacher Resources" section for website addresses that feature historical pictures from different neighborhoods.)

Have students tour the school in pairs. Tell students to interview one or two school workers. Publish findings in a class newsletter, or have students present their findings orally or in small groups.

Invite children to talk to their parents about school. If possible, invite alumni from the school to visit your classroom. They can talk about their school days.

Instead of the drawings or crayon object rubbings, let students take pictures of the school inside and out. Create a class collage entitled "Our School."

If there is a school song or pledge, help students learn it. They could even videotape themselves presenting it for parents or other peers.

**Pre-Kindergarten Standards:** 1C) Children will develop increasing proficiency in beginning reading skills and strategies including phonemic awareness and vocabulary building. 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 6) All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communication. 8) all students compose and make oral presentations for each academic study that are designed to persuade, inform, or describe. () All students communicate appropriately in business, work, and other applied situations.

### **Lesson 3-Community Tour**

**Objective:** To help children learn more about the community of Garfield.

**Materials:** A camera, pencils, paper, crayons, and a paper bag for collecting any items of interest while on the tour.

**Procedure:** Take students on a tour of the community. Stop along the way to look at and then draw pictures of houses or people you meet. From Fort Pitt, we would walk down Hillcrest Street, make a right on North Aiken Avenue, then proceed down North Aiken and make a right on Penn Avenue. As we walk down Penn Avenue, we would observe the stores and businesses. (There is a National City Bank, a Rite Aid drug store, a Family Health Center, a floral shop, and a Vietnamese restaurant and coffee shop, just to name a few.) Stop and discuss what types of community workers and/or related items one might find at each type of business. Let children draw pictures, if they wish. Go into one or two places to see if they will give you some literature-a plastic or paper bag from Rite Aid, a card from National City Bank, a restaurant menu, some flowers from the floral shop. Take pictures of the children outside some of the businesses.

After you come back from the tour, encourage children to share the pictures they drew or of the items they received. Display them in the classroom, if space allows. You can also place the photographs from your tour on the display as well. Name and list each type of community worker found on your tour-banker, florist, etc.

If possible, invite one or two community workers to come visit your classroom. Let them talk about where they work and what they do. Encourage them to bring real-life props they use at their job. This is an excellent way to begin or end a unit study on community workers. Then, set up an activity center in your classroom. Include some things you found on your tour. Children can match pictures with the objects. Or, you, the teacher, could make a tape describing the items, while students search for them. (Kind of like an I Spy Game.)

For an art activity, have children glue the bags, cards, or pamphlets to paper or their pictures they drew from the tour. Display these in your activity center as well. Invite any parents who work in the community to come visit and talk about their job.

This lesson can be adapted to older students by doing the following:

Let students decide which worker they liked best and why. Have them write about their likes, dislikes, and so forth.

Tell students to share what they would like to be when they grow up. Have them research the career of their choice. Present orally to the class or display on classroom bulletin board.

Play a guessing game with community workers. Have students write down clues about each community worker, then in pairs or small groups let them take turns guessing the correct name of each community worker.

Students can act out the jobs of various community workers. (Like a game of "Charades.")

**Pre-Kindergarten Standards:** 1C) Children will develop increasing proficiency in beginning reading skills and strategies including phonemic awareness and vocabulary building. 2A) Children will begin to organize thoughts and information and to participate in writing to communicate for different purposes with assistance as necessary. 2B) Children explore gross and fine motor tasks to develop dexterity for pre-writing skills. 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 4) All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas. 8) All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform, or describe.

#### **Lesson 4-Famous Pittsburghers**

**Objective:** To introduce the students to some famous people from Pittsburgh.

**Materials:** A book called Pittsburgh, Our City, by Nancy Balderose helped me find many of the famous names found in this lesson. This is the old social studies book used for a third grade study on Pittsburgh.

**Procedure:** This lesson can be done over the course of one, two, or three weeks, depending on the age of the students and the desired learning outcomes. Each day, talk about one famous Pittsburgher from the book. Show students the pictures of famous Pittsburghers, and discuss any major accomplishments of each. Below are some of the names and activities that could be done during this lesson.

**Nellie Bly-** (Her real name was Elizabeth Cochrane-she took the name Nellie Bly from a Stephen Foster song). Nellie Bly was a reporter who began her career with the Pittsburgh Dispatch newspaper.

**Activity:** Students could create and write their own newspaper. For younger students, they could create hats out of newspaper.

**Field Trip Idea:** Tour the Pittsburgh Post Gazette.

**Pre-Kindergarten Communication Standard:** 2B) Children explore gross and fine motor tasks to develop dexterity for prewriting skills. 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 4) All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas.

**Andrew Carnegie-** His idea for the Carnegie lending libraries began from his visits with Colonel James Anderson of the North Side of Pittsburgh. He left most of his fortune to the Carnegie lending libraries and other good causes like art and education.

**Activity:** Invite a librarian from your local Carnegie library to your classroom for story time.

**Field Trip Idea:** Visit a local Carnegie library, the Carnegie Museum or the Carnegie Science Center. (Older students can research more information about Andrew Carnegie, then write a brief summary of what they found).

**Pre-Kindergarten Communication Standards:** 1A) Students will listen to, experience, and interpret a wide variety of high quality, age-appropriate literature. 1B) Children will begin to comprehend and interpret a wide range of age-appropriate materials.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 2) All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex text. 3) All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational text and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.

**Stephen Collins Foster:** A collector and writer of the first real American style of music, he wrote or collected over 200 folk songs. Among them were "Camptown Races," "Oh, Susannah," and "My Old Kentucky Home."

**Activity:** Listen to some of his music. Learn the words and sing along. (Older students can research, write, and then tell about his life.)

**Field Trip Idea:** Visit Stephen Foster Memorial Hall in Oakland, or his old house in Lawrenceville, near the brewery. (Call first for hours of operation).

**Pre-Kindergarten Communication Standards:** 1B) Students will begin to comprehend and interpret a wide range of age-appropriate materials. 1C) Children will develop increasing proficiency in beginning reading skills and strategies including phonemic awareness and vocabulary building.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 1) All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies. 8) All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform, or describe.

**Henry Clay Frick:** A smart businessman who went into the coke-making business. Coke was made from coal heated ovens. Coke was used to make steel. Frick owned the world's largest coke and steel operation.

**Activity:** Watch a movie about steel. Write a letter for or against steel mills in Pittsburgh. (Pre-schoolers could talk about things made out of steel and share examples).

**Field Trip Idea:** Visit Frick Park, or the Henry Clay Frick Museum in Point Breeze.

**Pre-Kindergarten Communication Standards:** 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 4) All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, or persuade, in all subject areas. 5) All students analyze and make critical judgements about all forms of communication, separating facts from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes, and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.

**Jane Grey Swisshelm:** She was a teacher, nurse, and writer. She founded her own abolitionist (people who were against slavery) newspaper, *The Pittsburgh Saturday Visitor*.

**Activity:** Begin a classroom newspaper that focuses on news about your students and their beliefs. (For pre-schoolers, I would let them dictate their news articles to me, writes it down, then compile it in a newspaper or newsletter format.)

**Field Trip Idea:** Tour a local newspaper. Pay special attention to the printing process. (For pre-schoolers, I would let them make prints using fruits or vegetables on newspaper.)

**Pre-Kindergarten Communication Standards:** 2A) Children will begin to organize thoughts and information and participate in writing to communicate for different purposes with assistance as necessary. 2B)

Children will begin to use with some assistance, appropriate conventions, or language in writing. 3A) Children will begin to use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 4) All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas. 6) All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communication.

**Henry John Heinz:** His H.J. Heinz "57" Varieties became world famous. He used fresh foods in his canning methods. He built his canning plants between the vegetable fields and the markets.

**Activity:** Discuss ways to preserve food-in the refrigerator, in the freezer, by drying it. List as many ways as you can think of-with examples of foods. I would bring in my food dehydrator and dry fruit or vegetables with the students. Students could practice cutting the food with plastic knives. Another activity is to have a ketchup tasting contest with Heinz, Del Monte, and Hunt's brand ketchup. See which one your students like best and why. Make a pictograph or bar graph showing the results. Pre-school age children would also enjoy "painting" with ketchup packets on brown butcher paper. (I actually tried this in my classroom, the children loved it!)

**Field Trip Idea:** Tour the Heinz Plant on the Northside. See how many kinds of foods and products they manufacture. Don't forget to pick up a Heinz pickle pin!

**Pre-Kindergarten Communication Standards:** 2B) Children will begin to use, with some assistance, appropriate conventions, or language in writing. 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 6) all students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communication.

**Thomas Mellon:** He started one of the first banks in Pittsburgh in 1870, known as T. Mellon and sons.

**Activity:** Let children sort coins-pennies nickels, dimes, and quarters. Have them count pennies. (Older children can actually open their own "bank" with pretend money and coins. What a great way to reinforce math and counting skills!)

**Field Trip Idea:** Visit a Mellon Bank, take a tour, get information on opening a savings account.

**Pre-Kindergarten Communication Standards:** 2B) Children explore gross and fine motor tasks to develop dexterity for prewriting skills. 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 7) All students listen to, understand complex oral messages, and identify the purpose, structure, and use. 9) All students communicate appropriately in business, work, and other applied situations.

**Robert Lee Vann:** An African-American lawyer, businessman, and politician. He was publisher and editor for the *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper for thirty years.

**Activity:** Have students write letters to students at Robert L. Vann School in the Hill District. Encourage them to write to their pen pals. Set aside time for students to read their letters aloud before mailing. (For pre-school, I would have students help me write one letter, then read their response when it arrived).

**Field Trip Idea:** Visit your pen pals at Robert L. Vann School. Perhaps older students would enjoy visiting Vann's mausoleum in the Homewood Cemetery. Just go through the main entrance of the cemetery on Dallas Avenue and turn left immediately. It's less than 100 yards away. Interestingly enough, there are vacant lots on both sides of his mausoleum.

**Pre-Kindergarten Communications Standards:** 2A) Children will begin to organize thoughts and information and participate in writing to communicate for different purposes with assistance as necessary. 2B) Children will begin to use with some assistance, appropriate conventions, or language in writing.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 4) All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas. 6) All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communication. 8) All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform, or describe.

### **Lesson 5-The Shaping of the Point**

**Objective:** To inform students of Pittsburgh history.

**Materials:** A book called *The Shaping of the Point* was quite helpful.

**Procedure:** Discuss the history of the Point. Focus on Fort Pitt.

**Activity:** Build a model of Fort Pitt School. Divide children into small groups and use craft sticks. Older students can write a short paragraph about the history of the Point.

**Field Trip Idea:** Visit the Point. Look at the Fort Pitt Block House. Enjoy a picnic lunch.

**Pre-Kindergarten Communication Standards:** 2B) Children will begin to use with some assistance, appropriate conventions, or language in writing. 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 1) All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex text. 3) All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems. 8) All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform, or describe.

### **Classroom Activity**

"How Pittsburgh Got Its Name"

I thought of this idea while researching Pittsburgh history on the net. I came across a title of the same name, and thought it would be a great way for students to learn about some Pittsburgh history and some of their own as well.

To begin the activity. I would explain how a man decreed that Pittsburgh be named after Sir William Pitt, Earl of Chatham. He was instrumental in helping build Fort Pitt at the Point. Because of the pre-school age group, I would use a puppet or find a picture of Sir William Pitt in the encyclopedia if possible to provide more of a visual aid. Then, I would ask the children, "Do you know how you got your name?" (Of course, I would let them know how I got my first name, Christina. My parents were expecting me to be born around Christmas,

and were told that I would be a boy, whom they would call Christopher. Were they ever shocked when I arrived three weeks later and was a girl instead of a boy. So they decided on the name Christina instead).

Oh, I forgot to mention, prior to this activity, I would send home a note to parents talking about this activity, and provide a space for them to write in their response. Then, we would share the responses aloud in class during circle time.

I think this would be a great activity to foster parent involvement. It would also help students learn more about themselves. Plus, for older children, you could extend the lesson even further, maybe by asking students to find out or research how their parents got their names, or even the names of their siblings. They could present this information orally or in writing.

**Pre-Kindergarten Standards:** 1C) Children will develop increasing proficiency in beginning reading skills and strategies including phonemic awareness and vocabulary building. 3A) Children will use speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively.

**Elementary Communications Standards:** 1) All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional emerging library technologies. 3) All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational text and use the informational and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.

## Teacher Resources

### BOOKS

Alberts, Robert C. The Shaping of the Point. (Pittsburgh's Renaissance Park) Pittsburgh, PA University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980.

Balderose, Nancy Ward. Pittsburgh, Our City. Pittsburgh, PA: School District of Pittsburgh, 1991.

Baldwin, Leland D. Pittsburgh-The Story of a City, 1750-1865. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980.

Banks, James A. Pennsylvania-Adventures in Time and Place. New York: McGraw-Hill School Division, 2000.

Lorant, Stefan. Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City. Lenox, Massachusetts: Stefan Lorant, 1980.

O'Meara, Walter. Guns at the Fork. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979.

Stotz, CharlesMorse. Outposts of the War for Empire-The French and English in Western Pennsylvania: Their Armies, Their People, 1749-1764. Pittsburgh, PA: Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1985.

### WEBSITES

These websites give information on Fort Pitt (the fort formerly located at the Point in downtown Pittsburgh), how Pittsburgh got its name, as well as a homepage where you can access some 600 historical photographs and images about Pittsburgh bridges and neighborhoods.

<http://www.clp.org/clpexhibit.html>

<http://www.clpgh.org/clp/exhibit/name.html>

[http://www.clpgh.org/clp/exhibit/neighborhoods/point/point\\_n254.html](http://www.clpgh.org/clp/exhibit/neighborhoods/point/point_n254.html)

[http://www.clpgh.org/clpexhiby/neighborhoods/point/point\\_n71.html](http://www.clpgh.org/clpexhiby/neighborhoods/point/point_n71.html)

[http://www.clpgh.org/clp/exhibit/neighborhoods/point/point\\_n3.html](http://www.clpgh.org/clp/exhibit/neighborhoods/point/point_n3.html)

[http://www.clpgh.org/clp/exhibit/neighborhoods/point/point\\_n232.html](http://www.clpgh.org/clp/exhibit/neighborhoods/point/point_n232.html)

## **CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

These books can be used to explain the concept of a school.

Ahlberg, Allen and Janet. Starting School. Viking, 1998

Baer, Edith. This is the Way We Go to School: A Book About Children Around the World. New York: Scholastic, 1990.

Crews, Donald. School Bus. Greenwillow, 1984.

Farrar, Barbara Lucas. I Want to Go to School Too. A Sesame Street Get Ready Book, 1987. (Publisher not found)

Oxenbury, Helen. First Day of School. Dial, 1983.

Wells, Rosemary. Timothy Goes to School. Dial, 1981

## **L.P. RECORDS AND TAPES**

*American Folk Songs for Children* by Pete Seeger

*The Corner Store* by Raffi

*Growing Up With Ella Jenkins* by Ella

*Hop, Skip and Sing* by Nancy Raven

*Learning Basic Skills Through Music Series* by Hap Palmer

*Look At My World* by Kathy L. Poelker

*More Singable Songs* by Raffi

*My Street Begins at My House* by Ella Jenkins

*People in Our Neighborhood* by Ronno

*A Place of Our Own* by Fred Rogers

*Singable Songs for the Very Young* by Raffi

*Walter the Waltzing Worm* by Hap Palmer

*Won't You Be My Neighbor?* By Fred Rogers

*Young People's Record* (Artist Unknown)

#### **ADDITIONAL TEACHER RESOURCES**

Early Childhood Resource Book (Karnes)

We Learn All About Community Helpers (MacDonald)

Head Start Learning Resource Units for Young Children (Published by Pittsburgh Public Schools)

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