



OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Mariachi Herencia de México

23 | 24

ONSTAGE STUDENT FIELD TRIP
RESOURCE GUIDE

[OVERTURE.ORG/ONSTAGE](https://overture.org/onstage)

Dear Teachers,

In this resource guide you will find valuable information to help you apply academic goals to your students’ performance experience. We have included suggestions for activities which can help you prepare students to see this performance, ideas for follow-up activities, and additional resources you can access on the web. Along with these activities and resources, we’ve also included the applicable Wisconsin Academic Standards in order to help you align the experience with your curriculum requirements.

This Educator’s Resource Guide is designed to:

- Extend the scholastic impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, activities and reading to promote learning across the curriculum;
- Promote arts literacy by expanding students’ knowledge of music, science, storytelling and theatre;
- Illustrate that the arts are a legacy reflecting the values, customs, beliefs, expressions and reflections of a culture;
- Use the arts to teach about the cultures of other people and to celebrate students’ own heritage through self-reflection;
- Maximize students’ enjoyment and appreciation of the performance.

We hope the performance and this resource guide will provide you and your students with opportunities to integrate art learning in your curricula, expanding it in new and enriching ways.

Enjoy the Show!

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Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

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We want your feedback!

OnStage performances can be evaluated online! Evaluations are vital to the funding of this program. Your feedback educates us about the ways the program is utilized and we often implement your suggestions.

Survey: <https://form.jotform.com/OVJotForm/2324-onstage-post-show-survey>



About *Mariachi Herencia de Mexico*

Get ready to hear from an exciting addition to the more than 200 year-old art form known as mariachi music.

Mariachi Herencia de Mexico is a group of twelve to eighteen year-old students from the Mexican-American barrios of Chicago, playing music their parents and grandparents grew up with and making it fresh for today.

The group's focus is on honoring the past and the culture of Mexico, promoting cultural pride among people of Mexican descent, and developing new material to take mariachi into the future.

These are students who can hold their own with some of the best musicians in the world. In fact, they already have, including folkloric/fusion artist Lila Downs and veteran mariachi singer Aida Cuevas. Their first album, "Nuestra Herencia" (Our Heritage), was produced by Javier Limón, the world-renowned musician and artistic

director of the Mediterranean Music Institute at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. The album became a surprise hit when it was released in 2007 and was even nominated for a Latin Grammy.

Their second album, "Herencia De La Tierra Mia" (The Heritage of My Land), debuted in 2018, opening at #2 on the Billboard charts and #1 on the iTunes charts. Their third album, "Esencia," was released in 2019.

Their website describes the group's song selection as ranging from "spirited sonets, to tender boleros and a thrilling jarocho medley."

Along with their hard work and commitment, the young people of *Mariachi Herencia de Mexico* bring something special to their renditions of mariachi music. As Limón put it, "You can't teach authenticity."

More About Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

Mariachi Herencia de Mexico grew out of one individual's urge to give back to his community.

César Maldonado was born in Chicago, the son of mariachi-loving parents from Durango, Mexico, who did not speak English. Maldonado was an excellent student and after growing up to be a successful investment banker by age 33, he wanted to help the next generation of Mexican Americans. He founded the Mariachi Heritage Foundation (MHF) in 2012, to promote cultural pride among students from the barrios and give them access to music education they'd otherwise miss.

In just seven years, MHF has brought mariachi music education programs to eight public schools in Chicago, reaching 2,100 3rd- 8th grade students – and established the *Mariachi Herencia de Mexico*.

The mariachi music curriculum is sequential, and teaches students the basic elements of music, from reading music, to music theory, and notation. Students then move on to studying the key instruments of mariachi music – violin, trumpet, guitar, vihuela and guitarron.

Along with learning about music and cultural history, students develop skills in personal discipline, time-management, and teamwork. Their awareness, understanding, and pride in their heritage is enhanced.

Advanced students are eligible to audition for the *Mariachi Herencia de Mexico*. Playing with the Mariachi Herencia de Mexico can be a transformative experience for these young people, who come primarily from low-income, immigrant families. Not only do they get to play music across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, they are forging deep, deep bonds with their fellow student musicians, based on working through life-changing experiences together.

Maldonado was able to enlist the renowned musician Javier Limón to produce the group's first album, although he wasn't sure about it at first. "I had some doubts about whether I should do this project or not, but when I saw the faces of those kids – 12, 13, 14 years old – they just stole my heart," says the producer, who is artistic director of the Mediterranean Music Institute at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he lives.

"These are kids from very humble backgrounds who just as well could be thinking about their videogames, or listening to hip hop or reggaeton. The fact that they work so hard to learn this music, and then use music to get ahead in life, for me, that was the vital element that convinced me to work with them."



Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

What Is Mariachi Music?

Let's start with the word itself. While some experts once thought "mariachi" came from the French word for "marriage," it's now thought that it comes from the name for certain indigenous (meaning local, or native) musical groups, or the name of a tree from the state of Jalisco in Mexico, or a dance floor made from that tree.

In one way, mariachi music does suggest a marriage of sorts, because it brings together different musical traditions – those of the original inhabitants of Mexico, combined with European and African elements – to create something totally unique and new.

Mariachi music calls for a very specific set of instruments. These include:

Violins – In a traditional mariachi band, there are 6-8 violins

Trumpets – There are typically 2-3 trumpets in a mariachi group

Guitar – A single guitar is used in about 98% of mariachi songs

Vihuela – A native strummed instrument which looks a bit like a very big ukelele

Guitarrón – A very large bass guitar which is a key part of the mariachi sound

Other instruments – Some mariachi bands may include other instruments, such as the harp, a flute, and more



Mariachi Herencia de Mexico musician playing a guitarrón

Mariachi music is frequently a part of both community celebrations, such as weddings or dances, and private events.

Definition of "Herencia"

"Herencia" is a Spanish word meaning "inheritance" or "legacy." Why do you think this group is called Mariachi Herencia de Mexico?

What different kinds of music might you think of as your inheritance? Could it be music from places where you or your ancestors lived? What about music you or your parents or grandparents loved? Music you heard in school or at parties? What would that be?

Latinos in US & Wisconsin

- In 2016, about 370,000 Hispanics lived in Wisconsin, making it the 25th largest Hispanic population in the country.
- In Dane County, 34,700 Latinos make up about 6.5% of the population, and that share is increasing as the community thrives.
- The Latino population is also growing across the country. In 2016, the U.S. Census Bureau said there were 57.4 million Latinos in the United States, which is 18% of the country's total population.
- Latinos are active throughout society, from the Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor to the journalist Jorge Ramos, to U. S. Senator Marco Rubio, to the astronaut and inventor Ellen Ochoa, to the actress and entrepreneur Eva Longoria, to the activist Cesar Chavez, to the baseball player Alex Rodriguez, to performers like Jennifer Lopez.
- Latinos are extremely active in the construction and agriculture industries, and there are 1.1 million Latino veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.



Hat commonly worn by mariachi musicians



Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

Cultural Heritage

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines culture as “the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group” and “the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time.”

One way to describe culture is all the things that make you feel like you’re at home. This can include:

- The food you eat, how it’s made, and what you eat when
- The place where you live, who lives there, and how you interact with each other
- The languages you speak at home and other places, if they’re different
- The spiritual beliefs and practices your family follows
- The clothes you wear every day, how you dress up, and what you dress up for
- The music you listen to, the television shows and movies you watch, and the books you read

Culture is a term that can be applied on a national scale, like “American culture” or “Latino culture,” or a smaller one, like a business or a school.

Learning about other cultures helps you understand, appreciate, and enjoy more of the world. This helps you connect to other people in a more rich way. Learning about other cultures also helps you learn more about yourself. You might discover new foods to enjoy, new music, and nifty ways of moving.

This kind of learning also helps you understand more about the culture you grew up in. Have you ever been away from home and realized that you notice more things about your home and neighborhood when you return? It’s a similar thing.



Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

Resources & Discussion Questions



Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

Resources

Mariachi Herencia de Mexico Company [Website](#)

An [article](#) from the Chicago Reader on the Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

An article on the [forming and first success](#) of Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

[Good source](#) for background on Mariachi music

More facts about mariachi music, [for younger students](#)

Information on teaching about [cultural heritage](#)

A [collection of resources](#) for celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 – October 15), from Scholastic

[Information](#) on exploring family heritage at home

[Background](#) on the history of mariachi.

Discussion Questions

How important is music to who you are as a person?
What kind of music do you like?

Do any kinds of music bring back special memories to you? What are they?

What special days does your family celebrate, as in birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and more? What does your family do on these special days?

What are some of your favorite foods? Are any of them unique to your family, your neighborhood, or where you live?

Does your family have any special foods or prized recipes they like to make on certain occasions? What are they? How do you get involved with preparing them?

Except for Native Americans, pretty much everyone living in the United States today has ancestors who came here from a different place. Does your household have any special ways of remembering and celebrating the places your ancestors came from?

Learning Activity - Cinco de Mayo: The Beat of Mexico

From Education World (with resources from the Florida State University Geography and Technology Education Program)

Submitted by Linda Starr

September-October is Hispanic Heritage Month, and like Cinco de Mayo, a great time for students to learn about mariachi music and create their own rhythm instruments.

Grade Level:

Pre-K – 4

Learning Objective:

Students become familiar with the music of Mexico and the process of making music.



Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

Materials:

- Access to [El mariachi.com!](http://Elmariachi.com) – A website selling sheet music, which also features many links to free YouTube recordings of mariachi music
- Instruction Sheet for making musical instruments (*See next page*)
- Supplies for making instruments as noted in instructions.

Activities:

1. Play a selection of mariachi songs from [El mariachi.com!](http://Elmariachi.com).
2. Discuss the mood each piece of music creates.
3. Ask students to vote for the mariachi song they like best.
4. Distribute craft materials and help students follow instructions to make musical instruments.
5. Play the song students voted as their favorite and invite them to use the instruments they created to accompany the song.

Instructions for Making Musical Instruments

Decorative Items - For any of these activities, you can leave the items plain or decorate them with sequins, buttons, yarn, ribbon, masking tape, beads, glitter, etc.

Tambourine

Supplies

- Paper plates
- Stapler or glue
- Hole punch
- String
- Jingle bells
- Crayons

1. Staple or glue two paper plates together, facing each other.

2. Using a hole punch, make holes around the plates and tie jingle bells to the holes with string. Decorate the tambourine with crayons.

3. Shake to play.

Note: Heavy duty paper plates may be more durable for this craft.

Safety note: If using a stapler, an adult should do this. When finished cover the staples with scotch tape.

Drum

Supplies

- Empty oatmeal boxes with covers
- Yarn
- Pens & pencils
- Spools
- Construction paper
- Crayons

Before beginning, you can decorate the oatmeal box with construction paper and/or crayons for a colorful effect.

1. Place the cover on the box. Use a pen to make a hole in the center of the cover and in the center of the bottom of the box.

2. Pull a piece of yarn through these holes. Make sure it is long enough to hang around a child's neck and down to their waist.

3. For the drumsticks, place the spools at the ends of the pencils, secure with glue if necessary.

4. Beat to play.

Horn

Supplies

- Paper towel rolls
- Waxed paper
- Rubber bands
- Pens

1. Cover one end of the paper towel roll with waxed paper, secure it with a rubber band.

2. Punch a row of holes along one side of the roll with the tip of a pen.

3. To play, sing a tune into the open end of the horn.

Guitar

Supplies

- Empty shoe box
- Rubber bands
- Ruler or stick

1. Remove the cover from the box.

2. Stretch rubber bands around the box.

3. Attach the ruler or stick to the back of the box on one end to act as the arm of the guitar.

4. To play, strum or pluck the rubber bands.

Rhythm Egg

Supplies

- 1 plastic egg
- Assorted colors of electrical tape
- 1 tablespoon of un-popped popcorn or rocks
- Scissors & tablespoon

1. Select plastic egg.

2. Measure 1 tablespoon of un-popped popcorn or rocks and place in one half of egg.

3. Close egg. Cut a piece of electrical tape long enough to wrap around the egg on the seam. Place tape over seam to seal egg.

4. Decorate egg with stickers, marker, or additional electrical tape.

Learning Activity - Culture is Everywhere

From Girls Only Toolkit, San Diego District Attorney's Office

Grade Level: 5-8

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

- Define culture
- Find evidence of culture in their lives and all around
- Participants make an art project depicting culture in their lives

Materials:

- Pens and pencils
- Paper
- String
- Hole punch
- Index cards or small squares of paper
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Activities:

1. Begin by explaining culture is a shared set of practices and traditions that characterize a society or group of people. Culture can include clothing, food, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, spiritual practices and beliefs, language, family structure, and communication styles. Explain that culture influences who we are, just like our parents and personalities.
2. Have participants brainstorm a few examples of culture (ex: speaking English, speaking Spanish, wearing a blue and white school uniform, saying “please” and “thank you,” giving your teacher a hug at the end of the day, wearing your hair in braids, using American money, wearing flip flop shoes). Record their ideas on a board or large paper.
3. Explain that today they will be having a cultural scavenger hunt: they will find evidence of culture in their lives and all around. Explain that they will write their examples of culture on the index cards or small squares of paper and draw a picture of it. They should find at least six examples of culture around them. Participants can work alone, in pairs, or in groups.
4. Pass out index cards or squares of paper, pens and pencils, crayons, markers, or colored pencils. Direct participants to get up out of their seats to search for evidence of culture all around them. Assist as necessary.
5. Have participants write their examples of culture on the index cards or small squares of paper and draw a picture of each example. An example of six cards: 1) “speaking English” with a picture of the A, B, C’s, 2) “using American money” with a picture of a dollar bill, 3) “going to church on Sunday” with a picture of a cross, 4) “watching cartoons on Saturday morning” with a picture of a TV or a cartoon character, 5) “bringing lunch in a brown paper bag” with a picture of a brown paper bag or lunch foods, 6) “wearing friendship bracelets” with a picture of a friendship bracelet.



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Learning Activity - Culture is Everywhere (con't)

6. When participants have finished at least six cards, punch two holes on the top of each card and string them together.

7. Have participants share what they found on their scavenger hunts. Ask participants to discuss what each example of culture means and the role it plays in their lives.

8. Hang cultural scavenger hunt art projects throughout the room.

Journal Prompt: If you were to invent a cultural tradition or ritual, what would it be? A language? A food? A dance? Describe your new tradition and why you would have people practice it.

Evaluation: Did participants define culture? Were participants able to identify evidence of culture around them? Did participants create a collage of culture?

Related Activities: Ask participants to find examples of diverse cultural traditions in their community, or even within their families, and report back to the group.



Learning Activity – My Multicultural Self

From Teaching Tolerance

Adapted from EdChange Multicultural Pavilion

Grade Level: 8-12

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

- Be able to identify at least five facets of their multicultural selves
- Reflect on how any one identity facet shapes the way they view the world
- Understand the many reasons that miscommunication can occur



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Materials:

- Teacher prepares model of their own identity before presentation
- Copy of student handout (PDF) for each student

Activities:

Framework - Before endeavoring to develop cultural knowledge and awareness about others, we must first uncover and examine personal social and cultural identities. Guided self-reflection allows us to better understand how social group memberships inform who we are. This exercise is an important vehicle in any peer conflict mediation program to help students embrace the concept of being culturally responsive and culturally sensitive.

Introduction - What is culture? It is a shared system of meanings, beliefs, values and behaviors through which we interpret our experiences. Culture is learned, collective and changes over time. Culture is generally understood to be “what we know that everyone like us knows.”

The following exercise explores the roots of cultural learning by naming aspects of identity important to each individual. It highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities and addresses the importance of self-identification.

Step One: The teacher should complete a handout in advance to serve as a model for students. Use an overhead or simply draw your multicultural self-components on the chalkboard. Example:

Mrs. Fattori - Mother – Teacher – Buddhist – Biracial – Marathon Runner

Share how each of your identity bubbles is a lens through which you see the world. Mrs. Fattori might share, for instance, that when she became a mother she became stronger and more sensitive, stronger for having made and given life as well as knowing she would do anything to protect her child. But she also became more sensitive to young life of all kinds around her, whether it be children, nature or a student just learning to love a certain academic subject.

Step Two: Distribute a handout to each student and give the following directions: “Place your name in the center

figure. Use the identity bubbles to name aspects of yourself that are important in defining who you are.”

Allow students time to silently reflect on what they have written. Invite them to form pairs and share why the descriptors they chose are important to them. If time permits, invite pairs to introduce one another to the class.

Form small groups around the same or similar descriptors, i.e.. daughters, softball players, band member. Discuss similarities and differences among those of the same “group.”

Step Three: Have students reflect on how each individual identity colors and shapes the way they view and interact with the world. The teacher can use her own identity shells to illustrate this concept. Mrs. Fattori, for example, might share how being biracial allows her to be a part of two worlds.

When the teacher is sure that students understand this concept, discuss as a class or in small groups:

- How would you feel if someone ignored one of your multicultural identity bubbles?
- Can you see how ignoring one of your identity bubbles could cause miscommunication? Can anyone give an example?
- Do you have more than these 5 identities?
- If your 5 identity bubbles are communicating with a group of 5 others, how many identities are interacting?

Set up the next step by sharing with students that we have many identities in our multicultural selves. Not being aware of our own or others’ identities causes miscommunication.

Step Four: Our identities are NOT static. We are shaped and reshaped by what goes on around us and our identities constantly change as well. Give examples:

- A parent dies and this reshapes the way we see the world
- We fall in love and this reshapes the way we see the world
- We fall out of love and this reshapes the way we see the world
- We experience an act of violence and this reshapes the way we see the world

So, what we once knew to be true about our selves and others can change over time. For this reason, we should always try to suspend judgment, ask questions of others and talk with those different from us as much as possible.



Culture is part of our identity.

My Multicultural Self

MIDDLE/UPPER GRADES ACTIVITY

Place your name in the center. Choose five different aspects of your identity and write each of them in the identity bubbles provided.

The activity form consists of five speech bubbles arranged around a central horizontal line. The bubbles are colored as follows: a light orange bubble at the top left, a light blue bubble at the top right, a light green bubble on the right side, a light yellow bubble at the bottom left, and a larger light orange bubble at the bottom center. A thin black horizontal line is positioned in the center of the page, between the top and bottom rows of bubbles.

Academic Standards

Music

Standard 3: Respond

MG3.R.5.i:

Recognize and define grade- appropriate foundational musical elements.

MG3.R.7.i:

Utilize appropriate music terminology in the evaluation /reflection of music performances.

MG3.R.8.i:

Demonstrate proper concert/audience etiquette.

Standard 4: Connect

MG4.Cn.5.i:

Compare the historical and cultural aspects of music with other disciplines.

MG4.Cn.6.i:

Explain how music relates to self, others, and the world.

MG4.Cn.7.i:

Examine and evaluate musical connections, similarities, and differences.

MG4.Cn.8.i

Describe roles of musicians in various music settings and world cultures.

Social Studies

Behavioral Studies

SS.BH1.b.4

Describe how culture, ethnicity, race, age, religion, gender, and social class can help form self- image and identity.

SS.BH2.a.4-5

Compare how people from different cultures solve common problems, such as distribution of food, shelter, and social interactions.

SS.BH2.b.4

Give examples of how peoples from different cultures develop different values and ways of interpreting experiences.



Mariachi Herencia de Mexico



STUDENT AUDIENCE NORMS

It's important to share with your students the DO's and DON'Ts of audience etiquette for this performance. We want to ensure that everyone has an enjoyable experience at the show, so please talk with your students about the following DO's and DON'Ts.

DO stay in your seat for the duration of the performance (unless asked to stand)

DON'T talk to your friends during the show (it can be disrupting to the actors)

DO engage with what's happening onstage (laugh along, clap along, etc)

DON'T touch the people in front of you or next to you. Keep your hands to yourself.

DO listen to what the characters say. Help them out if they ask you to do something.

DON'T use electronic devices during the show. Keep your phones off and away while the show is happening.

DO have fun!

ABOUT LIVE PERFORMANCE

Live performance, unlike a tv show or movie, involves people onstage acting in real time. This means that the performers will react to laughing, clapping, and engaging with the performance as it is happening. Be sure to tell your students to prepare for the performance by being respectful of the actors and engaging with the material by watching closely. Remember these tips as you enter the theater space:

1. **Prepare:** Use the restroom beforehand, find your seat in a timely manner, and be prepared to sit and watch the entire performance.
2. **Engage:** Engage with the material! If something is funny, laugh. At the end of a scene, clap. Have fun!
3. **Focus:** Don't distract yourself or your fellow audience members by talking during the show, eating food, or doing other things that might pull focus from what's happening onstage.



Overture Center's mission
is to support and elevate
our community's creative culture,
economy and quality of life
through the arts.



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