

***Hispanic Heritage
Commemorating Florida's Quincentenary
in Tampa Bay***

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University of South Florida

Lesson Title

Operation Pedro Pan: How 14,000 Children Came to Live in America without their Parents

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Concept/Main Idea/Big Idea of Lesson

Operation Pedro Pan was the name given to the 22-month clandestine program involving the political exodus of more than 14,000 Cuban children to the United States in the early 1960s. Fearing communist indoctrination and the rumor of *patria potestad* — the government assuming legal guardianship of their children— Cuban parents sent their unaccompanied (minor) children to the United States.

Conference Theme

Migration, Exile, Diaspora

Intended Grade Level

3rd – 5th Grades

Infusion/Subject Area(s)

Social Studies: Geography, American History

Curriculum Standards

NCSS Themes:

Time, Continuity, and Change
People, Places, and Environments
Power, Authority, and Governance
Global Connections

Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards:

SS.3.G.2.6: Investigate how people perceive places and regions differently by conducting interviews, mental mapping, and studying news, poems, legends, and songs about a region or area.

SS.3.C.2.1: Identify group and individual actions of citizens that demonstrate civility, cooperation, volunteerism, and other civic virtues.

SS.3.A.1.1: Analyze primary and secondary sources.

SS.3.G.4.1: Identify a cultural characteristic of a population in the U.S. and a population in Mexico, Canada, or the Caribbean.

Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- learn about Operation Pedro Pan;
- explain the reasons for the exodus;
- identify Cuba on a map and understand its geographic relationship to Florida.

Learning Activities Sequence

Guided Imagery: Tell students that today they will be taking a trip --- a trip in their mind's eye. Dim the lights, decrease external stimuli as much as possible, and ask students to close their eyes, getting comfortable at their seats. In a calm, well-modulated voice, read the guided imagery exercise, encouraging students to envision what you will be describing.

Journal Writing: Ask students to think about what they were feeling as the child in the story. Tell them they are now to write an entry in the child's diary, finishing the following sentence:

“It is September 22, 1961 and I have just left my home...”

Instruct them to keep writing until you tell them to stop. Allow 5-10 minutes for this free-writing activity.

Think-Pair-Share: At the end of time allotted for the writing activity, ask students to trade their papers with someone sitting nearby, each silently reading the other's entries. Allow students to ask each other any clarifying questions, if needed.

After everyone has shared their responses with another person, ask for a few volunteers to share their responses with the whole class.

Class Discussion: Generate a class discussion by asking the following questions:

- What is the general tone of the journal entries generated in our class?
- What are the concerns or worries expressed?
- How long do you think it took the child in the story to see his or her parents again?

Teacher Explanation: Tell students that the experience you guided them through mentally was based on the true story of over 14,000 Cuban children known as *Operation Pedro Pan*.

Segue to the PowerPoint presentation, *Operation Pedro Pan: One Way to America*. Distribute Handout 2, Pedro Pan Notes Graphic Organizer, to students; they are to take notes on this Handout as they attend to the presentation.

Closure and Evaluation

Tell students that they are to imagine that it is the night before they are supposed to leave Cuba for the United States. Have them create a foldable with 3 columns, labeling each column as follows:

What I will take	What I will miss most about home	What I want my foster family in America to know about me

Extension Activity: Have students imagine that they are a Pedro Pan child in the United States, having been in their new home for one week. Using their own school experience, have students will write a letter to their parents describing what school is like in America. (HO3: Letter Writing Rubric can be used to evaluate this work.)

Materials and Resources

Map of the Western Hemisphere

Handout 1: Guided Imagery – Operation Pedro Pan (HO1)

Handout 2: Pedro Pan Notes Graphic Organizer (HO2)

Handout 3: Letter Writing Rubric (HO3)

PowerPoint: *Operation Pedro Pan: One Way to America*

Internet Sources for PowerPoint Images

The Cuban History. <http://www.thecubanhistory.com/2011/10/operation-pedro-pan>. Retrieved March 2, 2012.

History in an Hour. *Fidel Castro: Leader of the Cuban Revolution*. <http://www.historyinanehour.com/2011/08/13/fidel-castro-%E2%80%93-leader-of-the-cuban-revolution>. Retrieved March 2, 2012.

The Miami Herald. *Operation Pedro Pan: Opa-Locka Camp*. <http://www.miamiherald.com/2009/05/13/1047225/operation-pedro-pan-opa-locka.html> . Retrieved March 2, 2012.

Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc. *The Cuban Children’s Exodus*. <http://pedropan.org/images/pedro-flight.jpg>. Retrieved March 2, 2012.

Wall Street Journal. *Election 2012*. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123033841388736493.html>. Retrieved March 2, 2012.

References

Chicago Tribune. Pedro Pan—'60s evacuation of Cuban kids created broken families. January 12, 1998. <http://www.cubanet.org/CNews/y98/jan98/13e5.htm>. Retrieved March 2, 2012.

Cruz, Bárbara C. "Operation Pedro Pan," *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia* (edited by Vicki L. Ruiz and Virginia Sánchez Korrol. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006.

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<http://pedropan.org/images/pedro-flight.jpg>. Retrieved March 2, 2012.