



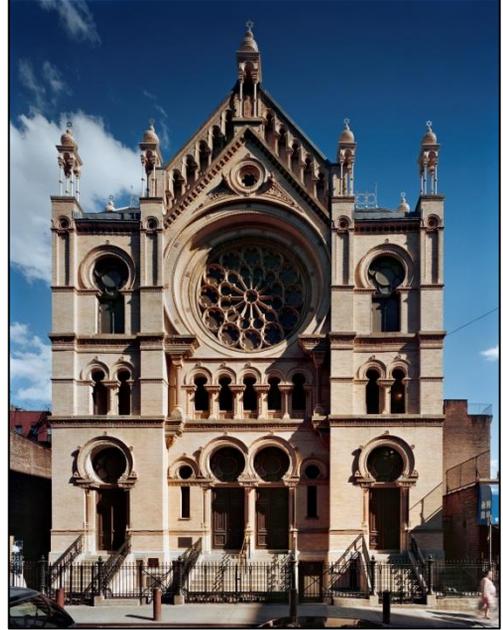
New Lives in a New Land

Pre-Visit Activities

Learning Objectives

To begin thinking about the immigrant experience prior to the museum visit. Activities can include:

- Reviewing and building vocabulary.
- Discussing reasons why people immigrate.
- Sharing family histories.
- Making connections between the immigrant experience and personal experiences of being new or going someplace unfamiliar.



Materials

- World Map or Globe
- Historic photographs
- Dry erase board or chalk board

Vocabulary

Immigrate: to move from one country to another.

Immigrant: a person who moves from one country to another.

Synagogue: a Jewish House of Worship.

Sweatshop: a shop or factory where people work long hours for low pay and in poor and unhealthy conditions.

Yiddish: the language of the Eastern European Jews. Written in the alphabet, Yiddish is a fusion of languages including German, Russian, Aramaic, and Hebrew.

Castle Garden: Castle Garden, located at the southern tip of Manhattan, was originally built as a fort during the War of 1812. It was America's first immigrant receiving center in 1855 and processed more than eight million immigrants before it closed on April 18, 1890.

Ellis Island: The first Federal Immigration Center, Ellis Island was the port of entry for over twelve million immigrants between 1892-1954. (See website at the end of this document for further resources.)

Activities



1. Discussing New Words

Immigrate - to move from one country to another.

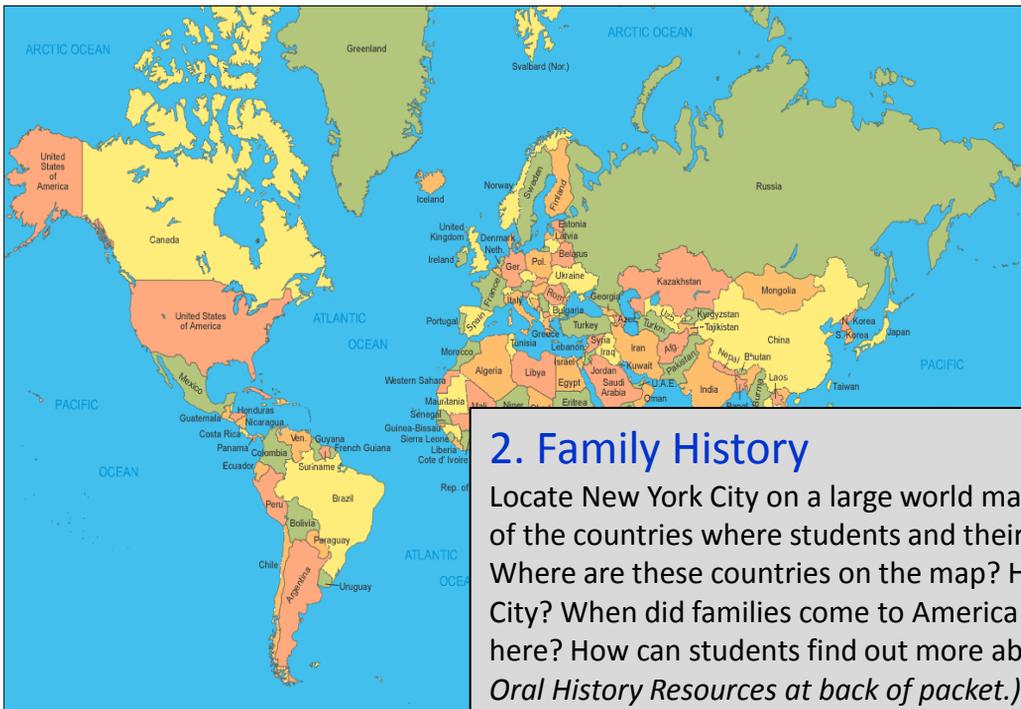
Why do people decide to immigrate?

Synagogue: a place where Jewish people pray and celebrate.

Where else do people go to pray or celebrate holidays?

Have you ever visited a synagogue, church, mosque, or temple?

Yiddish: This sign is written in Yiddish. Yiddish is the language of the Jews of Eastern Europe, and reflects the many places Jews have lived. Written in the Hebrew alphabet and read from right to left, the words come mainly from Russian, German, and Hebrew. You will see this sign when you come to the museum. Although you may not read Yiddish, **look closely at the sign. What do you think it is advertising? How can you tell?**



2. Family History

Locate New York City on a large world map or globe. Make a list of the countries where students and their families came from. Where are these countries on the map? How far from New York City? When did families come to America and how did they get here? How can students find out more about their families? (See *Oral History Resources at back of packet.*)

3. What Would You Pack in *Your* Suitcase?

Suggested Discussion or Writing Prompts

1. Working as a class or in pairs, pick three things to pack if you had to leave home forever. What would you choose and why? What would you leave behind?
2. Look at the little girl on the left side of this photograph. What do you think is in her bag? It's huge! Would she have packed the same things as children today? What might be the same and what would be different?
3. Use your imagination! Pretend you are the little girl, or the little boy on the right holding the big trunk on his back. Describe how you feel. What are you thinking about? What is like to hold such big bags? What can you imagine doing next?



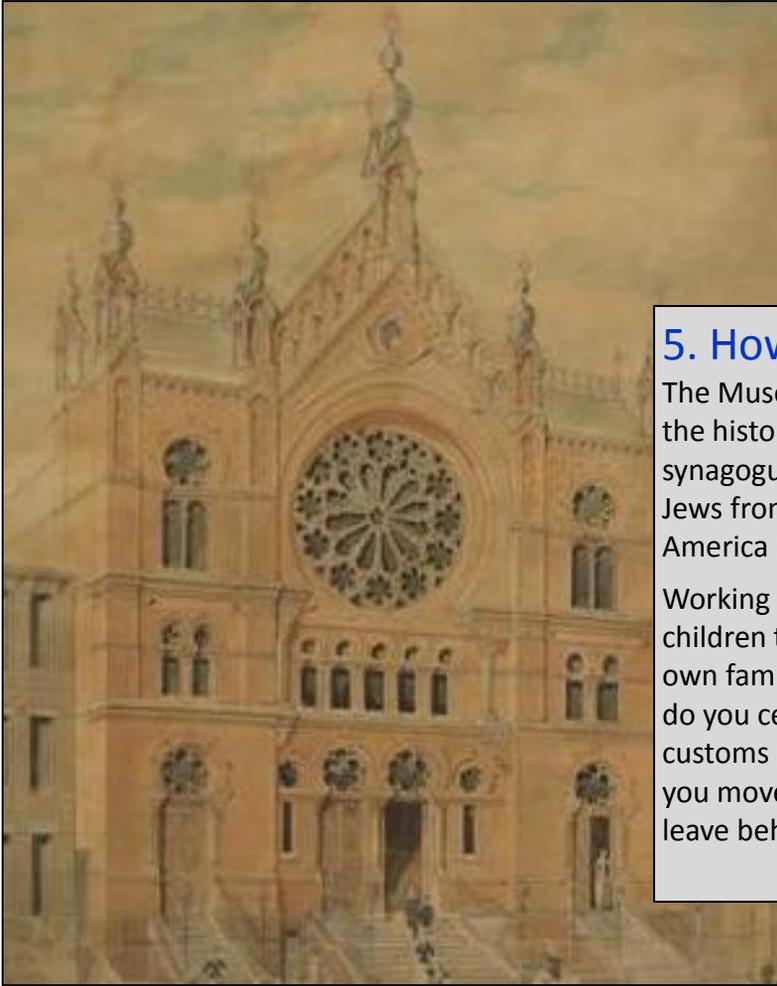
4. Starting over

Suggested Discussion or Writing Prompts

1. What is it like to be new? Who remembers starting a new school or camp or moving into a new neighborhood? Or who in the class has also taken a long journey to a new land?
2. This photograph was taken in 1902. It shows immigrants on a crowded ship coming to America. What is going on in the photograph? What are people wearing? Doing? What are they looking at? What might they be talking about? Why are they sitting on the deck of the boat? How would you describe the mood of this photograph?
3. Notice the little boy on the right side of the photograph looking at the camera. How old does he look? Who could he be travelling with? If you could walk into the photograph and sit down next to him, what questions would you ask?
4. Use your imagination! Write a short story, a letter, or a diary entry from the little boy's perspective. Or become a reporter, and write a newspaper article describing what you see aboard this ship.

Photo: National Park Service





5. How does a building tell a story?

The Museum at Eldridge Street is located inside of the historic Eldridge Street Synagogue. The synagogue opened in 1887 at a time when many Jews from Eastern Europe were immigrating to America and settling on the Lower East Side.

Working as a class or in small groups, have the children think about traditions and customs in their own families. Questions can include: what holidays do you celebrate? Where do you celebrate? What customs and traditions would you take with you if you moved to another country? What would you leave behind? Why?

More Websites

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/immigrating.htm>

http://www.ellisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island_timeline.asp

<http://www.tenement.org/>

<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>

<http://www.eldridgestreet.org/recommended-reading-on-immigration/>

<http://www.besthistorysites.net/index.php/oral-history>