

## Biddy Mason

### Teacher Guide

#### Overview:

Bridget “Biddy” Mason was born into slavery, survived a treacherous frontier crossing with a group of pioneers, and secured her freedom in the free state of California, where she became one of the wealthiest African-American women in the nation. Through careful saving and investments, Biddy Mason built an extensive commercial real-estate enterprise in what is now downtown Los Angeles. Her philanthropic efforts helped create and sustain African-American institutions in the city and shaped the city’s overall civic life for future generations. Her life exemplified forbearance and endurance, genius, generosity and compassion, and a refusal to give into bitterness or resentment.

This lesson is appropriate for historical lessons about the 19th century, slavery, the Civil War, Women’s History Month, or Black History Month. This lesson also emphasizes Social and Emotional (SEL) learning competencies, and highlights resilience, grit, determination, self-reliance, and other positive inner resources and character traits.

#### Lesson Prompt:

Have you ever wondered what happened to people who were born in slavery but were later freed? Here’s one story about an African-American woman who found great success on the West Coast.

Share the prepared PowerPoint presentation on the life of Biddy Mason. The presentation includes discussion prompts to reinforce the principles discussed.

Select activities from the accompanying Activity Pack according to your time allowance and student appropriateness. Included in the Activity Pack are:

- Multiple Choice Questions (Grades 2-8)

- Critical Thinking Questions (Grades K-8 with guidance)

- Activities & Exercises (Grades 5-8)

- Crossword Puzzle (Grades 5-8; Grades 2-4 with word bank)

(continued)

Coloring Page (Grades K-3)

Additional Reading/Viewing (Grades K-8 - varies by  
video)

## Vocabulary:

Midwife  
Pioneer  
Wagon Train  
Sue  
Intervene  
Emancipation  
Proclamation Wage  
Real estate  
Reinvest  
Profit  
Generous  
Smallpox  
Epidemic  
Fluent  
Philanthropist  
Abundance

## Standards and Learning Objectives

*Mapped to the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards published by the National Council for the Social Studies*

### Grades K-2

#### English Language Arts:

D1.3.K-2. Identify facts and concepts associated with a supporting question.

#### Civics:

D2.Civ.2.K-2. Explain how all people, not just official leaders, play important roles in a community

D2.Civ.10.K-2. Compare their own point of view with others' perspectives.

D2.Civ.14.K-2. Describe how people have tried to improve their communities over time.

#### Economics:

D2. Eco.1. K-2. Explain how scarcity necessitates decision making.

D2. Eco.2. K-2. Identify the benefits and costs of making various personal decisions.

D2. Eco.3. K-2. Describe the skills and knowledge required to produce certain goods and services.

D2.Eco.6.K-2. Explain how people earn income.

D2.Eco.10.K-2. Explain why people save.

D2.Eco.13.K-2. Describe examples of capital goods and human capital.

#### Geography:

D2 Geo.1.K-2. Construct maps, graphs, and other representations of familiar places.

D2. Geo.5.K-2. Describe how human activities affect the cultural and environmental characteristics of places or regions.

D2.Geo.6.K-2. Identify some cultural and environmental characteristics of specific places.

D2. Geo.7.K-2. Explain why and how people, goods, and ideas move from place to place.

#### History:

D2. His.1. K-2. Create a chronological sequence of multiple events.

D2. His.2. K-2. Compare life in the past to life today.

D2. His.3. K-2. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change.

D2.His.4.K-2. Compare perspectives of people in the past to those of people in the present.

**Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions:**

D4.2.K-2. Construct explanations using correct sequence and relevant information.

D4.5.K-2. Ask and answer questions about explanations.

D4.6.K-2. Identify and explain a range of local, regional, and global problems, and some ways in which people are trying to address these problems.

D4.7.K-2. Identify ways to take action to help address local, regional, and global problems.

**Grades 3-5****English Language Arts:**

D1.4.3-5. Explain how supporting questions help answer compelling questions in an inquiry.

**Civics:**

D2.Civ.10.3-5. Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

D2.Civ.12.3-5. Explain how rules and laws change society and how people change rules and laws.

**Economics:**

D2. Eco.1.3-5. Compare the benefits and costs of individual choices.

D2. Eco.2.3-5. Identify positive and negative incentives that influence the decisions people make.

D2. Eco.3.3-5. Identify examples of the variety of resources (human capital, physical capital, and natural resources) that are used to produce goods and services.

D2. Eco.4.3-5. Explain why individuals and businesses specialize and trade.

**Geography:**

D2. Geo.1.3-5. Construct maps and other graphic representations of both familiar and unfamiliar places.

D2. Geo.4.3-5. Explain how culture influences the way people modify and adapt to their environments.

D2. Geo.7.3-5. Explain how cultural and environmental characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people, goods, and ideas.

**History:**

D2. His.2.3-5. Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today.

D2. His.3.3-5. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes and continuities.

D2.His.5.3-5. Explain connections among historical contexts and people's perspectives at the time.

D2. His.14.3-5. Explain probable causes and effects of events and developments

D2.His.16.3-5. Use evidence to develop a claim about the past.

## **Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions:**

D4.2.3-5. Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data.

D4.4.3-5. Critique arguments.

D4.6.3-5. Draw on disciplinary concepts to explain the challenges people have faced and opportunities they have created, in addressing local, regional, and global problems at various times and places.

D4.7.3-5. Explain different strategies and approaches students and others could take in working alone and together to address local, regional, and global problems, and predict possible results of their actions.

D4.8.3-5. Use a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions about and act on civic problems in their classrooms and schools.

## **Grades 6-8**

### **English Language Arts:**

D1.4.6-8. Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.

### **Civics:**

D2.Civ.6.6-8. Describe the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives.

D2.Civ.10.6-8. Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

### **Economics:**

D2. Eco.1.6-8. Explain how economic decisions affect the well-being of individuals, businesses, and society.

D2. Eco.2.6-8. Evaluate alternative approaches or solutions to current economic issues in terms of benefits and costs for different groups and society as a whole.

D2.Eco.3.6-8. Explain the roles of buyers and sellers in product, labor, and financial markets.

D2. Eco.7.6-8. Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.

D2.Eco.13.6-8. Explain why standards of living increase as productivity improves.

### **Geography:**

D2.Geo.2.6-8. Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions, and changes in their environmental characteristics.

D2. Geo.4.6-8. Explain how cultural patterns and economic decisions influence environments and the daily lives of people in both nearby and distant places.

D2.Geo.5.6-8. Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.

D2.Geo.8.6-8. Analyze how relationships between humans and environments extend or contract spatial patterns of settlement and movement.

**History:**

D2. His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

D2. His.2.6-8. Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.

D2. His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2. His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

D2. His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

**Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions:**

D4.2.6-8. Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

D4.4.6-8. Critique arguments for credibility.

D4.5.6-8. Critique the structure of explanations.

D4.6.6-8. Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

D4.7.6-8. Assess their individual and collective capacities to take action to address local, regional, and global problems, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies, and potential outcomes.

D4.8.6-8. Apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms and schools, and in out-of-school civic contexts.