

# LATINO AMERICANS

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## 500 YEARS OF HISTORY

**St. Thomas University Library &  
John C. Favalora Archive and Museum**

### **Lesson Plans for Religion / Theology**

#### **Lesson Overview:**

Viewing images from the exhibit *La Virgen de la Caridad: Images from the Diaspora*, this lesson allows students to explore religious practices and traditions surrounding the devotion to *La Virgen de la Caridad* in Miami. It examines *La Virgen de la Caridad's* Miami story, which began in 1961 when a replica of the original image venerated in El Cobre, Cuba, was smuggled out of Havana and taken to a baseball stadium in Miami on her feast day, September 8<sup>th</sup>, to be reunited with the Cuban Diaspora. The lesson asks students to consider connections between religious practices and identity and write essays about what they have learned.

**Grades: 7-12 (Content maybe adapted for grades 4-6)**

#### **Materials:**

1. Access to the St. Thomas University Library and John C. Favalora Archive & Museum exhibits, *Latino Americans: Cuban Experiences in Miami* and *Miami: A Multicultural Hispanic Community*, either by field trip or Internet access.
2. Access to online research databases from the University Library: Access World News, Catholic Periodical Literature Index, ATLA Religions Database, and the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* as well as access to digital copies of *The Voice* and *La Voz*.
3. Digital access to images of Mary from Latin American, South American, and North American countries, including but not limited to Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexico), Our Lady of Chiquinquirá (Colombia), Our Lady of Mercy (Peru), and Our Lady of Lujan (Argentina).
4. Video clips from *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History*.

### **Lesson Outcomes:**

1. Students will explain the historical importance of La Virgen de la Caridad to the Cuban people, including key dates, events, and locations.
2. Student will compare and contrast La Virgen de la Caridad with other versions of Mary from across Latin American and South American countries.
3. Students will write about popular piety and explore the role of Mary in Christianity in general and in Roman Catholicism in particular.
4. Students will conduct research on La Virgen de la Caridad in Cuba and in Miami and write essays about their insights.

### **Lesson Procedures:**

**Foundational Activity:** Begin a discussion on the role of religion in cultural identity. Explore the many different titles of Mary in Latin American, South American, and North American countries while showing images of that representation on a screen. Ask the students about representations of Mary in their family's and friends' homes.

**Activity Two:** Using the photographs from the exhibit *La Virgen de la Caridad: Images from the Diaspora*, explore the impact of Our Lady of Charity in Miami.

**Activity Three:** Engage the students in a discussion of piety and devotion as well as the role of Mary in Christianity in general and in Roman Catholicism in particular.

**Activity Four:** Demonstrate how to login to and conduct research in the databases Access World News, Catholic Periodical Literature Index, ATLA Religion Database, Britannica Online, the Latin American & Caribbean Search Portal, and *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, accessible on the University Library website: <http://web.stu.edu/AZ/tabid/3721/Default.aspx>. Students will need their student IDs and passwords from St. Thomas University. Demonstrate how to access freely available digital copies of *The Voice* and *La Voz*: <http://library.stu.edu/ulma/va/3005/> and <http://library.stu.edu/ulma/va/3004/>. Instruct students to develop an essay about their insights into La Virgen de la Caridad in Cuba and in Miami.

**Activity Five:** Have students write an essay about the topic they explored in their research.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How do religious practices like those surrounding La Virgen de la Caridad impact the development of one's identity or identification with one's community?

2. What role has Mary played in Christianity in general and in Roman Catholicism in particular?

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