



Teacher/Viewing Guide

Father George Shalhoub – Episode 108 Priest, The Basilica of St. Mary

Grade Level: 9-12

Episode Overview:

Father George Shalhoub was never asked if he wanted to be a priest. At the age of 12, when his local bishop in Syria asked for families to send one of their sons to become a priest, he was sent by his parents to Lebanon to study in the Christian Orthodox seminary. Then, in 1972, when he was a Deacon, he was sent away again. This time the church sent him to America to a local immigrant community in Michigan that had asked for a minister from the old country. Father Shalhoub agreed to come to America and even entered into an arranged marriage to become the Antiochian Orthodox Christian priest in Livonia, Michigan. Though he experienced some culture shock, Father Shalhoub was gratefully welcomed into the community. They were initially a nomadic church, moving from place to place, until in 1988 they had gathered enough donations to build their first church structure. Today, the Basilica of St. Mary is a large community with 700-800 regular Sunday parishioners and 2000 registered members who can follow the church happenings on Facebook and Twitter. For many, the church serves as the Arab American Christians' chief link to their culture and the lands they left behind. It helps American-born generations learn about their heritage. Viewers of this segment will witness Father Shalhoub interacting with parishioners and see his ability to empower his members to act in positive ways.

Previewing Questions:

1. What is the role of a community church?
2. Why is it important for people to keep ties to their heritage and culture?
3. What qualities make a person a good leader and positive influence?

Vocabulary:

1. Basilica: A large oblong hall or building with double colonnades and a semicircular apse used as a Christian church.
2. Old Country: The native country of a person who has gone to live abroad.
3. Seminary: A college that prepares students to be priests, ministers, or rabbis.
4. Parishioner: An inhabitant of a parish, especially one who belongs to or attends a particular church.

Lesson Overview/Review:

After viewing the segment on Father Shalhoub, students should be prepared to brainstorm about why the church is such an important place in the community. What other places could serve a similar purpose? This can be done as a group activity, having students or the teacher record ideas on a board, or in their own journals.

Journal Option: Have students take a moment to consider where they go within their community to seek comfort, security and a sense of belonging. Why is such a place important to them?

Post Viewing Class Discussion: Conduct a short discussion to synthesize the information they gained from viewing the video segment. Some possible topics:

1. What surprised you the most about Father Shalhoub's life experiences?

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2. What issues does the Arab American community face that caused them to work so hard to bring their church into existence?
3. Why is Father Shalhoub's church so successful?
4. Have you ever seen a group in your community come together for a similar, positive, common goal? Explain.

Activity: Have students work in groups of two. Each person will interview the other to find out as much as possible regarding their partner's heritage. The class will then participate in a "Who Knows You Best" game.

Interview questions:

1. Where is your family from?
2. What types of customs/traditions do you celebrate?
3. What foods do you eat which are unique to your culture?
4. What other languages, if any, are spoken by your relatives?
5. How does your family interact with its larger cultural community? How do you stay in touch with your larger cultural community?

Pairs should record their notes on plain paper (provided by the teacher) and then spend time reviewing those notes and gathering more information from their partner while the teacher prepares for the game. To conduct the game, the teacher will write team names on the board, gather the note papers, and read aloud facts based off of the notes. Students will raise their hands if the fact read relates to their partner. The teacher will record the score. The winners are the team which remembers the most facts about each other.

Assessment Ideas: Students will be graded on:

1. Participation in class discussion.
2. Participation in partner work and game
3. Interview notes taken.

Explore Online: Use the following resources to allow your students to further explore the topic and the Arab American community.

1. Arab Cultural Center: <http://arabculturalcenter.org/>
2. Arab American Museum: <http://arabamericanmuseum.org/>
3. Arab American Antidiscrimination Committee: <http://adc.org/>
4. Basilica of St. Mary: <http://saintmarylivonia.com/home/about-us/clergy/fr-george-shalhoub/>

Interdisciplinary Options: Psychology; Sociology; Family and Consumer Science, Comparative Religion

In this episode students will learn about one person's individual journey and the role that the Church plays in connecting modern day Arab Americans to their cultural history.

Common Core Alignment:

- RI7: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally