



**MIDDLE  
SCHOOL**

**grades 7-8**

Choose, document,  
preserve and  
showcase

# Ordinary Treasures

## Description

In this activity, each student selects a personal object that is especially meaningful to him or her to present to the class. Working with family heirlooms allows students to reexamine their inherited culture as a source of continuity, connection, transmission and memory, with paths often marked by disruption and change.

The goal of this activity is to help the younger generation realize that heritage is not just about buildings or objects on display in museums, but it is alive and nourished by each individual.

The children, each with a unique object, contribute to their shared history as part of a collective heritage that is richly diverse and multicultural.

This activity encourages students to adopt an attitude of open-mindedness with regard to the many social and cultural differences around them. This value is cherished by the Ursulines.

## Learning objectives

- Construct a worldview that shows an understanding of the complex realities associated with human communities.
- Enrich one's culture and begin to explore the cultural heritage of communities within the context of cultural diversity.
- Establish one's place with respect to others and determine one's role in collective work.
- Discover one's cultural environment and lay the foundations for the continued development of one's general knowledge.

## Steps for the activity

1. Each student chooses a work of art or handmade object found at home. This can be a work or heirloom that has been handed down from generation to generation or it can simply be an object that is especially meaningful to them. When we choose an object for a museum collection, we take its history into consideration: Where does it come from, is it unique, does it have a particular significance?
2. Each student documents the provenance of their work or object and gathers information on the context in which it was acquired and when it came into their family. Students can ask themselves the following questions when gathering information:
  - Who acquired or made this object?
  - For what reason(s) was this object acquired or made? Was it a souvenir from a trip? A gift?
  - In what year was the object acquired or made? Was it related to a special event in the family (marriage, death, birth, etc.)?
  - Does the object have sentimental value? What did this object represent for the person who acquired or made it? What importance does this object have?
3. Each student determines what materials their object or work was made of and decides the best way to preserve it long-term. Should the object or document be stored in a specific container for preservation? Does it need to be kept at a precise temperature to protect it?
4. Students then form groups by teaming up with other students whose objects or works have one or more similar aspects they can present.
5. How will students showcase these types of objects or works? They locate a place at home where they can display their objects or works and where guests can enjoy them. This should be in a safe location with conditions suitable for preservation.
6. The groups present their objects as well as their ideas for preservation and display to the class.

