

## TALK THE TALK

### ART AND LANGUAGE ARTS

#### GRADE LEVEL: 3–6

#### BASED ON

*Carved staffs*, Undetermined peoples, Gabon or Republic of the Congo

Late 19th century, Museum Purchase: Steckelmann Collection, gift by special subscription, 1890

#### OBJECTIVE

Students will analyze pieces of artwork from the Yoruban region.

Students will interpret the meanings behind the figures and what they represent.

Students will decide how to create their own piece of art that will convey something about themselves.

#### MATERIALS

tree branches  
Crayola Model Magic  
string  
beads  
copper or bronze spray paint

#### VOCABULARY

Yoruba  
Ogoboni  
society staff  
talking stick  
persona

#### CONCEPT

Many societies, like the Yorubans, had objects such as sculpted and adorned staffs and sticks that were used by upper-class members of the society. A “talking stick” such as that in the Museum’s collection can be used by anyone. At meetings, the holder of the stick has the floor for as long as the stick is in their possession. This can be very empowering.

#### BACKGROUND

The Yoruba people live in the southwestern part of Nigeria. Their artwork dates back thousands of years. Much of their art had and still has religious symbolism. The Yoruban people hold many ceremonies, and one of the most important is the naming ceremony of their children. The name is not chosen until after the child is born. Then the names are chosen to reflect important people or events that occurred at the time.

#### PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to choose a tree branch that appeals to them.
2. Inform students that this will be their personal stick.
3. Using Model Magic, students create personas for themselves that contain a head of some sort. Mold the head into the character.
4. Students then create names for their sticks.
5. After the stick and/or head is spray painted by a teacher, adorn the stick with beads and string.

#### ASSESSMENT

Describe what you have learned, and show an example.

Tell how your work uses elements of design.

Have others interpret the designs.

#### NATIONAL STANDARDS: ART AND LANGUAGE ARTS

Students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life’s goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society.