



**Sons of Norway**  
**HERITAGE PROGRAMS**



**IdeaBank#21**

**GUEST SPEAKERS  
FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**1995**

# Guest Speakers for Public Schools

Public school classes enjoy guest speakers who can provide an hour's presentation on a special topic. Scout troops, Camp Fire programs and other children's groups also enjoy having special guests. For the children, it is something special to look forward to. For the teacher, it is a welcome addition to the curriculum he or she is prepared to teach.

It is important to prepare well, for now you are the expert.

The attention span, interests, information absorption, and participation will vary with age and grade. In general, the older the child, the longer the attention span, the higher the level of understanding, and the more they can participate, question, and work independently.

Often there will be a specific topic that fits in with what the class is studying—immigrants in their state, Norway as part of world geography, the Vikings in history. Or they might be interested in something more general, or something—singing, dancing, crafts—that they can do.

In larger metropolitan school districts, there may be an office which coordinates school volunteers. Talk with them about the kind of presentation you could give, and when you are available. In smaller towns or rural areas, you may want to let the school principal know that you're willing to come in to classes. You may be surprised at the demand for your services

Once you have gone through all the work involved in preparing for this hour, you can give it over and over again. And with more variations, it can be presented to many different grades and groups. Your guest appearance may be requested for a particular unit in the same grade year after year

As you make these presentations, keep track of your mileage to and from schools. This kind of expense for volunteering can be deducted from federal income taxes. (Always check to make sure you are keeping proper records, and making deductions according to current regulations.)

Not only can you enjoy bringing Norway and the Norwegian-America to school children, you are giving their instructor a refreshing and interesting break, and providing a real fraternal service.

Here are some ideas, suggestions, and resources to help you get prepared:

## TIE-IN TOPICS:

- Folk tales—language arts

- Slides/scenery—geography
- Resources, products—geography/industry
- Vikings—history
- Immigrants—history, social studies

### THINGS TO BRING:

- Slides (many slide programs are available through Heritage Programs)
- Souvenirs from Norway—money, postcards, flags, picture books, magazines, newspapers, maps (point out Norway on the globe)
- Wear a *bunad*, Norwegian sweater, *gummi* boots, or other Norwegian items
- Music: a record or tape of folk music, Grieg, current pop music

### THINGS TO DO:

- Teach a simple song, a schottische or a song-dance
- Make a treat together, such as open-face sandwiches, or bring *lefse*, flatbread and a nibble of goat cheese or some little treat
- Teach a few words and phrases—counting to 10, greetings, how are you, and what's your name
- Demonstrate one of the folk arts—*rosemaling*, needlework, carving, teach a song, perhaps a simple round, or song with motions
- Give everyone a Norwegian name

Kids will be interested in kids, aside from whatever topic you're presenting. You may want to have ready information on:

- The Norwegian school system
- Popular past-times, sports, and recreation
- Foods—holidays and how they're celebrated (including birthdays)
- Pop music—families, grandparents, boys' and girls' names

Remember to allow time for answering questions they might have.

Good resource materials from Sons of Norway to assist you are:

Information Bank #10: Information on Norway for children

Information Bank #9: Some Norwegian First Names

Information Bank #3: About the Folk Costumes of Norway

Sons of Norway Map Brochure to hang in the classroom

Further Information:

Books, slide shows, information sheets, and other resources are available from:

**Heritage Programs**

**Sons of Norway**

**1455 West Lake Street**

**Minneapolis, MN 55408**