



Grade Level: 4th grade

Objective: To give students the concept of the exchange of goods and hands-on experience with the bartering process experienced by The Three Fires and French Voyageurs during the 1600s in Michigan.

Materials: Students plan ahead and bring “treasures” from home to barter with classmates. Suggestions for these “treasures” include:

- Books they’ve already read
- Old toys (“Happy Meal” type work well)
- Sports trading cards

Extras: Students dress as their choice —

- A member of a Michigan tribe
- French Voyageur (a French accent is great!)
- A settler living in or near the fort
- Students also decorate the room to give the atmosphere of being in a fort. This varies from year to year and is a wonderful added touch.

Allow at least an hour for the set up and bartering to proceed . . . great photo opportunities . . . eavesdropping is a joy, i.e., “My big plastic dinosaur is worth more than just three baseball cards!” I’m a “food person,” so we always serve snacks (often making homemade butter and spreading it on flatbread). Have fun celebrating this part of our history!

Follow up: Written and oral activities abound. We’ve done descriptive paragraphs about their “treasures,” graphing, oral reports as the character portrayed, distance calculations to and from “Fort,” etc.

**Linda Yeager – Odyssey 2002 Award Winner
St. Mary School, Diocese of Lansing**