

# Discovering Amistad Programs – 2023

*Educational Programs for Students*



*Photo: Caryn B. Davis*

Discovering Amistad (DA) is a nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the 1839 Amistad Uprising to advance racial and social justice today. Formed in 2015, the organization owns and operates the recreation Schooner, Amistad, Connecticut's Flagship and a floating classroom. Our educational programs educate students on the story of the 1839 Amistad Uprising and the subsequent landmark Supreme Court decision while highlighting themes of dehumanization, resistance, and modern-day comparisons. The interactive curriculum addresses equity and adheres to the most up-to-date national C3 (College, Career and Civic Life) social studies framework. The programs are conducted by our trained educators virtually, in-classroom, and aboard the ship. History comes to life as we use the past as a framework for addressing present challenges related to diverse social issues and activism. Students and teachers alike have found that the curriculum has significantly increased their comprehension and the impact of our long-storied issues of freedom and slavery, oppression and empowerment and the achievement of justice.

## Student Programs



### One-Day Program

Duration: One 50 minute session

Location: Virtual or in-person

Target Audience: Individual classroom  
30 students or less, 4th - 12th grade

Cost: Virtual \$175  
In-Person \$200

#### Description:

##### The Amistad Story

- 30 minute story of the Amistad Rebellion designed for a general overview and introduction to the story of the Amistad.
- 20 minute interactive dialogue on racial injustice today. Using the Amistad rebellion as our platform for discussion, students will have a dialogue on what strengths they already possess to become active, and what skills they may want to acquire.

## Two-Day Program

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Duration: Two 50 minute sessions

Location: Virtual or in-person

Target Audience: Individual classroom  
30 students or less, 4th - 12th grade

Cost: Virtual \$325  
In-Person \$350

### Description:

#### Day 1 The Amistad Rebellion

- 30 minute story of the Amistad Rebellion designed for a general overview and introduction to the story of the Amistad.
- 20 minute interactive dialogue on racial injustice today. Using the Amistad rebellion as our platform for discussion, students will have a dialogue on what strengths they already possess to become active, and what skills they may want to acquire.

#### Day 2 The Amistad Court cases

- 30 minute activity where students learn about the supreme court case of the Amistad Africans and their return to Sierra Leone.
- 20 minute interactive dialogue on the impacts of the Amistad Rebellion and how it affects us in the modern day.

## Three Day Program

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Duration: Three 50 minute sessions

Location: Virtual or in-person

Target Audience: Individual classroom  
30 students or less, 4th - 12th grade

Cost: Virtual \$450  
In-Person \$500

### Description:

#### Day 1 Dehumanization

- 30 minute story of the Amistad from Mende culture – Middle Passage – arrival at Cuba while focusing on aspects of dehumanization. Students will learn about:
  - Who were the Amistad Africans?
  - The Mende Peoples in West Africa and how their culture was so closely tied to land, geography and climate.
  - How European powers and illegal slave traders swept through the land in the early to mid-1800's, kidnapping the inhabitants, separating families and forcing them to march to the coast of West Africa and board slave ships bound for Cuba.
- 20 minute interactive dialogue focusing on spotting examples of dehumanization today in full-class and break-out sessions.

*Three Day Program – Cont'd*

**Day 2 Resistance**

- 30 minute story of the Amistad from boarding Amistad to the Rebellion and Navigation to New York while focusing on the theme of resistance.
  - How 53 Africans were purchased on the island of Cuba and forced to board the Amistad as cargo.
  - How the Amistad Africans used all of their skills and resources to organize and free themselves in one of the most famous maritime rebellions off the coast of America.
  - How the Africans navigated the Amistad up the coast of Long Island.
- 20 minute interactive dialogue about organizing and rising-up. Students will discuss what strengths they already possess and what skills they need to acquire to become active.

**Day 3 Legacy**

- 30 minute story of the Amistad Africans from their arrest in New York, the trials and their return home while examining the legacy of their actions.
  - How the Amistad Africans were brought to New Haven to stand trial for murder and piracy, thus becoming an important part of Connecticut's history.
  - How the Amistad case made its way all the way to the Supreme Court.
  - How the Amistad Africans made their journey home.
- 20 minute discussion on some of the traumatic effects caused by slavery, i.e., breaking up the family, loss of connection to land and loss of all family resources. Students will discuss our role and responsibilities today as we grapple with continued racial segregation in America.



**Amistad Ship Tour**

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**Date/Time: to be scheduled**

Duration: 60 minutes

Location: Current location of the ship

Target Audience: Individual classroom  
35 students or less, all ages

Cost: \$250 as an add-on  
\$350 tour only

**Description:**

Students will receive a tour of the 128-foot recreation *Amistad* ship. The tour will cover how and why the reconstruction was built, differences with the original, and how we use the *Amistad* ship today. Everyone on board will learn about the Amistad story from its beginnings in West Africa, the Middle Passage, rebellion on the ship, and the court trials in the United States. Students will see how the 53 kidnapped Africans were able to plan and launch a successful rebellion against their illegal enslavement and how they ended up in Connecticut. This tour is available as an add on to in-person and virtual programming or it can be booked as itself.



**Amistad VIP Tour**

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**Date/Time: to be scheduled**

Duration: 60 minutes

Location: Current location of the ship

Target Audience: Adult  
35 participants or less

Cost: \$350

**Description:**

Participants will receive a tour of the 128-foot reconstruction *Amistad* ship. The tour will cover how and why the recreation was built, differences with the original, and how we use the *Amistad* ship today. Everyone on board will learn about the Amistad story from its beginnings in West Africa, the Middle Passage, rebellion on the ship, and the court trials in the United States. Participants will see how the 53 kidnapped Africans were able to plan and launch a successful rebellion against their illegal enslavement and how they ended up in Connecticut.



## Activity Add-ons

Location: All activities are done in-person or on-ship

All materials for the activity are brought by the educator

Target Audience: Elementary, Middle, and High School, 35 students of less

**Flag activity** - elementary (30 minutes) **Cost: \$100**

- Students are shown a Juneteenth, Sierra Leone, and Pan African flag.
- Short discussion on the meanings within the flag.
- Students are asked to create a flag for the Amistad Africans.

**Activism mixer** - Middle and High school (40 minute activity) **Cost: \$150**

- Students are given a random activist from either the time of the Amistad or the present day and asked to answer questions.
- Students are asked to share their information with their classmates in order to fill out an activism packet.
- Elementary version - each student is assigned an Amistad African.

**Writing for a Cause** - Middle and High School (30 minute activity) **Cost: \$100**

- Entire class will participate in a discussion on what issues they see in their community/world, solutions to these issues, and potential allies to recruit to the cause.
- Each student is then asked to pick a cause to write further about, selecting a cause, solution, and ally. The student will then write a letter to that ally.

**Navigation Game** - Elementary and Middle (40 minute activity) **Cost: \$150**

- Students are split into groups (crews) and given daily obstacles to overcome that mirror the obstacles the Amistad Africans had to overcome when they took control of the ship.

**Identity Iceberg** - Elementary and Middle (20 minute activity) **Cost: \$100**

- Students are lead in a discussion on visible and invisible parts of people’s identities and then asked to fill out their “iceberg” identity based upon their own identity.

**Where I’m From Poem** - Middle and High (30 minute activity) **Cost: \$100**

- As a class, students will read along with the "Where I’m From" poem. Next, each student will fill out their own version based upon their own identity.

**Primary Source Comparison** - Middle and High (30 minute activity) **Cost: \$100**

- Students, either individually or as a pair will compare and contrast primary sources from Amistad and slavery. Looking at the intended impact, target audience, and perspective of the author.

**Primary Source Analysis** - Elementary (30 minute activity) **Cost: \$100**

- Have students read excerpts from the letter written by Kale to John Quincy Adams. Students will answer questions about Kale’s goals, motivations, obstacles, etc.

## Summer 2023 – Amistad Leadership Academy

**Date: to be announced**

Duration: two weeks, daily sessions  
Target Audience: High school students,  
grades 10 to post-secondary

Location: Current location of the ship  
Cost: *Free*

**Description:**

The Amistad Leadership Academy is funded by private foundations and is **free** to participants. Dates and time schedule are flexible.

This program is designed for students grades 10-12 and post-secondary. Participating students will:

- Learn the history of the Amistad uprising of 1839 and its current-day implications
  - Build leadership and teamwork skills
  - Learn the impact and tools of non-violent activism
  - Collaborate on a social justice-based service project



## Professional Development

Duration: 60 minutes  
Target Audience: Teachers and professionals

Location: In-office, on-ship, or virtual  
Cost: \$300

**Description:**

Discovering Amistad offers professional development to educators and other professionals that are interested in learning about the Amistad Rebellion of 1839. This workshop will teach the details of the Amistad Rebellions from its roots in Africa, the role of the transatlantic slave-trade, the rebellion on the Cuban ship, and the court trials in the United States. Participants will also learn about the importance of names and language, cultural lenses, modern connections to this story, lived experience, and resources available to them that can help them learn/teach this important story.