Yemoja – from River Goddess to Goddess of the Sea

Subjects: English · Religious Studies · History | recommended from age 14 (B1) | Video: 9:17 min



Watch the video
youtu.be/yKCbjnnGKaA

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

A · Before watching

1. Do you know festivals where people bring gifts to the sea or a river? Write down what you know.

B · While watching

1. What are orishas, and what is Yemoja's place among them?

2. According to the myth, what came out of Yemoja's body?

3. Why were rivers like the Ogun so important for the Yoruba kingdoms?

4. How and why did the worship of Yemoja reach the Americas?

5. Under which names and with which festivals is she honoured today in Cuba and Brazil?

Useful words

goddess	Göttin	enslaved	versklavt
river	Fluss	diaspora	Diaspora
offering	Opfergabe	shrine	Schrein
worship	Verehrung	survival	Überleben

C · Put the story in order

Number the events from 1 to 8 in the order they happen in the video.

	The river Ogun flows out of her body.
	Enslaved Yoruba people bring their faith to the Americas.
	Olodumare stands above hundreds of orishas.
	The Ogun becomes the centre of her worship in Nigeria.
	Yemoja is married to Aganju; their son is Orungan.
	In Brazil the festival of Iemanjá is held on 2 February.
	Yemoja flees across the land for days.
	More orishas such as Shango, Ogun and Oya are born.

D · Think and discuss

1. Enslaved people worshipped Yemoja in secret, often behind Catholic saints. Why was that necessary – and what does it say about the power of faith?

2. In the Americas the river goddess became a goddess of the sea. How can this change be explained?

E · One goddess, three places

Complete the table with information from the video.

	Name and domain	How is she honoured?
Nigeria (Yoruba)		
Cuba (Santería)		
Brazil (Candomblé, Umbanda)		
Her colours and symbols		

F · Get creative

1. In your exercise book, research one of today's festivals (Iemanjá in Brazil or the Virgin of Regla in Cuba) and describe it in 8–10 sentences.