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## **Montessori's Cosmic Curriculum and Biodiversity in Africa**

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One of Dr. Maria Montessori's core philosophies is the idea of Cosmic Education, or that no element in the world exists in isolation. In this unit, the philosophy of Cosmic Education is introduced to the students to help them have an admiration of and respect for the world and their place in it. This unit invites the student to undertake the study of the continent of Africa according to the biota that live there along with indigenous cultures that meet their basic needs within their biome. The students will explore, through research, three different biomes of Africa and how they are interconnected to the botanical and zoological species that adapt within them. The biomes being studied are the tropical forest, grassland, and desert. Human cultures and indigenous tribes are presented in the context of their relationship to the biosphere. The tribes being studied are the Maasai of the grassland, the !Kung of the desert, and the Efe of the tropical forest. By studying the different biomes within the continent, the students will develop a strong understanding of how life adapts to different conditions found within the biomes.

Keywords: Montessori, Cosmic Curriculum, Africa, biome, grassland, desert, tropical forest, indigenous, Efe, !Kung, Maasai

This unit was developed for a Lower Elementary first, second, and third grade Montessori classroom.

(Developed for Montessori Cultures, Social Studies, and Science, grades 1-3; recommended for Science and Social Studies, Elementary grades, and Montessori Cultures, Lower Elementary grades)

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