Title of Lesson: ***Marketing a Bad Idea: Why So Many People Joined the Klan in the 1920s***
(Suggested grade level: 11th grade*)*

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Background Information:
The Ku Klux Klan, originally formed in Tennessee in 1865 as a means to intimidate and terrorize newly freed slaves, was primarily a southern phenomenon during its first incarnation. After reform-minded governments in the South had been overthrown and white supremacy re-established, membership declined. In 1915, a new Klan was created in Stone Mountain, Georgia, but it remained little more than a small, regional organization during its first years. By 1921, however, the Klan began to grow dramatically. Chapters sprang up all across the United States, many in the North and West. The Klan became a national, not just regional, organization. While it adopted some of the trappings of the original Klan and maintained its goal of white supremacy, the newer version "modernized" itself by employing more sophisticated marketing techniques and responding to issues that were troubling Americans in the years after World War I. New "enemies" joined African Americans on the list of Klan targets: Jews, Catholics, immigrants, socialists, and communists. By 1926 the Klan boasted over three million members. It exerted enormous political influence in some areas of the country, including Alabama. Klansmen served in state legislatures, in Congress, and several were elected governors of their states. Due to scandals, internal feuding, and corruption among leaders, membership declined dramatically in the late 1920s. By 1930, only 30,000 people still belonged. The Klan would remain a fringe organization until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s, when it revived once again.

What can explain the enormous and wide spread popularity of this group during most of the 1920s? Far from being composed of a few fanatical individuals, the bulk of Klan members were ordinary and otherwise decent Americans. For a while, the organization became part of mainstream culture, not only in rural areas but in many cities across of the nation. Although this lesson cannot fully explain the Klan's phenomenal growth during the 1920s, it does offer a window into how the Klan marketed itself, how it managed to appeal to a sense of patriotism and morality during a time of great change. Rather than simply dismissing all Klan members in the 1920s as uniformly "stupid" and "evil" people, students are asked to examine the troubling question of how the Klan managed to sell itself to such a broad audience. That can help them understand, at least partially, why some well respected, otherwise honorable Alabamians joined this hate group and how people can be lured into joining organizations that promote prejudice and intolerance.

Overview of lesson:
Students will analyze Ku Klux Klan documents from the 1920s, including promotional material the Klan published, as well as a photograph of a Klan meeting. Two of these documents are from the Alabama Department of Archives and History. The essential questions students will use throughout this lesson are:

- How did the Klan present itself to the public? What kind of message did it try to convey and how?
- Why do you think KKK membership appealed to so many Alabamians (and Americans living in other states) in the 1920s? What fears and concerns did the organization address?
- What Klan activities in the 1920s revealed its true nature?

Answering those questions will force students to learn more about postwar cultural, social, and economic conflicts in America (increasing number of immigrants, changing social mores, etc.); to recognize that the Klan of the 1920s used relatively subtle and sophisticated propaganda techniques (appealing to a love of country and respect for the law); to acknowledge that many ordinary, otherwise decent people joined the Klan in the 1920s; and to research the actions of the Klan during the 1920s.

At the end of the lesson, students will create a collage that demonstrates both why people joined the Klan in the 1920s and why they should not have.

Content Standards

***Alabama Course of Study:* Social Studies** (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)
Eleventh Grade: Content Standards 5 and 6, p. 77

***National Standards for History,* 1996**
Standards in Historical Thinking
Standard 3: The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation.
B. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.
G. Consider multiple perspectives in the records of human experience by demonstrating how their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears influenced individual and group behaviors
Standard 4: The student conducts historical research:
C. Interrogate historical data by determining by whom and when it was created; testing the data source for its credibility, authority, and authenticity; and detecting and evaluating bias, distortion, and propaganda by omission, suppression or invention of fact.

Standards in American History for Grades 5-12
Era 7, Standard 3: How the United States changed from the end of WWI to the eve of the Great Depression.
A. The student understands social tensions and their consequences in the postwar era; therefore, the student is able to: (7-12) Examine rising racial tensions, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, and the emergence of Garveyism.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, (Bulletin 111, 2010)
Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Primary Learning Objective(s):
The student will learn:

- More about America's problems and issues during the 1920s and how those related to the rise of the Klan
- What propaganda techniques the Klan used to promote itself
- The extent of Klan popularity during the 1920s, not only in the South, but throughout the nation
- Reasons ordinary, middle class people joined the Klan
- What the Klan did
- How to contrast (in a creative way) the abstract appeal of the Klan with the brutality of its actions

Time allotted: 120 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

- Student handout used in the "Engagement/Motivation Activity" (Attached)
- Official Klan Document which includes the article "What Does the Klan Give You?" (It is found in the middle column of page 8)
- Five documents to be analyzed by groups:
    1. Flyer: The Ku Klux Klan: What It Stands For, What It Stands Against
    2. Photo: Ku Klux Klan Rally Day at the Opelika District Fair
    3. Excerpts from "Klansman's Manual of 1925"
    4. Additional Excerpts from "Klansman's Manual of 1925"
    5. Additional Excerpts from "Klansman's Manual of 1925"
- Collage Assignment and Rubric

Technological Resources:

- The University of Houston hosts an online textbook called "Digital History." It includes a variety of resources for educators. Of particular interest to this assignment is their one-page summary of the Klan during the 1920s.
- The Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, maintains a website that includes a "Hate Map" which shows how many hate groups exist across the nation. If you select a particular state, you will then see a map of that state, a list of the hate groups operating within the state, and an indication of where they are located.
- The Alabama Department of Archives and History provides a link to "Alabama Moments in American History. "The "20th Century Ku Klux Klan in Alabama" unit includes primary sources and suggested activities.

Background/Preparation:

- Students should have background knowledge about the original Klan and its function in the South during Reconstruction (to reestablish white supremacy). The Encyclopedia of Alabama has an excellent article on the KKK during the Reconstruction Era and on Segregation (Jim Crow).
- Students should already have begun their study of the 1920s but **preferably not encountered information about the rise of the Klan during this time period**

Procedures/Activities:

Engagement/Motivation Activity:

- Ask students to name some of the organizations to which they or their parents belong (clubs, churches, civic organizations, etc.). Then ask them to identify and explain some of the reasons people join organizations like the ones they mentioned. (A chance to meet new people and network; a sense of belonging; an opportunity to learn and become better informed, social connections that might help them economically, politically or socially; an opportunity to serve or advance a cause they believe is important, etc.).
- Have students form groups of 2-3. Tell them that each group will be given a list of benefits one organization claimed to offer its members. Distribute copies of this document and instruct students to read the list and answer all the questions. **(The document you're giving to students is a slightly altered version of a brief article that appeared in an official Klan publication in 1926. The word "Klan" has been deleted so that students will have to read this text closely and completely before drawing conclusions.)**

- Allow time for the groups to finish the sheet.

Step 1	Poll all the groups to see how many would have joined this organization, based on its list of benefits. Put that total on the board. Write the words "would join" and "wouldn't join" on the board and then ask students: Which benefits did they put under which heading and why? Conduct a discussion, urging students to explain their reasoning.
Step 2	Show students the original article (entitled "What Does the Klan Give You?" and found in the middle column on page 8). Ask them if they are surprised to learn the Klan authored this article. Why or why not? (If you have time, you could show them other articles.)
Step 3	Tell students that by the mid-1920s, between three and four million people belonged to the Klan (the official number varies). The organization was no longer confined to the South. Klan groups sprang up all over the country. In fact, the KKK enjoyed its greatest support in Texas, Indiana, and Ohio. Somehow, millions of white Americans across the nation convinced themselves that joining the Klan was a "good" idea. The point of this lesson is not to approve of the Klan or admire the people who joined…it's to try to put ourselves back into the 1920s and understand how the Klan could have garnered so much main stream public support. Write the first essential question for this lesson on the board: **How did the Klan present itself to the public in the 1920s? What kind of messages did it try to convey and how?**
Step 4	Divide students into five groups. Distribute to each group one of the five documents. (Print off enough copies of the documents so that each student can have his or her own.) Tell students to examine their document closely and write down an answer to question # 1, referring to specifics within the document their group was examining.
Step 5	Conduct a whole-class discussion and display copies of all the documents as they are referenced. Encourage students to acknowledge that most of the messages conveyed in these documents could be construed as positive. Press them to explain (in their own words) the nature of the appeal and how exactly their document achieved that effect. Insist that students cite specifics from the document they examined. Also, ask the class to identify any negative or questionable messages.
Step 6	Have students copy essential question # 2: **Why do you think KKK membership appealed to so many Alabamians (and Americans living in other states) in the 1920s? What fears and concerns did the organization address?** Using their text for reference, have students review the material related to the 1920s. Tell them that as they read, they are to generate: a) a list of historical events and developments that might help answer this essential question and b) a list of specific fears and concerns some people had that related to those events and developments. Most textbooks mention the growth of the Klan and some try to explain its rapid growth, so students shouldn't find this assignment impossible. Insist, however, that students not copy explanations from the book.

	At the very least, what they say should be in their own words.
Step 7	Process students' answers to essential question # 2.
Step 8	Distribute the instruction sheet for the collage assignment, along with the grading rubric. Answer any questions students have.

Assessment Strategies:

- Use the rubric to evaluate students' collages.

Extension:

- Students could research propaganda techniques and determine which ones the Klan employed. Later on, they could apply that knowledge to Nazi propaganda during the 1930s.

DOCUMENT # 3
Klansman's Manual (1925)

THE ORDER

III. Its Nature

1. *Patriotic.* One of the paramount purposes of this order is to "exemplify a pure patriotism toward our country." Every Klansman is taught from the beginning of his connection with the movement that it is his duty "to be patriotic toward our country."

2. Military. This characteristic feature applies to its form of organization and its method of operations. It is so organized on a military plan that the whole power of the whole order, or of any part of it, may be used in quick, united action for the execution of the purposes of the order.

3. Benevolent. This means that the movement is also committed to a program of sacrificial service for the benefit of others. As a benevolent institution, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan must give itself to the task of relieving and helping the suffering and distressed, the unfortunate and oppressed.

4. Ritualistic. In common with other orders, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan confers ritualistic degrees and obligations, and commits its grips, signs, words, and other secret work to those persons who so meet its requirements as to find membership in the order. The ritualistic devices become the ceremonial ties that bind Klansmen to one another.

5. Social. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan endeavors to unite in companionable relationship and congenial association those men who possess the essential qualifications for membership. It is so designed that kinship of race, belief, spirit, character, and purpose will engender a real, vital, and enduring fellowship among Klansmen.

6. Fraternal. The order is designed to be a real brotherhood. Klansmen have committed themselves to the practice of Klannishness toward fellow-Klansmen." By this commitment they have agreed to treat one another as brothers. Fraternal love has become the bond of union. And this requires the development of such a spirit of active good will as will impel every Klansman to seek to promote the wellbeing of his fellow-Klansmen "socially, physically, morally, and vocationally."

DOCUMENT # 4

Klansman's Manual (1925)

Excerpts from the Original Electronic Text archived at the Center for History and New Media.

OBJECTS AND PURPOSES (ARTICLE II, THE CONSTITUTION)

II. Cultural

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is a movement devoting itself to the needed task of developing a genuine spirit of American patriotism. Klansmen are to be examples of pure patriotism. They are to organize the patriotic sentiment of native-born white, Protestant Americans for the defense of distinctively American institutions. Klansmen are dedicated to the principle that America shall be made American through the promulgation of American doctrines, the dissemination of American ideals, the creation of wholesome American sentiment, the preservation of American institutions.

IV. Beneficent

"To relieve the injured and the oppressed; to succor the suffering and unfortunate, especially widows and orphans."

The supreme pattern for all true Klansmen is their Criterion of Character, Jesus Christ, "who went about doing good." The movement accepts the full Christian program of unselfish helpfulness, and will seek to carry it on in the manner commanded by the one Master of Men, Christ Jesus.

V. Protective

1. The Home. "To shield the sanctity of the home." The American home is fundamental to all that is best in life, in society, in church, and in the nation. It is the most sacred of human institutions. Its sanctity is to be preserved, its interests are to be safeguarded, and its well-being is to be promoted. Every influence that seeks to disrupt the home must itself be destroyed. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan would protect the home by promoting whatever would make for its stability, its betterment, its safety, and its inviolability.

2. Womanhood. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan declares that it is committed to "the sacred duty of protecting womanhood"; and announces that one of its purposes is "to shield . . . the chastity of womanhood." The degradation of women is a violation of the sacredness of human personality, a sin against the race, a crime against society, a menace to our country, and a prostitution of all that is best, and noblest, and highest in life. No race, or society, or country, can rise higher than its womanhood.

3. The Helpless. "To protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenseless from the indignities, wrongs, and outrages of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal." Children, the disabled, and other helpless ones are to know the protective, sheltering arms of the Klan.

4. American Interests. "To protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, and all laws passed in conformity thereto, and to protect the states and the people thereof from all invasion of their right from any source whatsoever.

DOCUMENT # 5

Klansman's Manual (1925)

Excerpts from the Original Electronic Text archived at the Center for History and New Media.

VI. Racial

"To maintain forever white supremacy." "To maintain forever the God- given supremacy of the white race."

Every Klansman has unqualifiedly affirmed that he will "faithfully strive for the eternal maintenance of white supremacy."

IV. Klannishness

1. *Social:* A true Klansman will not injure a fellow Klansman. He will not slander him. He will not defraud a Klansman.

2 Physical: Every Klansman is pledged to go at any time without hesitation to the assistance or rescue of a Klansman in any way. With uplifted hand, every Klansman has committed himself; "at his call I will answer." The Klansman is sworn to be Klannish toward Klansmen in all things honorable.

3 Fraternal: The True Klansman will not permit his Klan or his order to be injured, either by himself or by others.

4 Civic and Patriotic:

(a) Every true Klansman is loyally patriotic. This means he is devoted to:

(1) The government of the United States of America.
(2) His state.
(3) His flag.
(4) The Constitution of the United States.
(5) Constitutional laws.
(6) Law enforcement.

(b) The true Klansman is pledged to absolute devotion to American principles. Before the sacred altar of the Klan, face to face with the Stars and Stripes, and beneath the holy light of the Fiery Cross, he pledged himself in these words; "I swear that I will most zealously and valiantly shield and preserve, by any and all justifiable means and methods, the sacred Constitutional rights and privileges of . . ."

1 Free public schools.
2 Free speech and free press.
3 Separation of church and state.

WHAT THIS ORGANIZATION SAYS IT GIVES ITS MEMBERS

1. It gives you an organization which is putting into operation the beautiful things taught by most social organizations---and has accomplished, for the welfare of America, that which most other organizations have not
2. It gives you the facts, figures and statistics which are impossible to secure through other channels.
3. It gives you the religious and social affiliations (connections) of men seeking public office.
4. It gives you the opportunity to serve your city, county, state and nation by furnishing you with information which enables you to go to the polls and vote intelligently.
5. It gives you light on the men you send to Washington, D. C., to represent the people. You can then really know whether they represent the people or certain favored interests.
6. It gives you information direct from Washington, D. C. relative to important measures and bills coming before Congress.
7. It gives you facts regarding the activities of the Roman Catholic Church in connection with our free public schools, our army, our navy, and our postal department.
8. It gives you information about Europe which the daily press does not dare print.
9. It gives you and your community an organization composed of real Americans who have sworn to uphold the laws and to protect American Institutions.
10. The organization is giving you better service day to day as we become better organized.

DIRECTIONS:

- Read each numbered item out loud. Determine what you think the words are saying. Write down any questions you can't answer as a group. We can discuss these.
- Decide as a group if you would join this organization or not. Circle your answer: yes no
- Write down reasons for your answer. List as many different reasons as you can and briefly explain each one
- Which benefits would make you want to join this group? Write down the number(s) and explain the reason(s) they sounded positive (think back to some of the valid reasons we said people join organizations).
- Which benefits would make you suspicious of this group? Write down the number(s) and try to explain why and in what way(s) they sounded suspicious.
- What adjectives would you use to describe this organization?

COLLAGE ASSIGNMENT (AND RUBRIC)

The goal of this assignment is for you to illustrate an understanding of two things, **why people joined the Klan** in the 1920s but also **why they shouldn't have joined**. Your collage must:

1) Be done on a half-sheet of posterboard (11 x 14 inches)
2) Have an original title at the top that communicates the overall message you want to send
3) Include references (images or words) that connect to at least two major events/developments of the 1920s, ones which the Klan exploited to their advantage
4) Indicate at least one positive benefit members derived from belonging
5) Include key words or phrases from at least two of the documents we studied (the quotations can be very brief, but do put quotation marks around them to indicate that they're from the documents, not words you invented)
6) Include images, statistics, or newspaper headlines from the 1920s which demonstrate that the Klan engaged in violence and intimidation
7) Include both words and images

Grading Rubric

1 = weak 2 = moderately weak 3 = average 4 = moderately strong 5 = strong

Collage:

1. Includes all the required elements (numbers 1-7)
2. Shows understanding of the topic
3. Demonstrates inventiveness and originality
4. Is neatly done
5. Indicates substantial effort and thought