

# EDUCATION DAY

CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL  
Friday, November 30, 2007 • Rogers Centre

## Junior Lesson

### As Long as the Rivers Flow

Adapted from the book by Larry Loyie

#### Teacher Backgrounder

The title of the story As Long as the Rivers Flow refers specifically to the history of the Two Row Wampum. This agreement was made binding through the presentation of the wampum, which had a white background with two parallel rows of purple beads. One row represented the path of the canoes of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), which contained their traditions and laws. The other row represented the sailing ships of the new European settlers, which contained their traditions and laws. The parallel paths were meant to signify that both groups would always journey together without ever outpacing each other or crossing paths. This would be the way things would always be, and they would always renew their treaties and keep this agreement, "...as long as the grass grows, the rivers flow, and the sun shines." Teachers are encouraged to allow their students the opportunity to research the sacred wampum belt. Cultural speakers from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory can be invited into your classroom to talk about the belt, show students what wampum belts look like, and further explain how this particular wampum has not yet been honoured by non-Native leaders in

Canada. This could provide a rich opportunity to investigate current land claims and treaty negotiations occurring between contemporary First Nations' groups and the federal government.

The Readers' Theatre piece for As Long as the Rivers Flow illustrates the traditional Aboriginal oral culture where history was transmitted from one generation to the next by way of cultural storytelling. It also illustrates the Aboriginal worldview that everything in nature has a spirit and the environment is treated with reverence as it is seen as a gift from the Creator. One example of this is that traditionally, when animals were hunted, every part of the animal was used for food, clothing, tools, and shelter. In traditional Aboriginal wisdom, it is believed that the animal, as an important part of creation, gives up its soul in order to provide humans with what they need for survival, therefore out of respect, no part of the sacrificed animal would go to waste. Such is the way that the earliest Aboriginal groups demonstrated a respect for the environment that remains unparalleled in today's society.

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## Curriculum Connections

### Junior Lesson

### Based on an adaptation of As Long As the Rivers Flow

#### Language

##### Oral Communication

Use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

##### Reading

Read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning.

Use knowledge of words and cueing systems to read fluently.

##### Writing

Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience.

Draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience.

##### Media Literacy

Create a variety of media works for different purposes and audiences, using

appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques.

##### Social Studies

###### Grade 6

Describe characteristics of pre-contact First Nation cultures across Canada.

###### Grade 5

Explain how 2 or more early civilizations shaped and used the environment to meet their physical needs for food, homes, clothing and health.

###### Grade 4

Identify and describe types of communities in each physical region of Ontario.

##### Drama

Interpret and communicate the meaning of stories, films, plays, songs, and other material drawn from different sources and cultures.

##### Visual Arts

Describe their interpretation of a variety of art works, basing their interpretation on evidence from the works.

Produce two- and three-dimensional works of art that communicate a range of ideas for a specific purpose and audience.

### **Lesson Plan**

1. Teacher introduces/reviews the form of writing an autobiography (a story about a person, written by that person.)
2. Discuss an autobiography as a type of narrative.
3. Teacher distributes the Readers' Theatre script and reads it over with students to familiarize them with the vocabulary, and script, and to review appropriate ways to present information (communicating clearly, using tone, pitch, and volume.)
4. Teacher provides time for students to practice the script while s/he circulates to assist any struggling readers or students needing help to concentrate on the task.
5. Students perform the Readers' Theatre for the class or another group.
6. Whole class discussion about narrative form (autobiography), to identify the purpose, audience, and various points of view in this play.
7. Students complete the graphic organizer (medicine wheel of conflict/character/solution/main idea) to show their level of understanding and personal response. See Appendix 1.
8. Students are given the opportunity to write a narrative using the model from the Readers' Theatre script to illustrate a significant event in their life.
9. Students self- and peer-edit their writing for conventions appropriate for this grade.

### **Modifications and Accommodations**

1. Teacher circulates to assist struggling readers with difficult vocabulary or buddy them up with a peer.

2. Teacher gives extra practice for students who need it, or reduces the amount they need to read/present.
3. Teacher helps students with their oral communication and presentation skills.
4. Struggling writers can write less and create a shorter play or narrative, or make a storyboard of illustrations/photographs and captions to recount a significant event in their life.
5. Non-writers can have the teacher or a peer scribe their play or narrative.
6. Struggling writers can have the teacher edit their narrative, play, or storyboard.

### **Evaluation**

1. Oral presentation can be assessed for presentation skills (oral, visual communication.)
2. Graphic organizer can be assessed for quantity and quality of ideas (writing.)
3. Written narrative or play can be assessed for following the proper form and including the necessary components (characters, setting, events leading up to the problem, problem, solution) (writing.)
4. Dramatic presentation can be assessed (drama.)
5. Art piece can be assessed (art.)

### **Resources**

Readers' Theatre: As Long as the Rivers Flow, graphic organizer-Medicine Wheel, pencils and paper, construction paper or other coloured paper, scissors, glue, scrap paper, Giving Thanks book by Chief Jake Swamp and Oh Canada book by Ted Harrison.

## **Follow-up/Extension Activity 1**

Use construction or coloured paper to create an image in the style of the illustrations in the books [Giving Thanks](#) or [Oh Canada](#).

First, the teacher would read the book to the class, pointing out the illustrations and the use of colours, the foreground, middle ground, and background, and the use of layering.

Then the students would plan out their piece of art on a piece of scrap paper or newsprint.

Finally, the students would create their piece of art using coloured or construction paper.

## **Activity 2**

Excellent teacher ideas addressing many areas of the curriculum for the book [Giving Thanks](#) are available at <http://www.leeandlow.com/pdfs/thanks.pdf>

## **Activity 3**

Use appendix 1, Earth Quotes, as a springboard for students to do an internet/library search for further quotations about the earth. Use these in small group discussions to explore the meaning of the quotes.

## **Activity 4**

Have the students create posters for the classroom about the Seven Grandfather teachings (Appendix 2.)

## **Activity 5**

Honouring our earth. Use Appendix 3 or 4 as a starting point for discussion about honouring our earth. Why should we honour our earth and the others mentioned in this text? Who else should we honour? Why?

## Appendix 1 Earth Quotes

***The Earth has received  
the embrace of the Sun  
and we shall see the results of that  
love.***

Sitting Bull  
Hunkpapa Sioux, 1831–1890

***Honour the sacred. Honour the  
Earth-our Mother.  
Honour the Elders.  
Honour all with whom we share the  
Earth:  
Four-legged, two-legged, winged  
ones, swimmers,  
crawlers, plant, and rock people.  
Walk in balance and beauty.***

Anonymous Aboriginal Elder

***I'm working for the Creation.  
I refuse to take part in its  
destruction.***

Leon, Shenandoah Haudenosaunee

***The Earth is the Mother of all people,  
and all people should have equal  
rights upon it.***

Chief Joseph, Nez Percé, 1840–1904

***Walk on a rainbow trail,  
walk on a trail of song,  
and all about you will be beauty.  
There is a way out of every dark  
mist, over a rainbow trail.***

Navajo Song

***If you have one hundred  
people who live together,  
and if each one cares for  
the rest, there is one mind.***

Shining Arrows, Crow

***The frog does not drink up  
the pond in which he lives.***

Teton Sioux Proverb

***When you arise in the  
morning, give thanks for  
the morning light, for your  
life and strength.  
Give thanks for your food  
and the joy of living.  
If you see no reason for  
giving thanks, the fault lies  
within yourself.***

Tecumseh,  
Shawnee, 1768–1813

**Appendix 2**  
**The Seven Grandfather**  
**Teachings - A Classroom Poster**  
***Wisdom***

To cherish knowledge is to have wisdom.

***Love***

To know love is to know peace.

***Respect***

To have honour for all of creation.

***Bravery***

To be able to face a foe with integrity.

***Honesty***

To be honest in facing a situation.

***Humility***

To know humility is to know yourself as a sacred creation.

***Truth***

To have truth is to know all of these things.

**Appendix 3**  
**Honouring Our Earth**

*Honour the Sacred. Honour the Earth-our Mother. Honour the Elders. Honour all with whom we share the Earth: FOUR-legged, TWO-legged, winged ones, swimmers, crawlers, plant and rock people. Walk in balance and beauty.*

Anonymous Aboriginal Elder

**Appendix 4**  
**Giving Thanks for Our Earth**

When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food and the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies within yourself.

Tecumseh,  
Shawnee, 1768-1813

## Medicine Wheel

Describe the following.....

