

EDUCATION DAY

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

Primary Lesson

As Long as the Rivers Flow **Adapted from the book by Larry Loyie**

Teacher Background

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

Primary Lesson

Based on an adaptation of As Long As the Rivers Flow

Overall Primary Expectations

Drama and Dance

Demonstrate an understanding of some basic elements of drama (e.g., using tone of voice and volume, changing speed or rhythm of movement, using voice and body to convey thoughts and feelings, speaking in characters, assuming attitude and gestures.)

Interpret the meaning of stories, poems, and other material drawn from a variety of sources and cultures.

Language

Oral Communication

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

Reflect on and identify their strengths as listeners and speakers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in oral communication situations.

Reading

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

Writing

Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience. Draft and revise their writing for the appropriate purpose and audience.

Media Literacy

Identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.

Create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences.

Science

Life System Strand

Grades 1, 2, and 3

Looking at how plants and animals are affected by the environment (growth, change, and harmful variables.)

Social Studies

Grade 2

Traditions and Celebrations

- Identify ways in which heritage and traditions are passed on (e.g., Aboriginal Solidarity Day, crafts.)
- Explain the significant traditions and celebrations of families from a variety of cultural traditions.
- Learn information about cultural or religious traditions (e.g., First Nation Powwows.)

Grade 3

Early Settlements in Upper Canada

- Describe the communities of early settlers and First Nation peoples in Upper Canada around 1800.
- Communicate information about interactions between settlers and existing communities, including First Nation peoples.
- Identify areas of early settlement in Upper Canada (e.g., Mohawk/Brantford.)
- Identify the First Nation peoples in Upper Canada around 1800 (i.e., Ojibwa, Iroquois Confederacy.)
- Compare and contrast aspects of life in early settler and/or First Nation communities in Upper Canada and in their own community today.
- Compare and contrast tools and technology used by early settlers

and/or First Nations peoples with present-day tools and technologies.

- Re-create some social activities or celebrations of early settler and/or first Nation communities in Upper Canada.

Lesson Plan

Prior Knowledge

Introductory whole class discussion to address and answer the following questions:

- Who are Aboriginal people?
- Who are the Aboriginal people or groups living in Upper Canada around the 1800s and today?

Mapping Aboriginal Groups and Locations

- As a class, use post-it notes to mark the name and general location of the First Nations tribes in Upper Canada around 1800.
- Discuss how they were usually nomadic groups, and that they did not make geographical boundaries or declare land ownership.
- Discuss what problems might arise when the Europeans arrived and attempted to claim/own the land.

Looking at Images of Aboriginal People in the Media (critical analysis)

As a class, discuss the "Hollywood" portrayal of Aboriginal people (example: frequently called "Indians", savage, uncivilized, disrespectful, and angry people, riding horses, and scalping Europeans and innocent villagers, wearing feathers and face paint,

whooping or shouting out war cries acting as warriors, and living wildly compared to the “European” or “right” way of living.)

Put a comparison chart on the board, or give out individual student copies. Tell students that after the 2 read-aloud books, they will be asked to compare the Hollywood images of native people with the contrasting representations given in the Thanksgiving prayer and the Readers’ Theatre.

Read [Giving Thanks-A Native American Good Morning Message](#) and have the students practice, and read the Readers’ Theatre called [As Long as the Rivers Flow](#) by Larry Loyie.

After reading the texts, as a class fill in the comparison chart to compare media images of Aboriginal peoples.

Dialogue about what was learned about Aboriginal people that was left out of the Hollywood image. See appendix 1.

Looking at Images of Aboriginal People in the Media (critical analysis)

Discuss the negative media images of Aboriginal people on television and how this affects Aboriginal people and their treatment in society.

Discuss who is shown as the “good guy” or the “bad guy” in the media and who is given hero status. Which side wins? Which side loses the power struggle? What does this media image of people tell us about the place of Aboriginal people in society today?

Dramatic Arts/Media Literacy Follow-Up Activity

The goal is to have the students create an accurate portrayal of how Aboriginal people really lived and acted historically. Have children create and present a media piece that shows what Aboriginal people

really did when they hunted or killed animals. Create a short reenactment about the Aboriginal way of living and hunting with the purpose of correctly showing Aboriginal lifestyle and spiritual beliefs. The drama clip should be created for an audience who wants to know what Aboriginal people are really like.

Recommended Extensions

1. Students can fill out a Retell Picture Story Map to show their comprehension of the main events and elements of the story. They draw a pictorial representation of what happened first, then, next, and finally. The pictures must include the characters, setting, main events, problem, and solution.
2. Students can generate ideas, write and edit their own Readers’ Theatre about a personal experience that showed them conserving, honouring, and caring for the world/natural environment (must include character/s, setting, plot, problem, solution, and character development.) Students can present their writing to the class.
3. Students can write a different version of the story from the perspective of the grizzly bear or other characters.
4. Research and present a report about an Aboriginal group in Upper Canada around the 1800s. Include the specific practices used by that group to honour, preserve, and care for the natural environment. Examine who they were, their way of life, and how they used the environment.

Additionally, they could look at how they helped the settlers to survive using traditional knowledge.

5. Research and compare how the Native people used the land and their environmentally-friendly technologies, with the present day methods and negative impacts of technology on the environment.

Modifications and Accommodations

1. ESL students and students with special needs should be given shorter pieces to practice and read (may need a “study” or “reading” buddy to support them in this area.)
2. Students with writing difficulties could have their story scribed by another student or the teacher, or buddy up with another student for partnered writing.
3. Students with written output difficulties could be interviewed by the teacher to test their comprehension of the text.

Evaluation

1. Oral Communication Self Evaluation (examining strengths and areas for improvement as a listener and speaker.) See appendices 2 and 3.
2. Story Picture Grid could be assessed for a complete understanding of the text. See appendix 4.
3. Readers’ Theatre presentation could be marked for oral communication. See appendix 5.
4. Student written Readers’ Theatre or perspective writing is assessable. See appendix 6.
5. Report writing template is assessable. See appendix 7.

Materials

Pencils, paper, space to move, copies of Reader’s Theatre, Thanksgiving book.
Reproducibles: oral communication reflection sheet, story picture grid, and report writing template.

Resources

Giving Thanks-A Native American Good Morning Message
Author: Chief Jake Swamp
ISBN 1-88000-054-7

Readers’ Theatre-An adapted version of As Long as the Rivers Flow
Author: Larry Loyie
ISBN 0-88899-473-7