

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO

2010 Year of the Métis

Primary



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Celebrating the Year of the Métis

Primary

"We are Métis, with roots and rights that extend 9,000 years into this continent. We are neither First Nations nor Inuit, nor are we European immigrants to this land. Instead, we are the middle-ground between camps; the compromise between differences and the dawn that separates night and day. We are not half-breeds, but the children born of a marriage between two very different worlds ... To be Métis is to be blessed with the best fruit of not one, but two family trees. We are not "half" of anything, but doubled. Being twice blessed, we are likewise proud, strong, and determined."

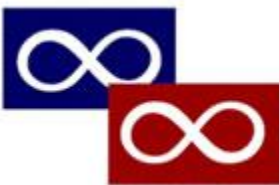
- Terry St. Amant, The Georgian Bay Métis Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario website

2010 - Year of the Métis Nation

On December 10, 2009, with unanimous support from all parties, the House of Commons passed a motion calling on the Government of Canada to celebrate the invaluable contributions of the Métis Nation. As a result, 2010 will be the Year of the Métis Nation in Canada. ETFO is proud to support teachers in Ontario with resources and materials to enrich their teaching practice.

The Year of the Métis Nation will commemorate the 125th Anniversary of The Northwest Resistance and the execution of Louis Riel. It will also celebrate the Métis people, their culture, heritage, and contributions to Canada.

The Métis Flag



Recognized merely as a horizontal figure eight by many settlers, the Métis flag was carried with pride. The figure in the centre of a blue field represents the joining of two cultures and as an infinity symbol, represents the immortality of a nation.

As the Métis were strongly associated with the North West Company (NWC), a fur trading entity in competition with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), they often fought for NWC causes. As part of a gift giving ceremony in 1814, NWC partner Alexander MacDonnell presented the Métis with this flag, which would soon become a trademark for the nation. Today, the Métis flag is still used and carried as a symbol of continuity and pride.

Objectives

All of us have known a hero, role model, or an influential leader at some point in our lives.

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to a variety of Métis individuals who fit the description of being a positive leader, a hero, or a positive role model.

Expectations

Language

Oral Communication

- 1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the information and ideas in a variety of oral texts by identifying important information or ideas and some supporting details.
- 2.3 Communicate orally in a clear, coherent manner, presenting ideas, opinions, and information in a logical sequence.

Reading

- 1.4 Demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts by identifying important ideas and some supporting details.
- 1.5 Make inferences about texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts as evidence.

Writing

- 1.5 Identify and order main ideas and supporting details into units that could be used to develop a short, simple paragraph, using graphic organizers.
- 2.1 Write short texts using a variety of forms.
- 3.1 Spell familiar words correctly.
- 4.3 Select pieces of writing that they think show their best work and explain the reasons for their selection.

Media Literacy

- 3.4 Produce media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using a few simple media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques.

Lesson Plan

This lesson has been designed to incorporate themes that can integrate into the primary, junior, and intermediate divisions. Each grade specific lesson plan may be used to encourage school wide initiatives that allow students to share their knowledge with their peers in other grade divisions.

Background information

QUICK FACTS

- There are about 73,000 Métis people in Ontario - about 30 per cent of the total Aboriginal population in Ontario. The Métis are the fastest growing of any segment of the Ontario population today (2006 Census).
- The Métis Nation of Ontario represents the majority of Métis in Ontario through a province-wide governance structure that includes Community Councils and the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario.
- In November, 2008 the Ontario Government and the Métis Nation of Ontario signed a Framework Agreement which recognizes the unique history, identity, and rights of Métis communities in Ontario. It sets out a collaborative process for the parties to work together to build stronger Métis people, families, and communities.

(From: <http://www.news.ontario.ca/maa/en/2010/04/ontario-proclaims-2010-the-year-of-the-metis.html>)

What's in a name?

Canada's Native people are still referred to officially in three broad categories by government for administrative purposes, and in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

- ✓ The **First Nations** were called "**Indians**" by Christopher Columbus when he landed in North America, because he thought he had reached India. Many now prefer to call themselves First Nations, though many still call themselves Indians in everyday conversation.
- ✓ The **Inuit** are the people who originally lived in the Arctic. Their language is Inuktitut, but it has several dialects that differ considerably from place-to-place.
- ✓ **The Métis** are a group of people who resulted from the relationships between European and Native men and women. The Métis developed a unique culture that included elements of both European and Native culture.

In the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada's First Peoples are referred to Indians, Inuit, and Métis. The Charter recognizes the special Aboriginal Rights of Inuit, Indians, and Métis. (From: http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_groups_origins.html)

Métis Heroes and Role Models

Task 1

In small groups, students will identify the qualities of a good leader and share these ideas with the whole class. Students will then return to their small groups and define what a hero and role model looks like, sounds like, and behaves like. It is important that they realize there is a difference amongst the two terms. (*Appendix 1*)

Ask students to apply their knowledge of leadership by analyzing the leadership that exists in their lives. Questions may include:

- Who are the leaders who influence your life currently?
- Why is it important to have leaders? In what situations? Does every situation require a leader?
- In what ways are you a leader to: yourself, peers, family, school, community, or country?
- How can you acquire more leadership skills for use now and in the future?

For example:

A hero is an individual who is idealized or admired for superior qualities, deeds, or actions of any kind. Words that may describe a hero are: determination, courage, honour, and excellence.

A role model is someone who is emulated because they have set an example for the behaviour of others – usually in a positive way.

Task 2 and Task 3

Students will read the biographies of Louis Riel, Pauline Johnson, Todd Ducharme, and Christi Belcourt and complete a short biography on one to three of the individuals depending on individual ability. They will need to determine if that person is a role model or hero and include their choice with an explanation as to their decision in their report. (*Appendix 2 to 6*)

The following Métis leaders may be used to complete biographies. For a more detailed list of Métis leaders visit <http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca>.

- Louis David Riel – politician
- Todd Ducharme – superior court justice
- Pauline Johnson – writer
- Christi Belcourt – artist

Hero and Role Model?

(Task 1/Appendix 1)

A Hero	A Role Model	A Leader
Looks Like:	Looks Like:	Looks Like:
Sounds Like:	Sounds Like:	Sounds Like:
Acts Like:	Acts Like:	Acts Like:
Examples:	Examples:	Examples:

Biography of Louis David Riel

(Task 2/Appendix 2)

Born in 1844, Louis Riel was the eldest son of a prominent St. Boniface Métis family. At 14, he was sent to Montreal to train for priesthood. By 1868, he had left school and was back in St. Boniface supporting his recently widowed mother and siblings.

Riel found the Red River Métis distressed by Canada's plans to annex Hudson's Bay Company lands. They feared losing traditional lands and livelihoods. An 1869 land survey by the Government of Canada stirred Riel into action. He formed a militia, turned back surveyors, took possession of Upper Fort Garry, and began the Red River Resistance.

During the winter of 1869-1870, Riel, just 25 years old, formed a provisional government and presented Canada with a Bill of Rights that, on May 12, became the *Manitoba Act, 1870*. Riel's provisional government approved it on June 24 and the Act came into effect on July 15.

Unfortunately, while his provisional government negotiated with Canada during the winter of 1870, Riel allowed an agitator to be tried and executed for insubordination. Vilified in eastern Canada for the execution, Riel feared lynching by the approaching Wolseley expedition and fled to the U.S. in August, 1870.

In following years, Riel was elected to the Canadian Parliament and denied his seat on three occasions. In 1874, he was convicted of murder and sentenced to death for the 1870 execution. Within months, Riel received amnesty on the condition that he remain in exile for five years.

In 1884, Riel was raising a family and living in Montana as an American. Asked to negotiate for Saskatchewan Métis as he had done at Red River, Riel saw opportunity to create a Métis homeland, but Canada sent soldiers instead of negotiators. Métis resistance was defeated in the North-West Rebellion at Batoche in May, 1885. Found guilty of high treason and hanged in Regina, Riel's life ended November 16, 1885.

Today, Louis Riel is widely regarded as the Father of Manitoba.

Biography of Pauline Johnson

(Task 2/Appendix 3)

Emily Pauline Johnson was born on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, on March 10 of 1861.

Johnson also used the Mohawk name Tekahionwake: her father was a Mohawk Native-Canadian, and her mother was English.

Pauline Johnson was well known for her poetry performances, which she gave across Canada in an attempt to raise money to support her writing. She began her popular performances in an English ball gown, and would break half-way through the night to transform herself into an Indian princess. Johnson was the first Native poet to be published in Canada.

She died March of 1913, at the age of 52. She is the only person to have ever been buried in Vancouver's Stanley Park, and today, a monument to her life and work exists at her grave site.

In the years immediately following Johnson's death, her work went largely ignored. But in the mid-1920s, there was renewed interest in her poetry. Canadian schoolchildren began studying "The Song My Paddle Sings." In 1961, to mark the 100th anniversary of her birth, the Canadian government issued a Pauline Johnson postage stamp, the first stamp to recognize a Canadian Indian and the first Canadian stamp to recognize a woman who was not a member of the British royal family.

Biography Profile of Christi Belcourt

(Task 2/Appendix 4)

Christi Belcourt was born in Scarborough, Ontario in September, 1966 to parents Tony Belcourt and Judith Pierce-Martin (née Streach).

After a brief period in Edmonton, her family moved permanently to Ottawa in 1970.

A Métis visual artist with a deep respect for the traditions and knowledge of her people, the majority of her work explores and celebrates the beauty of the natural world.

Author of Medicines to Help Us (study prints and book, based on painting of same title; Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2007), and an arts educator, Christi has won recognition for her fine artistry through numerous shows and prizes.

Her work has been commissioned by the Gabriel Dumont Institute (Saskatoon, 2004), the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and the Centre for Traditional Knowledge and Museum of Nature (Ottawa, 2002), and is found in the permanent collections of the Thunder Bay Art Gallery and Canadian Museum of Civilization, First People's Hall. Christi is a past recipient of awards from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Métis Nation of Ontario.

She has been studying traditional plants (identification of, stories of, medicinal uses for, names in Michif and Cree) for numerous years. She currently resides at her home in the Lacleche Mountains near Manitoulin Island, Ontario.

Todd Ducharme

(Task 2/Appendix 5)

Todd Ducharme, a Métis lawyer from Toronto, has a B.A. from McGill University, an M.A. from Yale University, an LL.B. from the University of Toronto, and an LL.M. from Yale Law School.

He is certified as a specialist in criminal law by the Law Society of Upper Canada and has practiced both as a defence counsel and as a standing agent for the Department of Justice.

In 1999, Mr. Ducharme was the first Aboriginal person elected as a Bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Mr. Ducharme is very well regarded in the legal community. This was evidenced by the fact that in the 2003 Bencher Election he received the most votes of any Toronto candidate, becoming the Regional Bencher for Toronto, and received the second highest amount of votes in the province as a whole.

Mr. Ducharme has also been very actively involved in Toronto's Aboriginal community over the last decade. He was the first Clinic Director of Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto and currently serves as a Director of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto.

In 2004, after a distinguished career in criminal law as a defense attorney, Mr. Ducharme was appointed a judge of the Superior Court of Justice. Mr. Justice Ducharme is the first Métis to be appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

Profile of Leaders

(Task 3/Appendix 6)

Name

Birth Place

Date of Birth

Death

Hero or Leader?

Important Life Events

Most Important Achievements

TALKING CIRCLE

By Joe Stone, Ph.D.

The traditional “talking circle” is a very old way of bringing Native people of all ages together in a quiet, respectful manner for the purpose of teaching, listening, learning, and sharing. When approached in a certain way, the circle can be a very powerful means of touching or bringing some degree of healing to the mind, the heart, the body, or the spirit.

One could call it a very effective form of Native group therapy.

The circle leader, teacher, or facilitator begins by passing around sweetgrass, cedar, or sage so that the participants may “smudge” themselves. Our ancestors have taught us that these sacred herbs have a purifying effect upon our total being. As smoke from the herbs surrounds us, we are better able to connect on many levels, including with others within the circle, with ourselves, and with what we are about to experience.

The group leader (or a volunteer) then opens the circle with a prayer. The circle is now in the hands of the Great Spirit, Grandfather, God, or whatever one chooses to call the Higher Power. Next, the leader might have the people shake hands to acknowledge each other. It is a good thing to do, especially if this is a new circle of people. The group leader then begins to talk to the people without interruption, talking not to one person, but to all who are present. All are expected to listen respectfully until the speaker is finished. All who sit within the circle will have an opportunity to express themselves if they choose, or they may simply listen, but all who speak will be given the same respect – they will be listened to.

The Talking Circle

The Talking Circle is used as a means to share leadership within a community or family. Aboriginal people use methods of reaching agreement or consensus that are in keeping with values fundamental to their world view and spirituality. The circle is not just a symbol; it is the model by which their society and thought are structured. A Talking Circle is both a forum to bring all parties together and a ceremony to remind us of the sacred.

The Talking Circle is called for a specific purpose whether it is to resolve a conflict, share ideas, or to celebrate an event. All participants come together for that purpose and have an opportunity to contribute to the resolution or consensus reached. However, it is a process whose purpose may change with the process of sharing.

An object is passed around the circle to show who is speaking. Sacred objects that are traditionally used are; feather, rock, or talking stick. But teachers may use an object that best suits their classroom and students.

Asking a general question such as 'what had the most impact on what you heard today', 'share an experience where by someone made you feel good today?', you can also ask their input on what other topics would they like to spend more time on, thus encouraging them and inviting them to have a say in their educational experience.

For younger students, teachers may begin the talking circle with 'how do you feel today?', 'what did you do this weekend?' or to dealing with conflicts that arise in the yard or the classroom.

Protocol of the Talking Circle for Primary Students

- Establish circle protocol at the beginning of the class, as well as reiterating in the subsequent several classes.
- Creating a safe environment through confidentiality is a critical component of a successful talking circle therefore, place extra emphasis on 'what is said in this circle stays in this circle' by stating this at the beginning of each class.
- Students are asked to speak from the heart by expressing what they feel on a given topic or concern.
- All other students are to listen respectfully, no interruptions, no talking to their neighbour.
- Each student that is part of this process can share their thoughts and feelings without fear of criticism or interruption.
- Students can disagree but no unkind words, thoughts, or actions are added or the whole circle is dishonoured.
- Everyone has the option of 'passing' the talking object, if they don't want to speak.
- As time goes on, if the required trust and comfort level has been established, there will be fewer 'passes' during the circle.
- Establish a signal so that one person doesn't speak 'overlong', such as a gentle cough.
- No one leaves the circle until it is closed, which is the role of the instructor. This may be in the form of a group thank you, good bye, comments on how the circle made them feel, etc...
- For younger students, the talking circle can be for ten minutes at the end of the day or after recess.
- The circle may be used to help resolve conflicts that arise during 'free' times such as, recess or lunch. Teachers are cautioned to be cognizant of singling out or bullying of students during the circle time.

(Material and content from: The Teaching Circle: Aboriginal Perspectives For Canadian Classrooms ETFO; <http://www.histori.ca/prodev/lp.do?id=13159>)

Resources

1. Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online

<http://www.biographi.ca/index-e.html>

2. Métis Culture and Heritage Resource Centre

<http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca>

3. The Métis Nation of Ontario

This is the official site of the Métis Nation of Ontario. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) brings Métis people together to celebrate and share their rich culture.

<http://www.metisnation.org/>

4. The Métis Nation in Alberta

This website is a comprehensive website which provides rich information about the Métis peoples in Canada.

<http://www.albertasource.ca/METIS/eng/index2.htm>

5. The Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

This is the official website of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. This website provides links to events celebration both Métis and Aboriginal events.

<http://www.mn-s.ca/>

6. Métis National Council

<http://www.metisnation.ca>
MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL
350 Sparks St., Suite 201
Ottawa, ON K1R 7S8
Tel: (613) 232 – 3216
Fax: (613) 232 – 4262
Toll Free: (800) 928 – 6330

7. Origins, Louis Riel rebellion - historical Information
http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_metis/fp_metis_origins.html
8. Gabriel Dumont Institute Mission Statement: To promote the renewal and the development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collections and the distribution of those materials, and the development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.
<http://www.metismuseum.ca/main.php>
9. **<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/index.html>**
First Nations, Inuit, and Métis community information, history and celebrations
<http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/ca-fnat.html>.
10. Who are the Métis?
<http://www.metisheritage.ca>
11. BC site on Métis
<http://www.michifmetismuseum.org/Home.html>
12. The Teaching Circle: Aboriginal Perspectives For Canadian Classrooms ETFO
<http://www.histori.ca/prodev/lp.do?id=13159>