

KINDERGARTEN

Indigenous Land-Based Learning Lessons

WCDSB and Rare Charitable Reserve Partnership



**Waterloo Catholic
District School Board**
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education



WCDSB Indigenous Education

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01

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Worldviews that humans have about the land vary depending on culture, identity, spirituality, way of life and even personal connection. Amongst Indigenous Peoples - First Nation, Métis, and Inuit, there is a diversity of Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing across Turtle Island. Traditional values and beliefs may be different in different geographical areas but there are commonalities including respecting and caring for all living things, valuing traditional knowledge and ensuring the land is respected. Part of this shared worldview suggests we are only borrowing the land from future generations and that there is a responsibility to be stewards of the land, to respect and protect it for 7 generations.

If colonization is about dispossessing Indigenous Peoples from the land, then decolonization must involve forms of education that reconnect Indigenous Peoples to land and the social relations, knowledges and languages that arise from the land (Wildcat, McDonald).

Colonization removed Indigenous Peoples from sources of their knowledge and strength – the land.

In order to educate people on Indigenous intelligence, we must find ways of inserting people into relationships with and on the land as a mode of education (Wildcat).

We have to move from “talk about” land within the conventional classroom setting and engage in conversation with the land and on the land in a physical, social and spiritual sense (Wildcat).

We want to be a connector between the city and the land.





What is Indigenous Land-Based Learning?

Indigenous Land-Based Learning recognizes that we have a connection and a relationship with the land around us. Indigenous People understand that land is our first teacher. We can understand nature by observing the behaviour and actions of animals over time (Aikenhead & Michell). These ways of knowing are spread through sharing stories that helped Indigenous People live and survive. Storytelling is a key component of Indigenous Land-Based Learning. Telling stories help us to retain and transfer information. Without story, culture, territory, and language are lost.

Indigenous Land-Based Learning integrates ways of knowing, learning and being, while honouring the spiritual, ancestral and physical aspects of the land. This integrated relationship and diverse ways of learning that Indigenous Peoples have with the land must be at the center – it is not just about going outdoors.

In Indigenous Land-Based Learning, gratitude and reciprocity are key. Having respect, reverence and responsibility for the land is a very different view from the Eurocentric mindset, which is long understood land as a resource and object to serve human uses (Dr. Amy Parent Noxs Ts'aawit, Nisga'a from the Nass Valley of northwestern BC).

Indigenous Land-Based Learning is a process that centers respect, reciprocity, reverence, humility, and responsibility as values connected to the land through Indigenous knowledges – it is a very different view from the Eurocentric mindset.

Land-Based Learning does acknowledge Indigenous history, cultural knowledge, and all places that are Indigenous lands.

Indigenous Land-Based Learning is not recreating colonial constructs outdoors.



Why Do We Need Indigenous Land-Based Learning?

Indigenous Education is not Indigenous or education from within Indigenous intellectual traditions unless it comes through the land, unless it occurs in an Indigenous context using Indigenous processes (Simpson, 2014 pg. 9).

Healing from the impacts of colonization through a Land-Based Learning approach provides FNMI the opportunity for the revitalization of culture, language, and ceremonies. Indigenous Peoples are sharing their knowledge and wisdom with non-Indigenous Peoples. This knowledge is about learning to live a good life in balance and harmony with all living beings.

We only have to look at the state of our environment today to see why this is a good thing.

Consumerism and the capitalist way of life (the western colonized ways are the most destructive) does not align with a respectful relationship with the land. If everyone acted globally, we would not be worried about climate change or clean water shortages.

Changing the relationship that many non-Indigenous People have with the land, it has the potential to lead to a healthier Earth for all.

Land Based Education is Climate Change Education. It is lead to better environmental protections by changing people's relationship with the land. The world is struggling with climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation.

Our urban landscapes are connected to and constructed over traditional lands of the original people. These stories come to us from archaeologists. Rare Charitable Research Reserve provides us with unique opportunities to learn about the relationships between the land and the First Nations Peoples - a relationship that non-Indigenous People can learn from and possibly strengthen.



Why Capitalize the “L” in Land?

The term land is intentionally capitalized in Land-Based Learning as a sign of respect and to honour an Indigenous understanding of place or environment. The meaning of land when capitalized includes larger cultural constructions that signify a complex entity that includes physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional characteristics (Styres et al., 2013).

We also refer to land as the first teacher, to locate Indigenous knowledge systems and culture as intimately embedded in the land and connected to all relations - the creatures, beings of the Earth, land and water, as well as all those elements that are spiritual, ancestral and inanimate. We choose the term Land-Based Learning within these lessons to encompass all activities that are intimately tied to Indigenous Peoples and cannot be practiced without the land.



Ministry Message on Indigenous Education

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students in Ontario will have the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to successfully complete their elementary and secondary education in order to pursue postsecondary education or training and/or to enter the workforce. They will have the traditional and contemporary knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be socially contributive, politically active, and economically prosperous citizens of the world. All students in Ontario will have knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions, cultures, and perspectives. -Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007)

The Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework is part of Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy, which supports the achievement and well-being of Indigenous students across the province. The strategy also raises awareness about First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, perspectives, and contributions among all students in Ontario schools. The strategy is an essential component of Ontario's partnership with Indigenous Peoples and addresses a critical gap in Ontario's efforts to promote high levels of achievement for *all* students.

Consistent with the strategy, the present revision of the Social Studies Curriculum for grades 1-8 was developed in collaboration with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit educators, community members, and organizations in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action numbers 62 and 63. The revision strengthens learning connected with Indigenous perspectives, cultures, histories, and contemporary realities, including those related to the residential school system and treaties.

To move forward on their learning journey, students must have a solid understanding of where we have been as a province and as a country. Consistent with Ontario's vision for Indigenous education, all students will have knowledge of the rich diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, perspectives, and contributions, as well as an awareness of the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing in a contemporary context. Ontario is committed to ensuring that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit survivors and communities bring their perspectives to students' learning about our shared history.

It is essential that learning activities and resources used to support Indigenous education are authentic and accurate and do not perpetuate culturally and historically inaccurate ideas and understandings. It is important for educators and schools to select resources that represent the uniqueness of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, perspectives, and world views authentically and respectfully. It is also important to select resources that reflect local Indigenous communities as well as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities from across Ontario and Canada. Resources that best support Indigenous education feature Indigenous voices and narratives and are developed by, or in collaboration with, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities (Ontario Social Studies Curriculum 2023).

Ministry Message on Indigenous Education Cont'd...

The WCDSB is developing an Indigenous Land-Based Learning space at Huron Park Natural Area. As stated in the Ministry of Education Memo dated November 1, 2023, there are many priorities that can be addressed by the development of such a space.

Priority #3 is Land-Based Learning. Huron Park Natural Area is an outdoor space that is designed to support Indigenous Land-Based Learning. Huron Park Natural Area will be access to Indigenous Land-Based lessons reviewed by Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

According to Priority #4, WCDSB needs to engage with and collaborate with local Indigenous partners, communities, and organizations. Our lessons within this resource have been developed with Indigenous community members as well as our partners at Huron Park Natural Area.

Priority #5 is set to improve and expand the knowledge of all students and educators on Indigenous history, perspectives, contributions, and ways of knowing. WCDSB's goal is to teach students about the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the land throughout the year. Students from city schools will be transported free of charge to the center to participate in Huron Park Natural Area, Land-Based learning program. As part of this education, the Huron Park Natural Area will house Indigenous artifacts, Indigenous resource books, information posters and information from the Chonnonton archaeological dig. Working with other organization such as OYAP, NPAAMB, and the Region of Waterloo, WCDSB plans on building a teaching lodge structure, a 3-sisters garden, and sacred medicine gardens. A fire-pit already exists on site, which can be used for sacred fires.

Priority #6 states that WCDSB needs culturally responsive well-being supports. The goal of this partnership with Huron Park Natural Area is to provide a place for healing. It can be a place where our Indigenous students and families can come together and engage with Huron Park Natural Area supports.

Our Goals at WCDSB

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board, in its commitment to Truth & Reconciliation hopes to bring Land-Based Learning programs to our student population. Having the partnership with the rare Charitable Research Reserve will make our hopes a reality. Creating an Indigenous Land-Based Learning Centre will allow us to bring Indigenous worldview and learning about deep relationships with the land to students. This knowledge will bring a very different view of the land – students are taught that she is a resource to serve human wants, much to the detriment of the living world. This Eurocentric mindset is one we hope to change alongside colonial ideas.

Through our Land-based Learning Center, we hope to:

- Remedy our current disconnect with the land and revive an understanding of the reciprocal relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the land.
- Teach about the land on which students reside and its history – Treaty relationships and allyship.
- Teach about how the First Nation Peoples interacted with the land (e.g., the way they lived in harmony with the land daily).
- Evoke a deep love and respect for nature and what it has to offer – especially in healing.
- Instill a desire to change students' and educators' relationship with the land, which will lead to better environmental protections – a development that could have important implications for our world struggling with climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation. This can happen when you develop a different relationship with the land, seeing the land and animals related to you. The need to protect will evolve.
- Create understanding and empathy that students will hold in their minds and hearts due to spiritual and cultural teachings they are learning through the land.
- Engage with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the design and teaching of the programs.
- Provide a space where children can get outside amongst nature – these spaces are disappearing from our city-based schools.
- Provide opportunities for children to have experiential learning opportunities.

Important Background Information

What is rare Charitable Reserve?

Rare is a community-driven urban land trust and environmental research institute protecting over 1,500 acres of ecologically significant lands across eight properties in Waterloo Region and Wellington County. Conservation is their priority, promoting a biodiverse and sustainable world for everybody's health and well-being, now and for the future.

Everything is connected. As a land trust and environmental institute, rare's ultimate goal is to make the world a more sustainable place. They do this by making the environment relevant in peoples' lives through conservation, research and education in ways that are inclusive of different world views and all forms of inquiry. Through the 'Every Child Outdoors' (ECO) education program, they bring children and youth face-to-face with nature, sparking a sense of wonder in the next generation of conservationists.

Unlike more traditional methods of conservation, rare doesn't build fences around natural areas to protect them. They believe that people are a part of the environment and when we all work together, sustainability is achievable. Through responsible land management, they provide a trail system open and free for the public, while protecting sensitive landscapes and research projects..

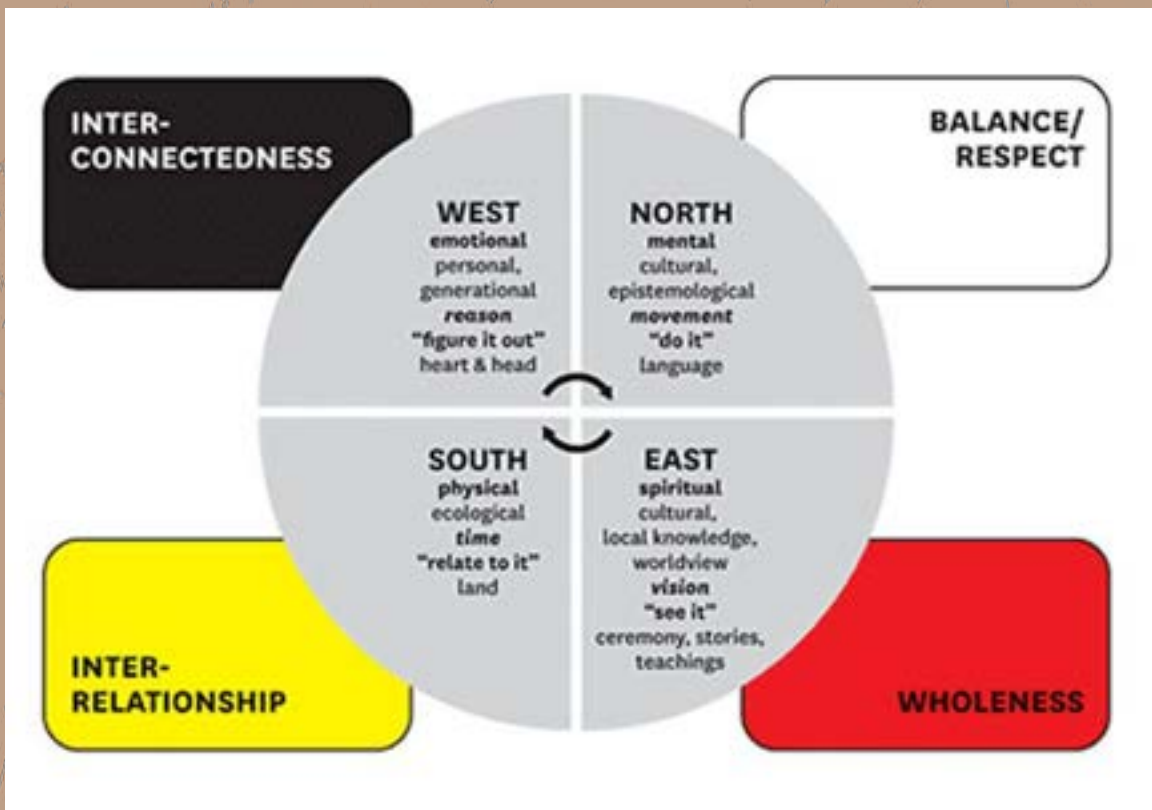
At rare, volunteers and staff, with the support of hundreds of donors and many partners, have made tremendous programs towards rare's vision of offering the community – including local Indigenous peoples, the international community, and future generations – a diverse network of connected natural areas, protected now and for the future.

For more information, visit <https://www.raresites.org/>



Important Background Information

The Medicine Wheel



The Medicine Wheel represents all of creation, harmony, and connections. It is considered a major symbol of peaceful interaction on Earth (e.g., All races of people, the directions, all the cycles of nature, day and night, seasons, moons, life cycles, and orbits of the moon and planets).

- The basic Medicine Wheel of the Four Directions can be expanded to include other wheels. These wheels within wheels are used to explain and examine things that impede personal growth and the development process that involves leading a person to wholeness. (Please note, this is not part of all Indigenous cultures)
- All Medicine Wheels are tools for people to learn about their place in the universe and their relationship to all things created.
- Numbers have always played a significant part in First Nation Peoples lives. Four is one of the most sacred numbers used in First Nation Peoples culture. Many aspects are seen in terms of four.

The lessons contained in this document include all 4 aspects of the Medicine Wheel, the intellectual, the spiritual, the physical, and the emotional therefore, students receive a balanced understanding of the land and their relationship to it.

Important Background Information

Seven Grandfather Teachings

The First Elder was given these gifts of knowledge by the Seven Grandfathers. These gifts were to help the people live a good life and to respect the Creator, the Earth and each other. We have learned how to take care of Mother Earth. In our care for Mother Earth, we have learned to apply these gifts to families, communities, ourselves, and to all beings. The Seven Grandfathers told the First Elder that, "Each of these teachings must be used with the rest; you can not have wisdom without love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth...to leave one out is to embrace the opposite of what that teaching is." If one of these gifts is not used with the others, we will not be in balance. We must remember these teachings, practice them, and teach them to our children.



Important Background Information

Seven Grandfather Teachings

1. **Wisdom:** The beaver represents wisdom. To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom. To have wisdom is to know the difference between positive and negative and know the result of your actions. Sound judgment, ability to see inner qualities and relationships. Listen and use the wisdom of Elders, Spiritual Leaders and Healers. Wisdom is sound judgment and the ability to use good sense, to have a good attitude and reason of action, that runs through and binds the seven teachings together. Wisdom is given by the Creator to be used for the good of the people.



2. **Love:** The eagle represents love. To know love is to know peace. Feel and give absolute kindness for all things around you. To love yourself is to live at peace with the Creator and in harmony with all creation. Love is to feel and give complete kindness for all things around you. Love is based upon affection, respect, kindness, unselfish loyalty, devotion, and concern. Love your brother and sister and share with them. Love cannot be demanded. It must be earned and given freely from the goodness of your heart.



Important Background Information

Seven Grandfather Teachings

3. **Respect**: The bison represents respect. To honour all of creation is to have respect. Showing respect is showing honour for the value of persons or things by polite regard, consideration and appreciation. Honour our teachings. Honour our families, others, and ourselves. Don't hurt anything or anyone on the outside or the inside. Respect is not to be demanded. If you wish to be respected, you must give respect freely from the goodness of your heart.



4. **Bravery/Courage**: The bear represents bravery/courage. To face life with courage is to know bravery. The personal strength to face difficulties, obstacles and challenges. Have courage and make positive choices. Stand up for your convictions. Show courage in communicating and decision-making. Do things even in the most difficult times. Be ready to defend what you believe and what is right. Never give in. Never give up.



5. **Honesty**: The raven represents honesty. To be honest in action and character, be faithful to fact and reality. To walk through life with integrity is to know honesty. Being truthful and trustworthy. Tell the truth. Be honest with yourself, recognize who, and what you are. Accept and act on truths with straightforward and appropriate communication. Be honest in every action and provide good feelings in the heart. Do not be deceitful or use self-deception. Honesty keeps life simple.

Note: The sabe/sasquatch is also used to represent honesty depending on which First Nations teaching is used.



Important Background Information

Seven Grandfather Teachings

6. **Humility:** The wolf represents humility. To accept yourself as a sacred part of creation is to know humility. Reflecting, expressing or offering in a spirit of deference or submission. Balance of equality with all of life. Recognize the human need for balance in life. Know that you are equal to everyone else. Take pride in what you do, but the pride that you take is in the sharing of the accomplishment with others.



7. **Truth:** The turtle represents truth. To know of these things is to know the truth. Faithfully apply the teachings of our Seven Grandfathers and trust in the Creator. To show honour is to be truthful and trustworthy, to tell the truth. Sincerity in action, character, and utterance. Be faithful to fact and reality. Be true in everything that you do. Be true to yourself and true to others. Understand it - Speak it - Live by it.



Important Background Information

Tobacco is the first plant that creation gave to the Anishinaabe. Three other plants, sage, cedar, and sweetgrass, follow tobacco, and together they are referred to as the four sacred medicines. The Four Sacred Medicines are used in everyday life and in ceremonies. All of them can be used to smudge with. It is said that tobacco sits in the Eastern door, sweetgrass in the Southern door, sage in the West, and cedar in the North. Medicines should be used with an Elder, Knowledge Holder, Senator first and then only continued to be used with clear teachings and permission.

CARING FOR MEDICINES

You take care of these sacred medicines by keeping them in a dry place. They can be stored in paper bags or wooden boxes. Indigenous People say that tobacco is always first. It is used as an offering for everything and in every ceremony.

TOBACCO

Traditional tobacco was given to us so that we can communicate with the Spirit World. It opens up the door to allow that communication to take place. When we make an offering of tobacco, we communicate our thoughts and feelings through the tobacco as we pray for ourselves, our family, relatives, and others.

Tobacco is always offered before picking medicines. When you offer tobacco to a plant and explain why you are there, that plant will let all the plants in the area know why you are coming to pick them.

When you seek the help and advice of an Elder, Healer or Medicine Person, and give your offering of tobacco, they know that a request may be made as tobacco is so sacred.

We express our gratitude for the help the Spirits give us through our offering of tobacco. It is put down as an offering of thanks. First Nations People make an offering of tobacco each day when the sun comes up.



Tobacco



Sage



Sweetgrass



Cedar

Important Background Information

SWEETGRASS

Sweetgrass is the Sacred Hair of Mother Earth. Its sweet aroma reminds people of the gentleness, love and kindness she has for the people.

When sweetgrass is used in a healing circle it has a calming effect. The three strands of the braid represent the balance of body, mind, and spirit.

SAGE

Sage is used to prepare people for ceremonies and teachings. It is used when smudging to cleanse the Spirit of negative thoughts of a person or place. It also has other medicinal uses.

Sage represents the Western direction. Sage is used by Indigenous People to make their prayers and to signal to Creation of one's need for help. There are many varieties of sage and all are effective in smudging.

CEDAR

Like sage and sweetgrass, cedar is used to purify the home. It also has many restorative medicinal uses. Cedar baths are healing, and cedar tea can be an excellent source of vitamin C.

When cedar is put in the fire with tobacco, it crackles. When it does this, it is calling the attention of the Spirits to the offering that is being made.

SMUDGING

Smudging is a tradition in many Indigenous cultures, which involves the burning of one or more of these medicines. There are many ways to perform a smudge and different variations and protocols exist.

Smudging allows people to stop, slow down, and become mindful and centered. This allows people to remember, connect, and be grounded in the event, task, or purpose at hand.

Smudging also allows people to let go of negative feelings and thoughts. Letting go of things that inhibit a person from being balanced and focused comes from the feeling of being calm and safe while smudging.



Building Knowledge and Understanding: Context for Teachers and Students

According to the archaeological record, over 14,000 years ago, during the last ice age, people from Eurasia followed the herds of game over an ice bridge that had formed between current day Alaska and Russia. Over the next 10,000 years, generations of these peoples spread all over the land of North, Central and South America.

These were our First Peoples. They settled in all areas of what became known to them as Turtle Island. Their languages and cultures developed differently depending on the environment in which they settled. Where they lived, determined how they lived. For example, those that settled in the Arctic relied on seals for much of their food and clothing. They lived in ice structures as there was very little wood due to the barren landscape. Those that settled on the West Coast had great amounts of wood in which to build their homes. They relied on the salmon for much of their food.

First Peoples in the Prairies hunted the bison and were thus, nomadic. They followed the herds and lived in structures that could be easily packed up – the teepee. Those that settled in our area around the Great Lakes, led a more sedentary lifestyle. The land was good for crops and the people grew the Three Sisters - corn, bean and squash. They lived in more permanent large longhouse structures.

No matter where the First Peoples lived, they did have one thing in common. They relied on the land for survival. They developed deep relationships with the land. They learned from the animals about what was safe to eat. They learned what plants were medicine. They took only what they needed from the plants and animals and always gave thanks for what they took. They built their homes, made their clothing, and their means of travel from what could be found on the land.

Knowledge was passed orally between Nations and to each other. Children were educated by the community. Many groups had leadership structures or family structures that would help everyone co-exist peacefully.

Building Knowledge and Understanding:

Context for Teachers and Students

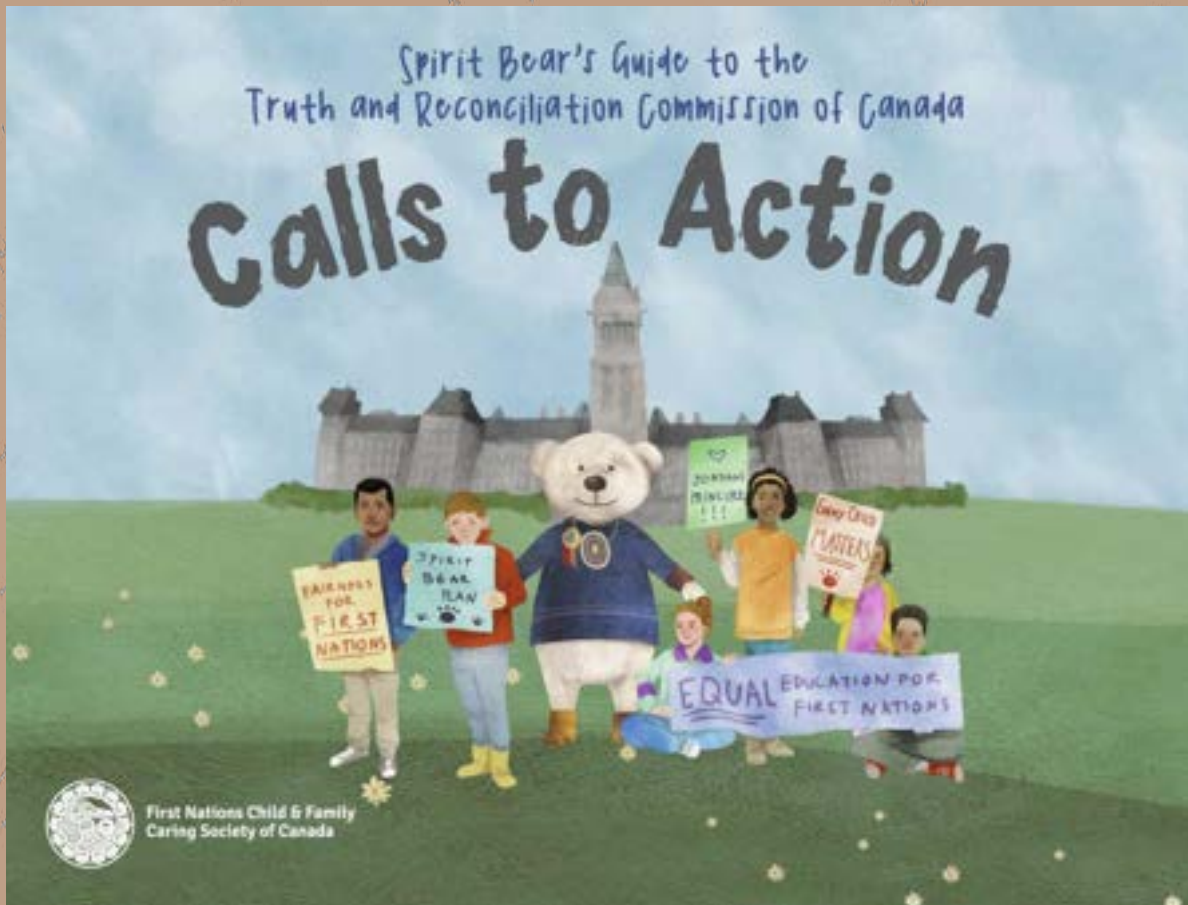
It is important to recognize that there are hundreds of different Indigenous cultures, each with their own distinct language and way of living. Indigenous People are not a homogeneous group. Life for Indigenous People changed with the arrival of the Europeans 500 years ago. After initial contact, Europeans from many countries came to this land with the hopes of owning a piece of it. They hoped to find a new way of life or make their fortune from the fur trade.

The arrival of the French and the English led to the signing of many land agreements or treaties. This was the beginning of what we refer to as colonization. The Europeans believed that they knew what was best for the Indigenous Peoples. They believed that because the Indigenous People did not live like they did, that they were uncivilized and they need to be indoctrinated into the Christian faith.

The Canadian government, once formed under Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, agreed with this assessment and sought to assimilate Indigenous People into a Euro-Canadian society. This led to the reserve system, the residential school system and other rules for Indigenous People set out in the government legislation called the Indian Act.

Today, Indigenous People are divided into 3 distinct groups: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. The trauma that our First Peoples suffered at the hands of the government for over 150 years is still felt today. It is only because of the brave actions of survivors that we now know the full extent of the suffering of Indigenous children. The Truth & Reconciliation Commission has set forth 94 Calls to Action that implore our government agencies, including education to make changes and amends that can bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians together for future generations.

Building Knowledge and Understanding: Context for Teachers and Students



<https://fncaringociety.com/>

The Spirit Bear's website is hosted by the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society. This page shares resources and information about Spirit Bear, who serves as a symbol of reconciliation, equity, and justice for First Nations children, youth, and families.

OUR WRITING TEAM

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The Kindergarten Program

As children's sense of belonging and contributing develops, they begin to experience their role in relation to both community and place.

Throughout their learning in Kindergarten and beyond, children are given opportunities to learn about what it means to be a responsible, active citizen in the community of the classroom and the diverse communities to which they belong within and outside the school. It is important for children to understand that they belong to many communities and that, ultimately, they are all citizens of the global community.

Hand in hand with their experience of positive, caring, and respectful relationships, children develop an awareness of their connection to the world around them. When children have opportunities to make and maintain connections to others and to the world in which they live, they also develop a sense of place, which has a profound influence on their developing sense of identity. Sense of place refers to "the human experience in a landscape" and "grows from identifying oneself in relation to a particular piece of land on the surface of planet Earth" (The Sense of Place, 2015). Belonging and contributing to the social and cultural world they share with others becomes intertwined with a sense of belonging and contributing to their environment.

Children's developing sense of place, combined with their awareness of caring for the environment, is sometimes referred to as "ecological identity":

"An ecological identity allows us to experience the earth as our home ground, and leaves us determined to live in honorable relationship with our planet." (Pelo, 2009, p. 1)

The Kindergarten program provides numerous opportunities for educators to support children in developing an awareness of their relationships with the local environment, and of how those relationships can be mutually supportive (see "Learning in the Outdoors" in Chapter 1.3, "The Learning Environment").

It is important for educators to:

- ensure that children have extended interactions with the natural world;
- engage children in endeavours designed to appropriately enhance or restore land and place (e.g., establish and maintain a native species garden);
- support children's inquiries involving natural materials and promote their use of various resources to further learning about the natural world.

Developing a sense of place and an awareness of our role and responsibility in caring for the planet and understanding our impact on the places where we live, work, and play are consistent with the following fundamental principles of Indigenous education:

1. Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
2. Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
3. Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions. (First Nations Education Steering Committee, n.d.)

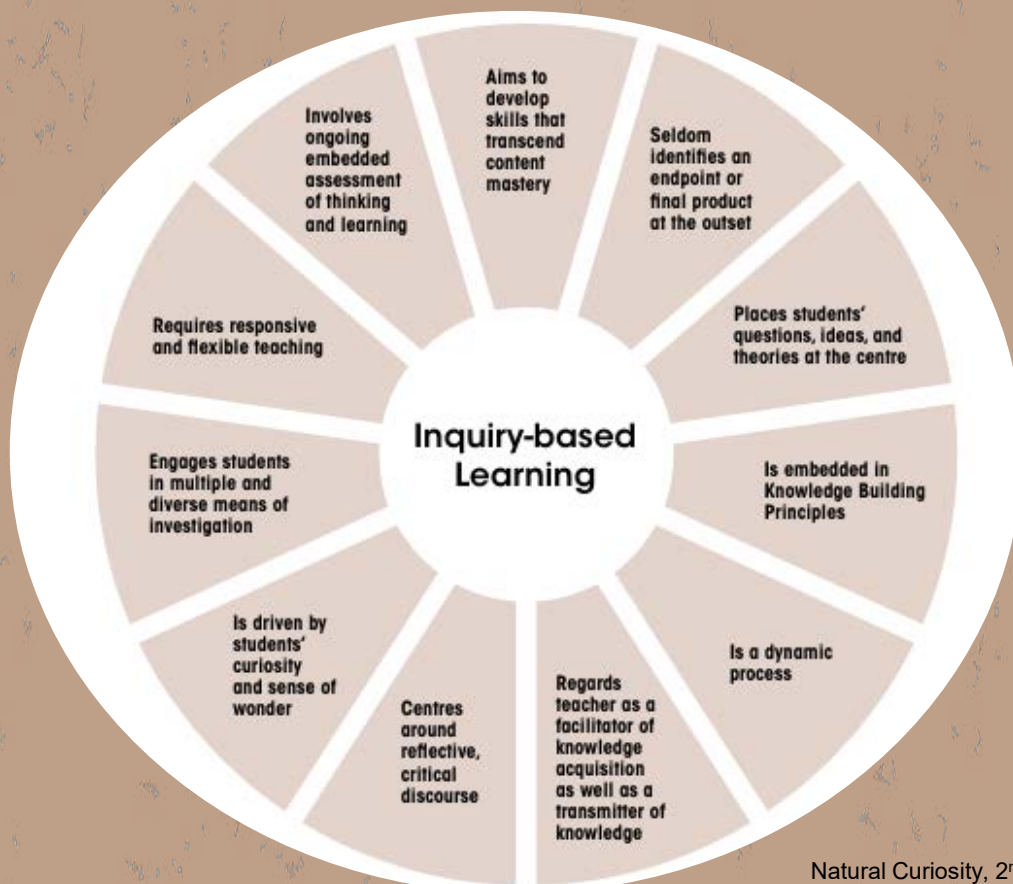
Inquiry Learning in the Ontario Kindergarten Program

“Research suggests that students are more likely to develop as engaged, self-directed learners in inquiry-based classrooms.” (Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010)

Asking questions and making sense of information to expand understanding are at the core of all inquiry. Through its focus on an inquiry approach, the Kindergarten program promotes the development of higher-order thinking skills by capitalizing on children’s natural curiosity, their innate sense of wonder and awe, and their desire to make sense of their environment. An inquiry approach nurtures children’s natural inquisitiveness. As educators give children opportunities to seek answers to questions that are interesting, important, and relevant to them, they are enabling them to address curriculum content in integrated, “real world” ways and to develop – and practise – the higher-order thinking skills and habits of mind that lead to deep learning.

(Ontario Kindergarten Program 2016, Pg. 21)

Inquiry learning is a **child-centered approach** where students explore, ask questions, and investigate topics that interest them. It encourages **curiosity, observation, and reflection**, allowing children to construct their own understanding through **hands-on experiences**.



The Inquiry Process in the Kindergarten Classroom

Elements of the child's inquiry process	When children are engaged in the inquiry process, they:	When educators are modelling or supporting the inquiry process, they:
Initial engagement noticing, wondering, playing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> raise questions about objects and events around them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> observe and listen
Exploration exploring, observing, questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore objects and events around them and observe the results of their explorations make observations, using all of their senses, and generate questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> act as co-learners with the children, posing thoughtful, open-ended questions encourage children to observe and talk among themselves and to the educators
Investigation planning, using observations, reflecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gather, compare, sort, classify, order, interpret, describe observable characteristics and properties, notice patterns, and draw conclusions, using a variety of simple tools and materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a rich variety of materials and resources, and strategically question and observe children to discover, clarify, and expand on the children's thinking model how to plan, observe, and reflect
Communication sharing findings, discussing ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work individually and with others, share and discuss ideas, and listen to ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen to the children to help them make connections between their prior knowledge and new discoveries

Alignment with the Four Frames

Belonging and Contributing

- a) **Connection to Land and Community:** Visiting the Indigenous garden helps children feel connected to the land and the broader community, including Indigenous cultures.
- b) **Respect for Diversity:** Learning about traditional Indigenous knowledge fosters respect for different ways of knowing and being.

Self-Regulation and Well-Being

- a) **Mindful Exploration:** Sacred medicines like sweetgrass and sage invite calm, respectful engagement with nature.
- b) **Emotional Growth:** Children learn to express wonder, empathy, and gratitude for the natural world.

Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours

- a) **Language Development:** Children ask questions, describe plants, and retell stories like the Three Sisters legend.
- b) **Math in Nature:** They count seeds, measure garden plots, and compare plant growth.

Problem Solving and Innovating

- a) **Hands-On Learning:** Children explore how corn, beans, and squash support each other in the garden.
- b) **Critical Thinking:** They compare traditional and modern gardening methods and think about sustainability.



02

PRE-VISIT

LESSONS



01

**Indigenous
People**



02

**The Medicine
Wheel**

03

**Three Sisters
Story**

Pre-Visit Lessons

04

**Greeting and
Thanking the
Land**

Indigenous People

Kindergarten Pre-Visit Lesson 1

Materials Required:

- Interactive Whiteboard (e.g., Brightlink)
 - Access to Internet
 - World Map or Globe
- Drawing paper and drawing materials
- Cards depicting Indigenous village life

Today, you'll learn...

Who the
Indigenous
People are...

Where
Indigenous
People lived...

Words to Know!

Indigenous

Globe

Map

Connection (e.g., to
the land)

Storytelling



PRE-VISIT LESSON 1

Greeting and Warm-Up:

1. Show the following video link as a “hook”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpvNsqgmVyl>
2. Greet the students and ask them if they know what “Indigenous” means. Try to connect the video to the history of Indigenous People in this land (Indigenous People came into this land by walking over the Bering Strait ice bridge between Russia and Alaska during the last Ice Age - over 10,000 years ago).

World Map Exploration:

1. Show the world map or globe.
2. Point out different continents and explain that Indigenous Peoples live all around the world.
3. Mention that we will focus on Indigenous Peoples in Canada today.

Storytelling:

1. Show the following video of a traditional telling of the Haudenosaunee Creation story
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE183rBKRpM>
2. Discuss the importance of storytelling in Indigenous cultures (e.g., Storytelling is an oral tradition that explains things people did not understand. It is a way to share true information). Additionally, Indigenous People have diverse cultures themselves and so the story of Turtle Island will vary.
3. Students look at Indigenous village life and discuss how Indigenous People once lived in this area.



Activity Centre Idea:

Create a “Land Connection” Craft:

- Provide students with paper, markers, and crayons.
- Ask them to draw a picture of something they love about the land (e.g., trees, animals, rivers).
- Discuss how Indigenous Peoples have a special connection to the land.
- Have students share their drawings and explain what they love about the land (e.g., Their personal connection to the land).



Please Note: These lessons are not meant to be taught at one time. Please break up the understandings into suitable chunks of time as per your class.

The Medicine Wheel

Kindergarten Pre-Visit Lesson 2

Materials Required:

- Large Medicine Wheel displayed on the whiteboard
- "When We Are Kind" by Monique Gray Smith
- Art supplies, natural loose parts (stones, feathers, leaves)
- Audio of traditional Haudenosaunee songs or drumming

Today, you'll learn...

What is the
Indigenous Medicine
Wheel and why it is
important to
Indigenous People...

What are
Indigenous
Sacred Medicines
and what are they
used for...

Words to Know!

Medicine Wheel

Tobacco

Sage

Cedar

Sweet Grass

Sacred



PRE-VISIT LESSON 2

Circle Time Introduction:

1. Begin with a Welcome Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUEHiyRDuZg>
2. Review with students that there are many Indigenous People living in Canada and that they were here many, many years before settlers arrived.
3. Introduce the Medicine Wheel: four colours, four directions, four aspects of self. Use a large visual to show the wheel. Discuss how the wheel helps people live in balance.

Story Time:

1. Read the story, "When We Are Kind" by Monique Gray-Smith that reflects Indigenous values (e.g., kindness, respect for nature).
2. Ask: "What part of the Medicine Wheel do you think this story connects to?"

Sacred Medicines Exploration:

1. Show and pass around (if appropriate) the four sacred medicines.
2. Explain their uses and emphasize respect and care when handling medicines:
 - **Tobacco** – offering and prayer
 - **Sweetgrass** – cleansing and kindness
 - **Cedar** – protection and healing
 - **Sage** – purification and wisdom



Please Note: These lessons are not meant to be taught at one time. Please break up the understandings into suitable chunks of time as per your class.

Play-Based Extension Activities

Medicine Wheel Art Station

- Children create their own Medicine Wheel using paint, collage, or natural materials.
- Encourage them to choose colours and symbols that represent their feelings or ideas.

Sensory Table: Sacred Medicines

- Fill bins with cedar leaves, sweetgrass-scented items, and safe herbs.
- Include magnifying glasses, tweezers, and sorting trays for exploration.

Outdoor Inquiry Walk

- Go on a nature walk to find plants, trees, and natural items.
- Ask: “What do you think this plant could be used for?” or “How do you feel in nature?”

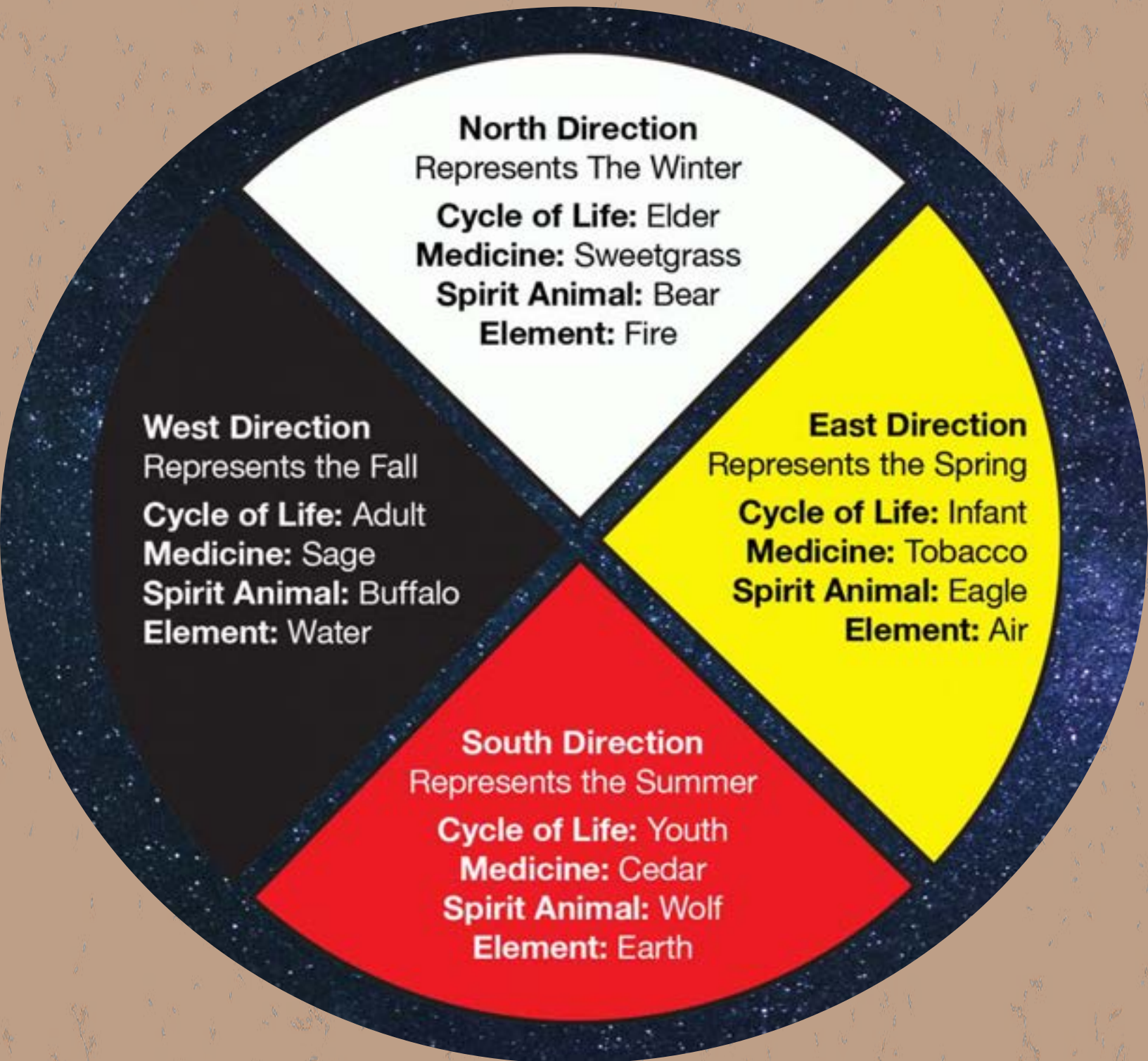
Music & Movement

- Listen to traditional Haudenosaunee music.
- Invite children to move like the four directions (e.g., wind from the east, sun from the south).



Please Note: These lessons are not meant to be taught at one time. Please break up the understandings into suitable chunks of time as per your class.

The Medicine Wheel



The Three Sisters

Kindergarten Pre-Visit Lesson 3

Materials Required:

- Video of the Librarian telling the story (see lesson plan for link)
 - Felt Board and felt pieces
- Real or plastic corn, beans, and squash
- Soil, seeds, and planting containers (optional)
 - Art supplies, natural loose parts

Today, you'll learn...

The
Indigenous
story of the 3
Sisters...

What are the
3 Sisters
plants and
how are they
used by
Indigenous
People...

Words to Know!

Three Sisters

Beans

Corn

Squash

Vine

Farming

Harvesting

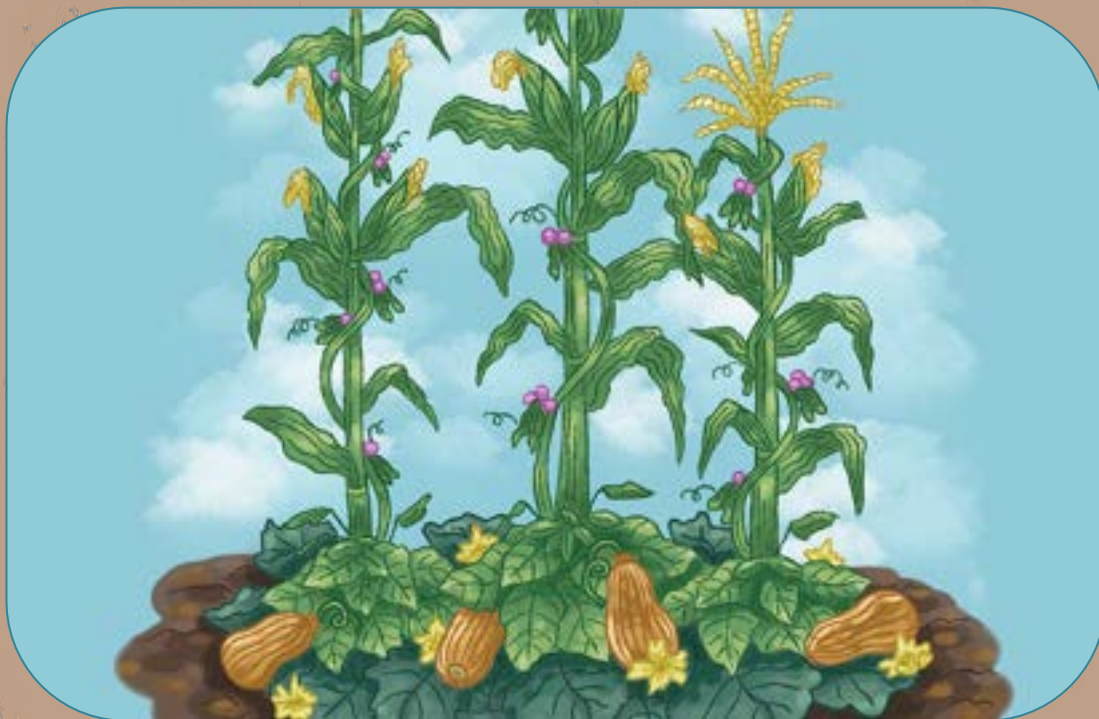
Seed



PRE-VISIT LESSON 3

Circle Time:

1. Welcome children and say the school land acknowledgement. Then have a brief discussion about Indigenous Peoples in Ontario to review the learning from previous lessons.
2. Read or tell the story of the Three Sisters (if you have one available), otherwise use the link here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tv3J7Wsf54w>
3. Ask guiding questions:
 - “Why do you think the plants are called sisters?”
 - “How do they help each other grow?”
4. Show real or model versions of corn, beans, and squash. If you do not have access to real world items, use the felt board and felt pieces available in the kit in place of this.
5. Talk about how each plant grows and what it gives to the others:
 - **Corn** grows tall and gives beans something to climb.
 - **Beans** fix nitrogen in the soil to help all plants.
 - **Squash** spreads out and keeps the soil moist and weeds away.



Please Note: These lessons are not meant to be taught at one time. Please break up the understandings into suitable chunks of time as per your class.

Play-Based Extension Activities

Planting Station

- Children plant corn, bean, and squash seeds in soil cups.
- Observe and document growth over time.
- Ask: "What do you notice about how they grow together?"

Dramatic Play:

- Set up a pretend garden with tools, seed packets, and baskets.
- Include dolls or puppets to act out the story of the Three Sisters.
- Have the felt board and felt pieces accessible for play

Sensory Bin:

- Fill a bin with dried corn kernels, beans, and small squash.
- Add scoops, bowls, and sorting trays for tactile exploration.

Art Station:

- Use natural materials, tissue paper, and seeds to create a collaborative mural or small individual mosaic art of a Three Sisters garden.

Building & Inquiry:

- Use blocks or loose parts to build a garden layout.
- Ask: "Where would you plant each sister? Why?"



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Greeting/Thanking the Land

Kindergarten Pre-Visit Lesson 4

Materials Required:

- Interactive Whiteboard (e.g., Brightlink)
- Access to Internet
- Chart Paper and Markers
- Water in an environmentally friendly container for sprinkling on the ground prior to the walk

(Note: Many Indigenous communities offer tobacco when greeting/thanking the land)

Today, you'll learn...

How to greet
and thank the
land as
Indigenous
People do...

How and why
settlers give a
land
acknowledgement
...

Words to Know!

Greeting

Thanking

Sacred Medicine

Gratitude

Land
Acknowledgement

Settler



PRE-VISIT LESSON 4

Discussion on Land Acknowledgment:

1. Show the following video before starting the lesson discussion:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0Bz408Y5DU>
2. Explain that we are on Indigenous land (e.g., Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Chonnonton People).
3. Discuss why it is essential to acknowledge and respect the original stewards of the land (e.g., They protected it for many generations and we can live on this land today).
4. Land acknowledgements must recognize the Indigenous People who lived on the land for generations, how they cared for the land and specify what we are going to promise to do - to care for the land too!
5. Explain that when we go out onto the land we want to greet the land before we enter and thank the land after we have visited.
6. Read the story book, "Walking Together" Elder Albert D. Marshall and Louise Zimanyi included in the kit.

Land Acknowledgment Script:

1. Explain that a land acknowledgment is a way to honour Indigenous People.

Share a sample script:

- E.g. "I would like to say that I am going to school on the land that was cared for by the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, and the Chonnonton People. I am thankful that I get to live on this beautiful land. I love the trees, the flowers, and the birds. I promise to take care of this land by picking up garbage and teaching my friends about the land around me." (e.g., mention specific things you appreciate)
- Work together to create a short class version of a land acknowledgement that you could say when you arrive at Rare Charitable Reserve. Remember to recognize the Indigenous People who once lived on the land, how they cared for the land, and what your class will do to care for the land as well.



PRE-VISIT LESSON 4

Microhike and Gratitude Walk:

1. Take students outdoors and gather students in a circle.
2. Have a volunteer group of students share the class land acknowledgement.
3. The teacher will then sprinkle a small amount of water on the land as a greeting and thank you to the land for welcoming us on the walk.
4. As you walk, encourage them to observe nature and ways that humans may not be respecting the land (e.g., cutting down trees, paving over the land, littering).
5. Ask students to silently express gratitude for the land, plants, and animals they encounter.
6. Return to the classroom.

Reflection:

1. Gather students together in a circle.
2. Ask students to share their observations from the gratitude walk.
3. Together as a class, decide if there is anything they would like to change about their class land acknowledgement based on their observations from the walk.
4. Have students share and read their land acknowledgement on the school's morning announcements.

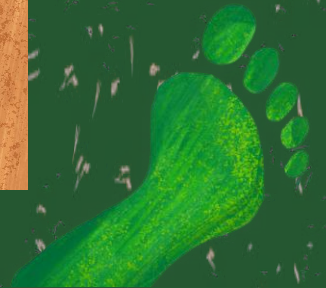
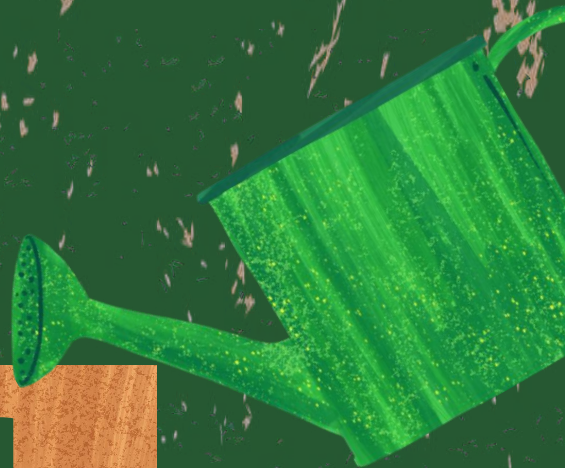


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03

LESSON

ON-SITE



Indigenous Garden

Kindergarten On-Site Lesson

Materials Required:

- Labelled map of Indigenous Garden
- Plant Identification cards
- "Lessons from Mother Earth" read aloud

Today, you'll learn...

To identify
the 3 sisters
and how they
are growing
in the garden

To identify
the 4 sacred
medicines
that are
growing in
the garden

Words to Know!

Three Sisters

Beans

Corn

Squash

Cedar

White Sage

Sweetgrass

Tobacco



SITE VISIT LESSON

Greeting the Land and Thanking the Land:

1. Recall the learning done in Pre-Visit, Lesson 4. When you arrive at rare Charitable Reserve, gather the children together to greet the land.
2. Have some of the students (or all) say the land acknowledgement that you created together previously.
3. Sprinkle some water in thanks to land for having the class visit today to learn about the Indigenous garden.
4. Before leaving for the day, gather the students together to thank the land as well.



Introduction to the Indigenous Garden:

1. Following lunch time, have the children gather together in a circle in an appropriate area (if possible), otherwise, it could be at the picnic tables beside the gardens at rare Charitable Reserve. While there, read the story, "Lessons from Mother Earth" (provided in the kit). Discuss how they are going to visit an Indigenous garden that includes Three Sisters planting, sacred medicine planting, and pollinator plants.
2. Take students to the Indigenous Garden after reading the story. Follow the signs to access the garden entrance. Students can sit on logs framing the gardens around the Three Sisters planting area.
3. Discuss:
 - How the garden is set up with raised beds and trenches for water.
 - Ask students how this is different or the same as gardens they may have in their house. (Trenches capture water here and grass covering retains moisture).
 - Discuss how the corn, beans and squash are planted in a circle. Students reflect on pre-visit lesson on how the three sisters rely on each other to grow successfully.
 - Ask students why there are sunflowers growing in the centre of the garden (to keep birds away from corn as they will be drawn to sunflower seeds).
 - Ask students to identify each of the plants and discuss their characteristics.

SITE VISIT LESSON

Water Cistern Discussion:

1. Gather students around the Nautilus shaped water cistern that is meant to hold water.
2. Ask students what the shape is like? Have they seen this shape before? (spiral shape in shells, art, plants, seeds, waves, hurricanes, fingerprints)



Medicine Discussion:

1. Take students to medicine side of garden. Students can sit on logs surrounding the area.
2. Ask students to recall the 4 sacred medicines.
3. Direct students to look at each garden plot and identify which medicine they think is growing. Teacher may like to pick some of medicine and pass around to students to smell.
4. Ask students to share the characteristics of the medicines and recall the use of each one for Indigenous People.
5. Talk about how to braid sweetgrass - (21 strands of grass divided into 3 groups of 7 strands for the 7 grandfather teachings – respect, humility, honesty, truth, courage, wisdom & love).
6. Encourage students to see the medicine wheel in the garden plots – how it is arranged for planting.
7. Other plantings are raspberry canes, and pollinators and the paw paw tree. Give the students the ID cards provided in the kit and allow them some time to explore in small groups by matching the photo to the plants.



THREE SISTER PLANTING AREA



CORN



SQUASH



CEDAR TREE



BEAN PLANTS



SUNFLOWERS



WILD STRAWBERRY



**CISTERN AREA WITH
OVERHEAD PHOTO**



SWEETGRASS



**TOBACCO PLANTING
AREA**



TOBACCO



WHITE SAGE



**SAGE
PLANTING
AREA**



**RASPBERRY PLANTING
AREA**



WILD BLACK RASPBERRY



A pawpaw tree is a small, deciduous tree native to North America, specifically the eastern United States and southern Ontario. It is known for its large, edible fruit, which has a unique, sweet flavor described as a mix of banana and mango.

PAW PAW TREE PLANTING AREA





**POLLINATOR
PLANTING AREA**



WILD SENNA



**BLUE
LOBELIA**



BLACK-EYED SUSANS



BONESET



**GREAT YELLOW
HYSSOP**



**GREAT PURPLE
HYSSOP**



CUP PLANT

The background features a dark green, textured surface with a pattern of small, light-colored specks. On the left side, there are stylized green leaves with yellow highlights. On the right side, there is a potted plant with green leaves in a brown pot.

04

POST-VISIT

LESSONS

01

**Farming Today
Vs Indigenous
Farming Then**



02

**Growing a 3
Sisters Garden**

03

3 Sisters Soup

Post-Visit Lessons

04

**Classroom
Extension
Activities**

Modern Farming Vs. Traditional Indigenous Farming

Kindergarten Post-Visit Lesson 1

Materials Required:

- Whiteboard
- Include slides or cards provided in kit
- Three Sister felt board and felt pieces provided in kit

Today, you'll learn...

Understand the difference between modern and traditional Indigenous farming and hunting

Explore how Indigenous knowledge respects nature and sustainability

Words to Know!

Farming

Tractor

Crop

Traditional

Modern



POST-VISIT LESSON 1

Circle Time Discussion 1:

1. What is farming? Where does our food come from?
 2. Show pictures of modern farms (tractors, greenhouses) and traditional Indigenous farming (hand tools, natural methods). See included slides for ideas.
- Indigenous farmers work with nature and grow different plants together. Modern farmers use big machines and grow lots of one kind of plant.

Circle Time Discussion 2:

1. Review the story of the Three Sisters. Use the felt board and felt pieces if a visual helps with retelling. Alternatively, volunteer students could use the felt pieces to retell the story for their classmates.
2. Lead the discussion further by talking about how Indigenous people traditionally gathered food besides farming? (Hunting, fishing, gathering berries and nuts) Use the cards included in the kit/digital slides to show images of Indigenous people engaged in these activities.



Image of traditional Indigenous foraged foods (cbc.ca)

Please Note: These lessons are not meant to be taught at one time. Please break up the understandings into suitable chunks of time as per your class.







Ganödagwēhda: 'Dosgēh Gēhō:de'

(Translated from Seneca as "the village close by the stream")



A Neutral Nation village snapshot

The image to the left depicts what archaeologists believe a typical autumn day might have looked like at Ganödagwēhda: 'dosgēh gēhō:de' in A.D. 1500.

Challenging historical stereotypes

Historical stereotypes typically portray the First Nations as having led difficult lives filled with hard work, poor health, and the constant threat of violence. The picture of life offered by archaeology, however, tells a very different story. The Neutral Nation left behind a rich legacy of beautiful objects and valuable data which suggests that they lived a peaceful life characterized by an abundance of good health, food and free time in a setting that was peaceful, social and communal.

A social life, a peaceful life

Neutral society was both matrilineal and matrilocal, meaning that kinship was traced through the female line and that married couples lived with the family of the wife. People lived in longhouses, which were large communal structures. At the Ganödagwēhda: 'dosgēh gēhō:de', these could be as much as 80 metres long and home to dozens of people.

Most of the productive work required to "make a living" was carried out by women, whether it was the tending of crops, the processing of food, or the making of pottery. Pottery making in particular is an art which was passed from mother to daughter. Tiny "juvenile" pots, clearly made by children, are common on Neutral sites.

TO LEARN MORE VISIT THE CITY OF KITCHENER WEBSITE @ www.kitchener.ca/parks

Illustrations by Emily S. Truesdale / City of Kitchener and Emily S. Truesdale / Archaeologists in Paul J. Fiedler and Archaeological Research Associates Ltd.

THE NEUTRAL NATION

For hundreds of years prior to the arrival of Europeans in A.D. 1615, Southwestern Ontario was home to as many as 20,000 people known to history as Neutral Nation. They were given this name by the French explorer Samuel de Champlain because they refused to ally themselves with either the Wendat (Huron) or the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) in the conflict between them.

Over the next 50 years, the Neutral population declined sharply as the result of European diseases. In 1651, they were dispersed by the Haudenosaunee, who probably adopted the remnants of the group. Archaeologists tell us that the people of the Neutral Nation were farmers who lived in longhouses and had leisure time to craft a wide range of beautiful objects.

To visit the site and for more information follow the STRASBURG CREEK TRAIL



TO LEARN MORE VISIT THE CITY OF KITCHENER WEBSITE @ www.kitchener.ca/parks

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THE NEUTRAL NATION



FOOD GATHERING

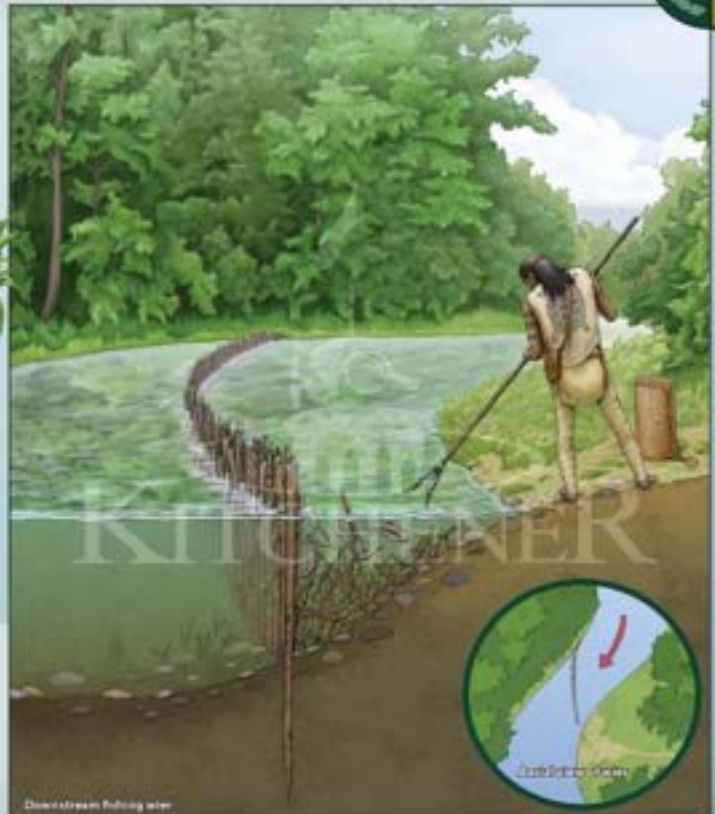
The people of the Neutral Nation were not exclusively farmers when they lived here around A.D. 1500. They also hunted, fished, and gathered an abundance of natural foodstuffs. In the spring, they collected a wide range of plant foods including wild leeks and fiddleheads (see below). Strawberries and raspberries were gathered in the summer. Walnuts and butternuts were collected in the fall.



Gathering leeks and fiddleheads

FISHING

During the spawning runs of fish species such as the white sucker, wooden fences known as "fish wiers" were constructed across waterways to direct the fish to locations where they could be speared from the bank. Sometimes brush was placed below the water line to drive fish to the surface where they could be more easily seen and caught (see right).



Downstream fishing wiers



TO LEARN MORE VISIT THE CITY OF KITCHENER WEBSITE @ www.kitchener.ca/parks

Illustration by Sally A. Hendrix | City of Kitchener and Sally A. Hendrix | Archaeological Research Associates Ltd.



THE NEUTRAL NATION



Deer hunting enclosure

HUNTING DEER

Early European accounts suggest that deer hunting among the Neutral Nation was a cooperative activity carried out by men. Prior to the hunt, brush was used to create fencing that would direct animals towards an enclosure.

Then, groups of men using bone noisemakers, and accompanied by dogs, moved through the forest to drive deer towards this pen in which they could be dispatched using arrows and spears. In this way large numbers of deer could be harvested quickly and efficiently.



Deer hunting enclosure



Deer hunting enclosure

TO LEARN MORE VISIT THE CITY OF KITCHENER WEBSITE @ www.kitchener.ca/parks

Illustration by Sally A. Hendrix | City of Kitchener and Sally A. Hendrix | Archaeological Research Associates Ltd.



THE NEUTRAL NATION



MANAGING THE LAND

In A.D. 1500, the Neutral Nation relied on crops such as corn, beans, squash, sunflower and goosefoot. To achieve this, large fields had to be cleared. Using stone axes, trees were girdled of their bark to kill them. Then they were felled by a combination of burning and chopping before being reduced to firewood.

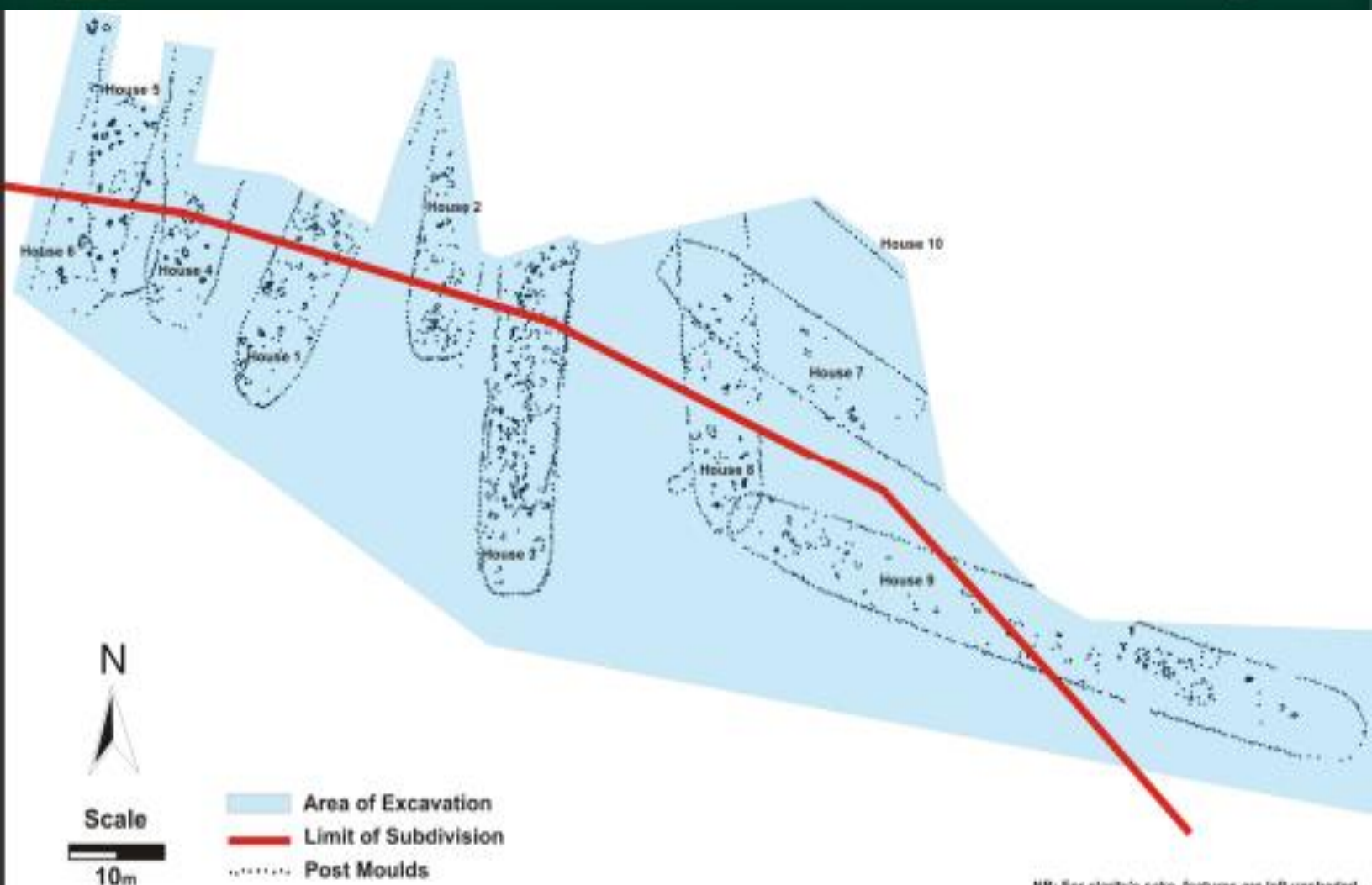


A field might be used for some years before it lost its fertility. After this, it was allowed to return to nature, providing at first a meadow which attracted game for hunting, and later a forest in which the cycle could begin again.



TO LEARN MORE VISIT THE CITY OF KITCHENER WEBSITE @ www.kitchener.ca/parks

Illustration by Emily S. Hargrave © City of Kitchener and Emily S. Hargrave. Acknowledgements to Paul J. Fiedler and Archaeologists of Thompson Research Ltd.





ARROWHEADS AND PARTS OF TOOLS



POTTERY



Growing a Three Sisters Garden

Kindergarten Post-Visit Lesson 2

Materials Required:

- Large paper and writing materials
- Student journals/sketchbooks and writing materials
- Corn, bean, and squash seeds
- Water container
- Pots and Soil (if needed)
- Garden tools (as needed)
- Rulers/measuring tapes
- Materials for labels/signage

Today, you'll learn...

Learn how to care for plants and observe changes over time.

Work together to plan, plant, and care for a garden.

Words to Know!

Garden

Three Sisters

Soil

Indigenous

Collaborate

Support

Observe

Measure



POST-VISIT LESSON 2

Reflecting on Our Visit:

1. Students are sitting in a circle. Recall the visit to rare Charitable Reserve.
 - What did we see? What did we learn?
 - Who are the Three Sisters? How do they work together in a garden to support each other?
2. Invite students to visit the Writing/Craft Centre to draw a picture of the Indigenous garden and share one thing they remember.

Planning Our Garden:

1. Begin with a class discussion.
 - What do we need to grow our own garden? Where will it go?
2. Use a large sheet of paper to co-create a garden plan (draw where corn, beans, and squash will go). Link it to math by having students count how many seeds or pots we'll need.

Preparing the Soil:

1. Visit the space you are planning to create the garden in. Dig, loosen soil, and prepare the area.
 - Link to sensory by encouraging students to explore the soil, textures, smells, and insects.
 - Link to Literacy by having students label the garden areas with signs (e.g., "Corn," "Beans," "Squash"). To extend this, have them make a sign for "Three Sisters" and explain to passersby the Indigenous story of the Three Sisters.

Planting Day!:

1. Plant corn first, then beans around the corn, and squash around the base.
2. Discuss with students why we plant them in this order? (Corn grows tall, beans climb, squash shades the ground.)
3. Reflect with students by asking, "How did it feel to plant something?"

Caring for the Garden:

1. Develop a daily routine for watering, observing, and even sketching/journaling.
2. Activity Ideas:
 - Garden Journals: Draw what they see each day.
 - Measuring Growth: Use string or blocks to compare plant height.
 - Storytelling: Pretend to be one of the Sisters and tell their story.



Three Sisters Soup

Kindergarten Post-Visit Lesson 3

Materials Required:

- Photos from the trip to the Indigenous garden at rare Charitable Reserve
- Picture cards of the Three Sisters
- Real or plastic food models
- Recipe cards
- Cooking tools, slow cooker or pot, ingredients, bowls, spoons

Today, you'll learn...

Understand the cultural significance of the Three Sisters in Indigenous communities

Collaborate to plan and prepare a simple soup using the Three Sisters

Words to Know!

Three Sisters

Soup

Ingredients

Measurement

Beans

Corn

Squash

Seeds



POST-VISIT LESSON 3

Circle Time Discussion and Collaborative Mural Drawing:

1. What did we see at the Indigenous garden?
2. What are the Three Sisters? Why are they important?
3. Using the prompts included, hang large pieces of paper around the classroom each with a different prompt. Have the students draw their version of each prompt as an opportunity for art during play.
4. Use the completed pages to create a mural retelling of the story of the Three Sisters that could be hung in the hallway to teach other classes about the Three Sisters.

Planning the Soup:

1. Show corn, beans, and squash (real or images). Discuss textures, colours, and smells.
2. Plan the Soup
 - What do we need? Who will do what?
 - Create a visual recipe together (e.g., 1 scoop of beans, 2 pieces of squash, etc.)
3. Talk about kitchen safety and respecting food as a gift from the Earth.

Making and Sharing the Soup

1. In small groups, students help add ingredients to the pot.
2. Discuss what's happening as it cooks (smell, colour, texture).
3. Eat the soup together.
4. Reflect: What did you like? What did you learn?
5. Draw or dictate a story about the soup-making experience.



Please Note: These lessons are not meant to be taught at one time. Please break up the understandings into suitable chunks of time as per your class.

PROMPTS FOR POST-VISIT LESSON 3

COLLABORATIVE MURAL

1. Long ago, the Earth gave us three sisters.

Illustration Prompt: Draw three plants standing together.

2. Sister Corn stands tall and strong.

Illustration Prompt: Draw tall corn with green leaves.

3. Sister Bean climbs up Corn's stalk.

Illustration Prompt: Draw a bean vine wrapping around the corn.

4. Sister Squash spreads wide on the ground.

Illustration Prompt: Draw a squash plant with big leaves.

5. Together, they help each.

Illustration Prompt: Draw all three sisters growing together.
other grow

6. They give us food and teach us to share.

Illustration Prompt: Draw a bowl of soup made from the
Three Sisters.

RECIPE FOR POST-VISIT LESSON 3

THREE SISTERS SOUP RECIPE

Ingredients: (Serves 8 Adults)

- 10 mL (2 tsp) vegetable oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 carrots, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic , minced
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 L (8 cups) vegetable broth
- 1 butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 375 mL (1 ½ cups) frozen corn
- 2 cans (2 x 540 mL/19 oz) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 10 mL (2 tsp) dried thyme (or 60 mL/4 tbsp fresh)
- 5 mL (1 tsp) ground pepper

TIPS

- Serve this soup hot with Bannock or crusty whole grain bread.
- Use canned corn instead of frozen – make sure to drain and rinse it first.

Directions: (Cooking Time Approximately 25 Minutes)

- 1.Heat oil in a large saucepan. Add onion and sauté over medium heat, stirring often until golden, about 2 minutes.
- 2.Add carrots, garlic and celery and sauté for another 8 minutes, or until softened.
- 3.Add vegetable broth and bring to a boil.
- 4.Turn down heat and add cubed squash. Simmer, covered, for 8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 5.Add beans, corn, thyme and pepper. Stir and simmer another few minutes, until squash is soft with a fork.

POST-VISIT ACTIVITY IDEAS (Invitations and Provocations)

Farm Sorting Game: Use toy animals, tools, and crops to sort into “Modern” and “Traditional” baskets.

Dramatic Play: Set up a “Farmers’ Market” with pretend produce and tools.

Sensory Bin: Fill with dried corn, beans, and squash seeds. Add scoops, bowls, and small tools.

Animal Tracks Game: Match toy animals to their tracks and talk about their role in traditional Indigenous diets.

Build a Farm: Use blocks, toy tractors, and animals to create a modern farm.

STEM Challenge: Design a simple irrigation system using tubes and water play.

Art Project: Create a mural of the Three Sisters garden and a modern farm side by side.

Storytelling Corner: Invite students to draw and tell a story about being a farmer or hunter.

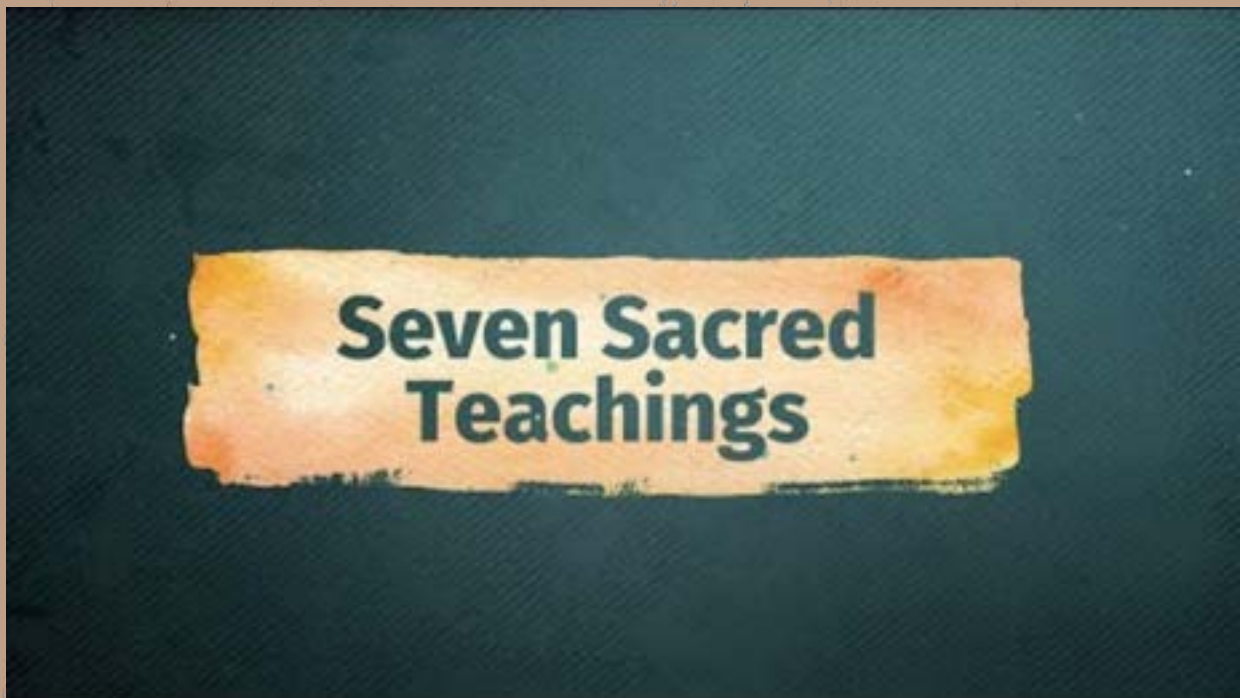
Three Sisters Garden Diorama: Invite students to use Shoeboxes, construction paper, yarn, dried beans, corn kernels, squash seeds to recreate the garden they saw at rare Charitable Reserve. Encourage them to show how the plants grow together and support each other.

Sacred Medicines Exploration Table: (Available in kit) Sweetgrass, sage, cedar, tobacco at a sensory table with magnifying glasses. Students can observe, smell, and draw the sacred medicines. Discuss their uses and importance in Indigenous cultures.

RESOURCES

7 Grandfathers Teachings:

Classroom Videos for the 7 Grandfather Teachings- Primary





THE THREE SISTERS STORY

The three sisters are Corn, Beans, and Squash. They are seen as the three beautiful sisters because they grow in the same mound in the garden. The Corn provides a ladder for the Bean Vine. They together give shade to the Squash. Native people first plant the corn in a mound, then plant the beans on top of the corn planting and add more soil to create a larger mound. Finally they plant the squash seed as the final layer and mound the soil.

The Native American story of the Three Sisters vary from tribe to tribe.



THE STORY OF THE THREE SISTERS

A long time ago there were three sisters who lived together in a field.

These sisters were quite different from one another in their size and way of dressing. The little sister was so young that she could only crawl at first, and she was dressed in green.

The second sister wore a bright yellow dress, and she had a way of running off by herself when the sun shone and the soft wind blew in her face.

The third was the eldest sister, standing always very straight and tall above the other sisters and trying to protect them. She wore a pale green shawl, and she had long, yellow hair that tossed about her head in the breeze.

There was one way the sisters were all alike, though. They loved each other dearly, and they always stayed together. This made them very strong.

One day a stranger came to the field of the Three Sisters - a boy. He talked to the birds and other animals - this caught the attention of the three sisters.

Late that summer, the youngest and smallest sister disappeared. Her sisters were sad.

Again the boy came to the field to gather reeds at the water's edge. The two sisters who were left watched his moccasin trail, and that night the second sister - the one in the yellow dress - disappeared as well.

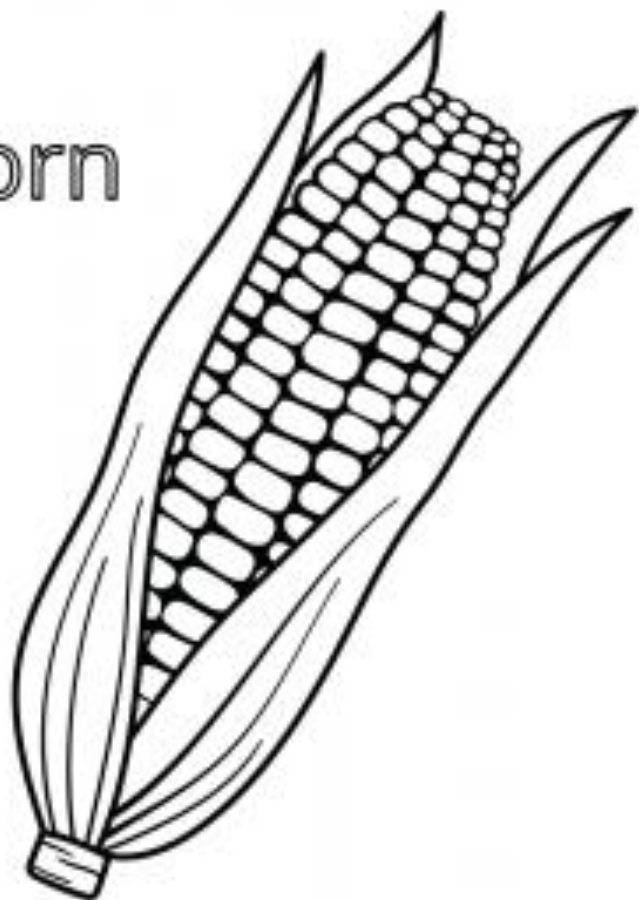
Now the Elder Sister was the only one left.

She continued to stand tall in her field. When the boy saw that she missed her sisters, he brought them all back together and they became stronger together, again.



The Three Sisters

Corn



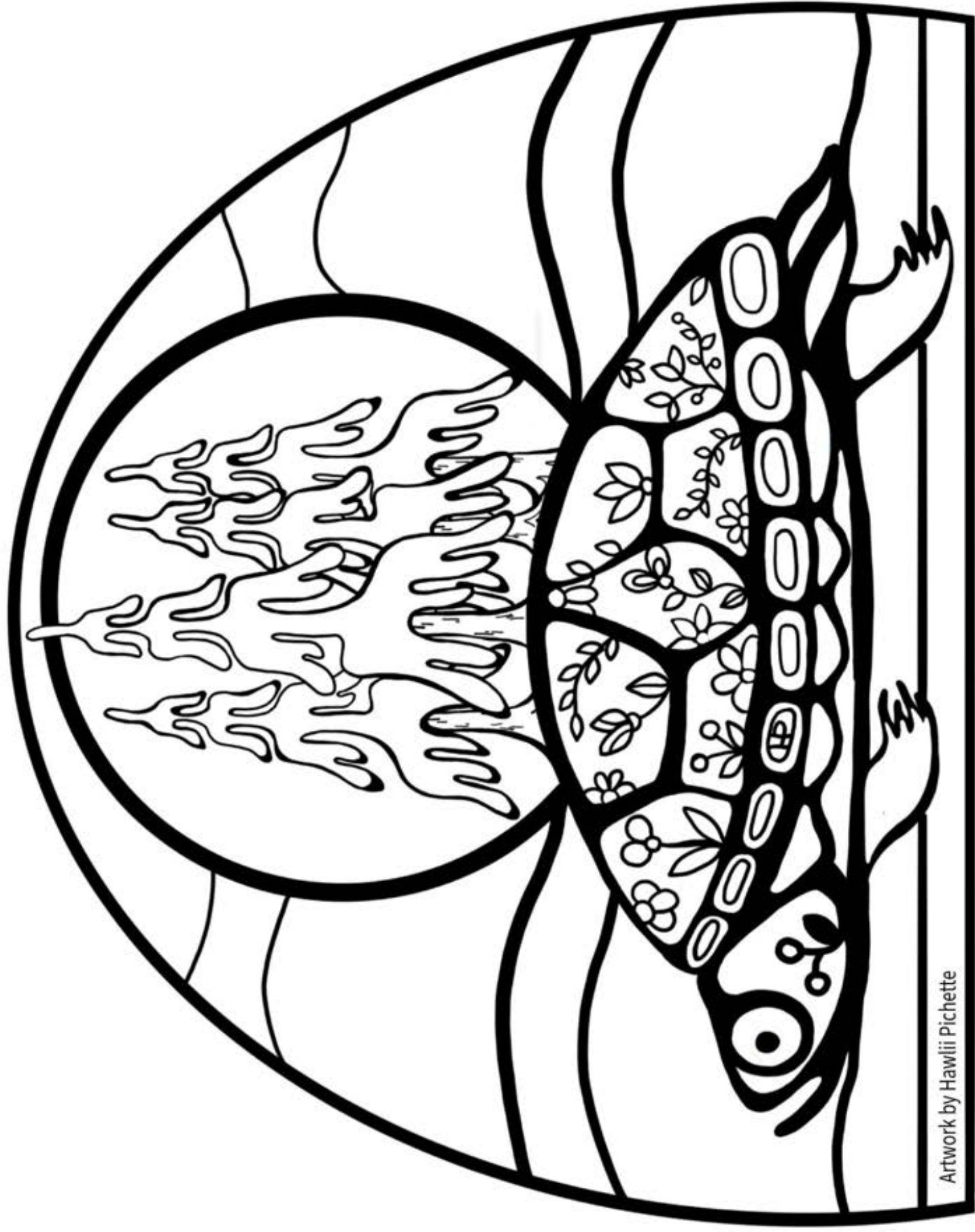
Beans



Squash







Artwork by Hawlii Pichette

