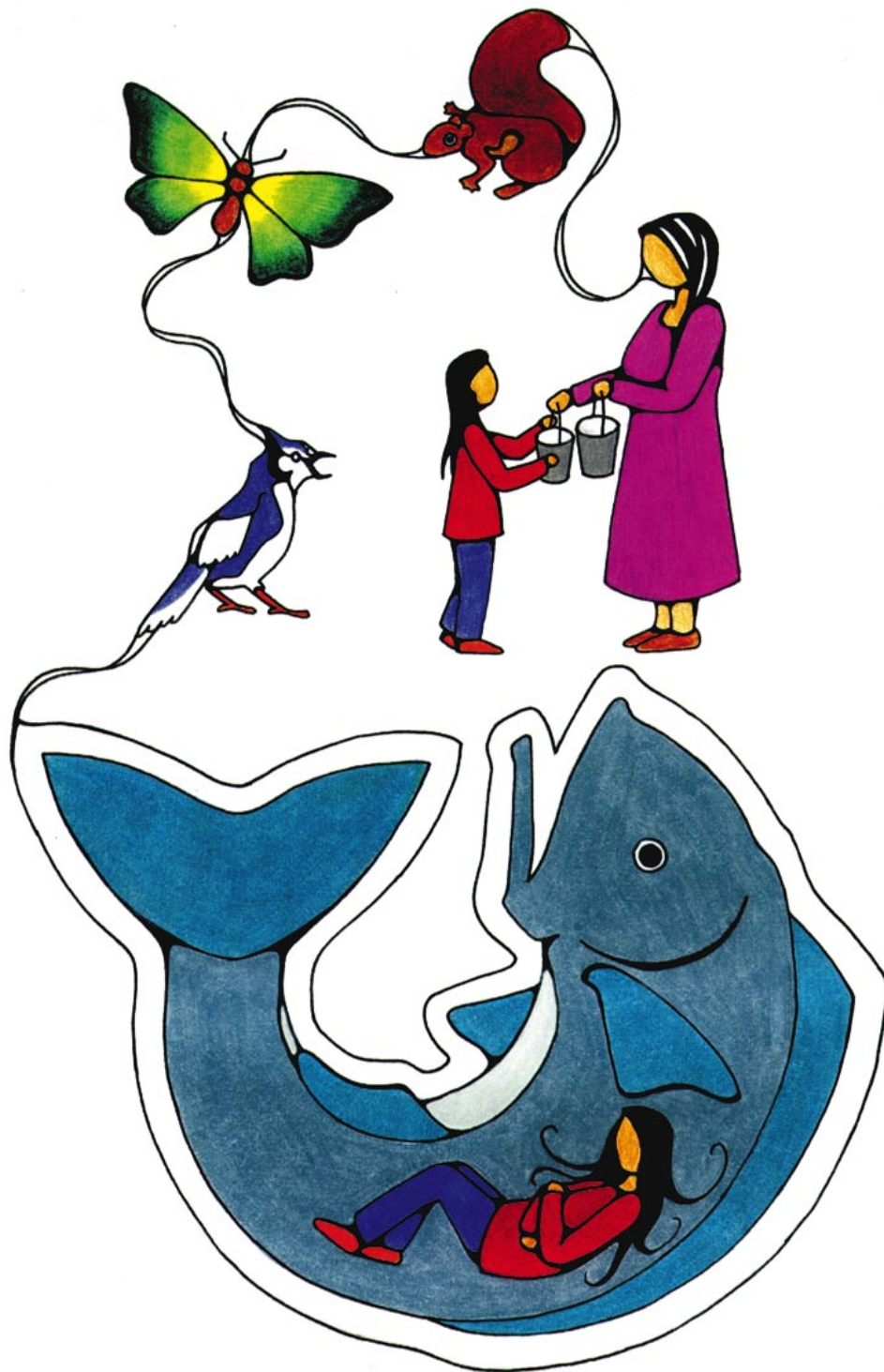


THE LEARNING CIRCLE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES ON
FIRST NATIONS IN CANADA



AGES 4 TO 7



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada

Canada

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S A N D C R E D I T S

The Learning Circle: Classroom Activities on First Nations in Canada — ages 4 to 7

Researched and written by Harvey McCue and Associates
for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Special thanks to:

The First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres
The National Association of Native Friendship Centres

Illustration credit:

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Published under the authority of the
Minister of Indian Affairs and
Northern Development
Ottawa, 2000

www.inac.gc.ca

QS-6127-000-EE-A2
Catalogue No. R32-195/2000E
ISBN 0-662-29302-9
©Minister of Public Works and
Government Services Canada

Cette publication peut aussi être
obtenue en français sous le titre :

**Le cercle d'apprentissage : Activités pédagogiques
sur les Premières nations au Canada —
destinées aux jeunes de 4 à 7 ans**

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Learning Circle has been produced to help meet Canadian educators' growing need for elementary-level learning exercises on First Nations. It is the first in a series of three classroom guides on First Nations in Canada. Because First Nations are culturally diverse, the information in this activity book does not necessarily apply to all groups. To learn more about particular First Nations, and get help with learning activities, teachers are encouraged to consult local Aboriginal Elders, cultural education centres or friendship centres. Some key addresses and contact numbers are listed at the end of this guide.

The Learning Circle is organized in thematic units, each with its own teaching activities. Units are designed to give teachers and students simple but effective exercises, projects and activities that will encourage students to learn more about First Nations. Educators can follow some of the exercises as stand-alone units on First Nations topics, or integrate them with existing curricula on Aboriginal peoples.

Most exercises in **The Learning Circle** can be completed in one period. Certain others will take several periods, days or weeks.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON FIRST NATIONS

Many academics maintain that people inhabited North America some 30,000 years ago, and possibly earlier. This is confirmed by archaeological research. As more and more archaeological data have become available, some academics are of the opinion that this date should be revised.

However, many First Nations dispute the claims about their arrival in North America. Most First Nations origin and creation stories reinforce the belief that the First People lived in North America since time immemorial.

The term **First Nation** came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "**Indian**." Although the term **First Nation** is widely used, no legal definition of it exists, unlike "**Indian**." The word "**Indian**" is still used to describe one of three groups of people recognized as Aboriginal in the **Constitution Act, 1982**. The other two groups are the Métis and Inuit.

There are six major cultural regions of First Nations in Canada. From east to west, these are the Woodland First Nations, the Iroquois First Nations of southeastern Ontario, the Plains First Nations, the Plateau First Nations, the First Nations of the Pacific Coast and the First Nations of the Mackenzie and Yukon River basins.

Each Nation possesses its own unique culture, language and history. Their collective presence in North America does not diminish their distinctiveness any more than the collective presence of nations in Europe lessens the distinctions between the cultures of Poland and Italy, for example. The practice of identifying all First Nations as a homogeneous group obscures the unique and rich traditions that each First Nation developed and nurtured.

First Nations today retain their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. As with other cultures throughout the world, many contemporary First Nations result from a long history of influences, some peaceful and some arising out of conflict. Some First Nations merged with others. Some were simply absorbed over time by larger Nations, and some disappeared altogether. The cultures and languages evident today are the products of complicated, centuries-old processes that shaped the evolution of most, if not all, cultures everywhere.

Although there are many differences between First Nations, there are commonalities as well. For example, all First Nations were dependent on the land for survival and prosperity. All First Nations were hunters and gatherers. Some were also farmers. Without the skills and knowledge to hunt and fish and to gather food and medicines, First Nations would not exist today.

Another commonality is that all First Nations lived in organized societies with their own governments, religions and social and economic institutions. Individuals, families and larger groups of people, such as clans, tribes and Nations, behaved according to a broad range of agreed-upon social, political and economic values.

A third commonality was trade. All First Nations in Canada and North America as a whole traded extensively throughout the continent. Expansive trading practices contributed to the growth and development of First Nations cultures. These practices also enabled many First Nations to respond to the fur trade as competitive, efficient trading partners with Europeans.

UNIT 1

STORYTELLING

MAIN IDEA

Stories are not only entertaining, they help us learn. Stories were the primary teaching aid of many First Nations people, and storytelling is still very important today. For every event, feature of land, or animal, there was a story.

OBJECTIVES

1. to encourage children's natural storytelling skills
2. to use stories to teach values and encourage introspection
3. to have children understand the importance of storytelling to First Nations oral traditions

TEACHER INFORMATION

First Nations societies regularly tell stories — about adventures, ancestors, or different aspects of the land. Through stories and songs, First Nations keep their history alive and pass it on to subsequent generations.

First Nations storytelling has always been a communal experience. Stories brought people together to share a past, to explain the seemingly inexplicable in creation or to instruct. A powerful story might also make children see the consequences their actions might have.

All Aboriginal people use stories for entertainment, recording history and education. As a teaching tool, stories are a valuable way to educate young people about the values and beliefs that First Nations consider important for their members. Teaching stories fall into different categories. Some are similar to fables, with explicit morals. Another popular kind of teaching story is the open-ended story. Here the lesson is subtle, possibly even obscure, and is left to the students or listeners to discover. The discovery story educates listeners gradually. The goals or morals of the story reveal themselves to the listener, as his or her maturity and life experiences develop.

Traditionally, winter, with its longer nights and shorter days, was the main storytelling season. Historical stories ensure the recording and transmission of important events for families and for Nations. However, stories used primarily as teaching tools for the young can be told at any time by anyone. The education and socialization of First Nations children are not left strictly to the children's family or parents. A wide range of individuals, including members of the extended family, older siblings, friends, Elders and leaders, also occasionally instruct the young. In addition, stories are a useful method for teaching and retaining Aboriginal languages.

"The Lily Root" is a discovery story. Listeners are expected to draw their own conclusion, without the story specifying an explicit lesson or instruction. The maturity and age of the students will determine the particular lessons they derive from the story. The character of "Old John" reinforces the Aboriginal way of enabling non-family members to act as instructors, in this case, an elderly man in the community. In some First Nations, the principal disciplinarians were not the children's parents but rather an aunt or uncle, or a grandmother as illustrated in the story, "The Granddaughter who was Eaten by a Big Fish." In the story, "The Lily Root," a grandfather offers philosophical and plant knowledge to his grandson.

This unit is designed to encourage storytelling within the classroom. The stories in this unit focus on traditional and life experience stories.

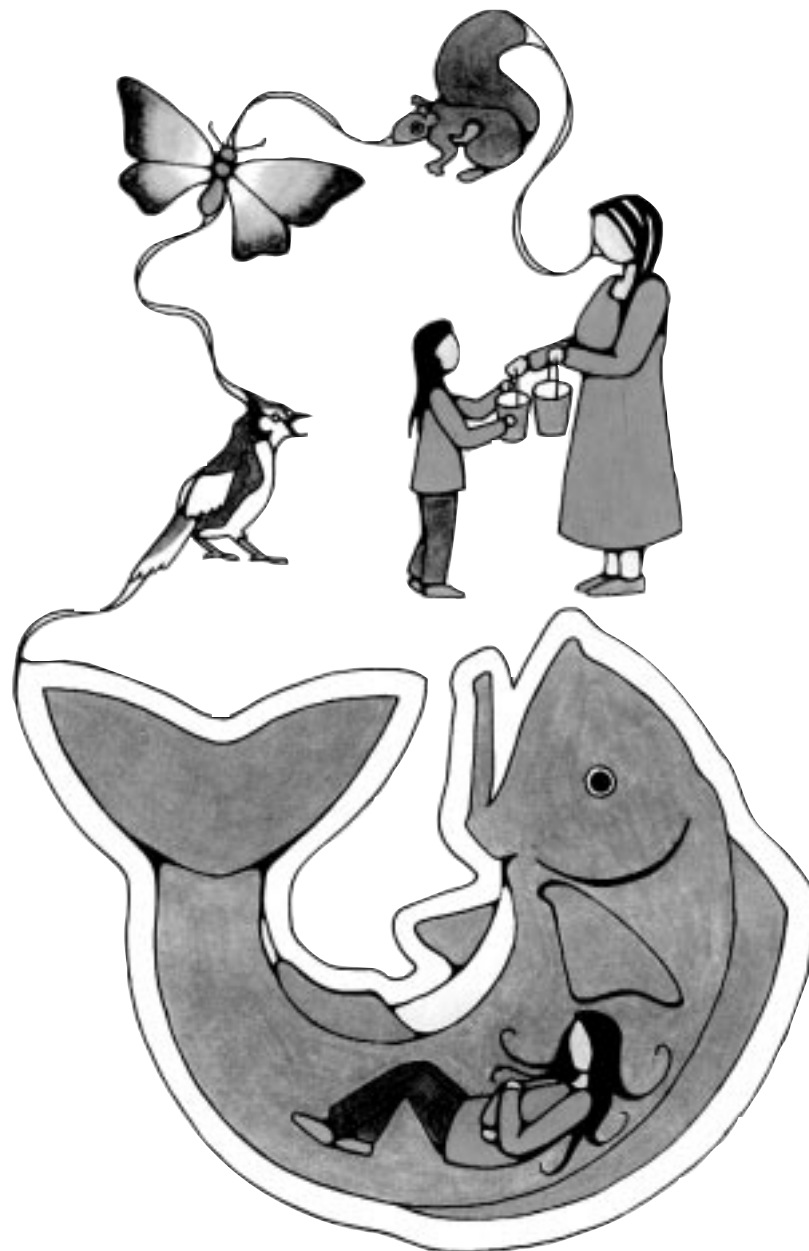
HOW TO USE STORIES IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- Non-Aboriginal people often recorded First Nations legends as fairy tales or myths, adding convenient morals to sum up the story. However, the stories of Elders and accomplished storytellers often have no such ready explanation. The listener was expected to take time to think about the story and its meanings. Students need to be made familiar with this format, if your stories follow this method.
- Repetition is an important element of First Nations storytelling. Stories need to be told and "felt" over and over again.
- Storytelling is not just a creative activity for the highly accomplished. Because stories are essential to the oral tradition of First Nations, they can become an important part of the classroom. Storytelling helps children with their memory skills, reading, oral communication, writing and imagination.
- Stories based on memories and anecdotes can be just as effective as traditional legends. Above all, it is important that as the narrator, you rehearse the story and identify its critical elements. If you practise, the story will come alive for students and ensure they pay attention and participate.

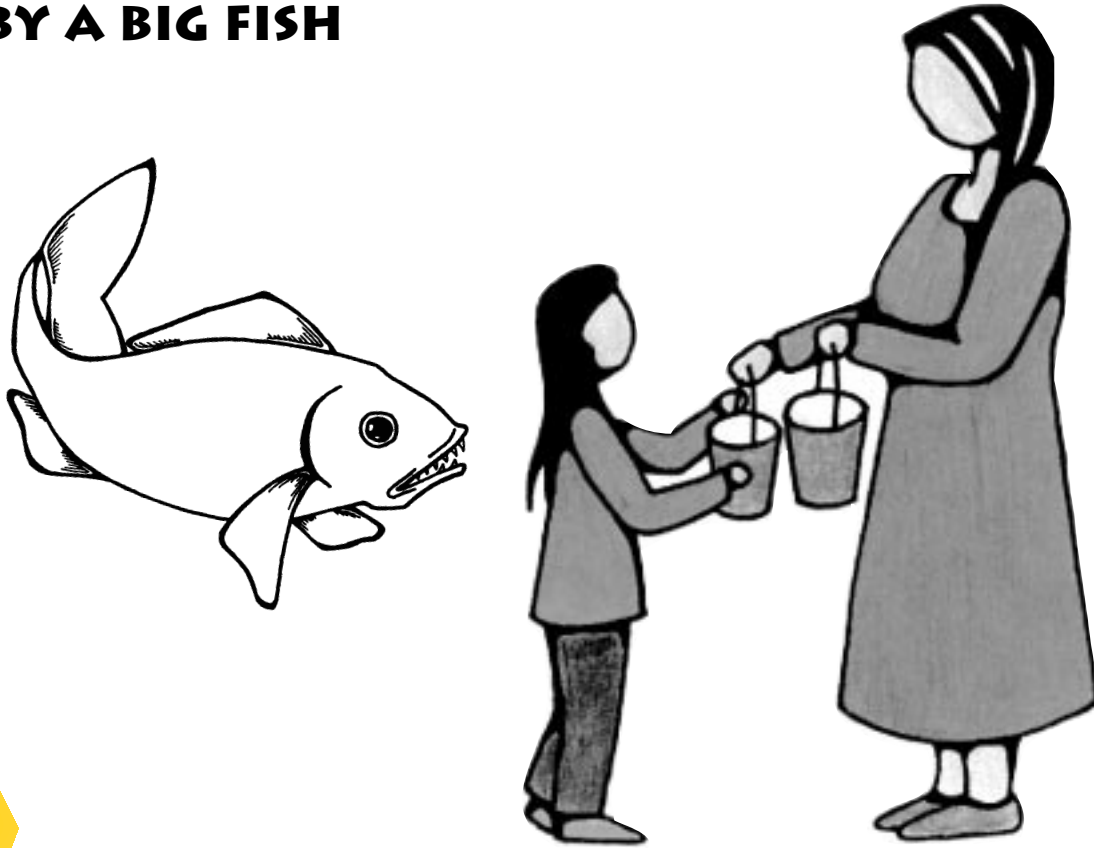
ACTIVITIES

1. CREE STORY — THE GRANDDAUGHTER WHO WAS EATEN BY A BIG FISH

You may read the story to students, or tell it from memory. Should you decide to tell the story, read it over a few times to get a general sense of the plot. Try a practice run of telling it out loud. The actual words of the story are not as important as the general concepts and characters.



THE GRANDDAUGHTER WHO WAS EATEN BY A BIG FISH



This is a story about Gookum (Cree word for “grandmother”) and her mischievous granddaughter, Beulah. Beulah was a very curious little girl. She was always wandering off from the camp, looking for adventures. Gookum was always telling her to listen. One day, Gookum asked Beulah to get some water from the lake so she could make soup.

“Whatever you do, don’t go swimming in the lake alone,” said Gookum.

“Why not?” asked Beulah.

“Because there is a giant fish in that lake, and he will catch you and swallow you up if you swim too far.”

“Eeeeya, Gookum. I’m not afraid of a big fish.”

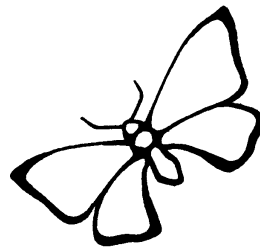
So, Beulah went off to collect the water. Oh, it was a nice warm day. The sun shone brightly.

A squirrel chattered as she walked along the path.

“Go away, silly squirrel. I am busy.”

A butterfly flew around the girl. She ran around in circles trying to catch the butterfly until it flew away. I am really hot now, Beulah said to herself.

Finally, Beulah came to the lake. She went to the big rock where Gookum had showed her to stand to get water. She dipped her buckets in the lake. They filled up quickly. Those buckets were heavy now. She had to be very careful when she carried them to the shore, they were so heavy. With a cup, she scooped out the little sticks and leaves that floated on the top. She was ready to carry them back now.





Carrying the buckets made Beulah tired. She lay down next to the water, in a nice spot on a large flat rock. The sun shone on her. She was very hot, so she took off her shirt.

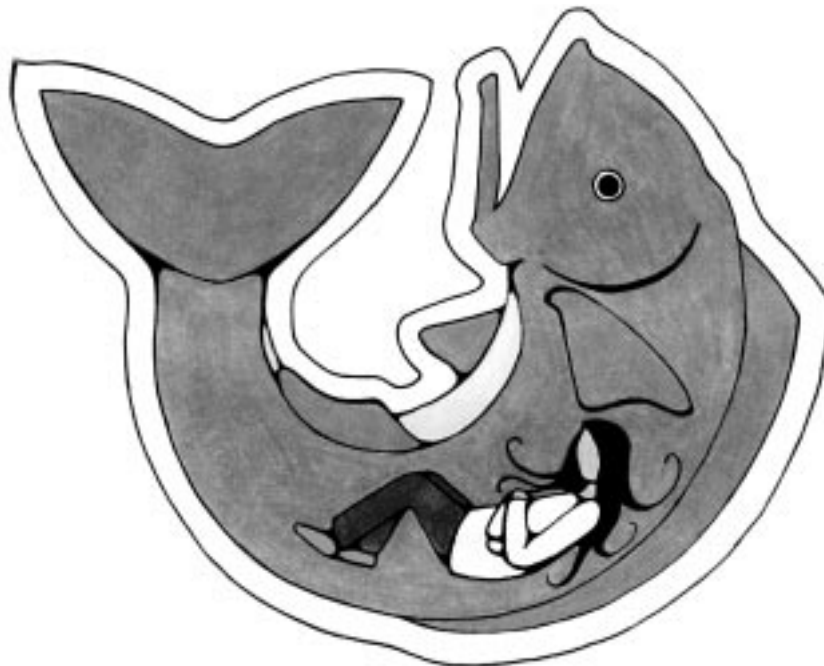
A blue jay landed in a tree next to the path. The blue jay squawked at her.

“You noisy old bird. Stop disturbing me.” The blue jay flew away.

Beulah decided to have a quick swim, just to cool off before she took the water back for Gookum. She removed all of her clothes and dived in.

The water was nice and cool. Beulah was a good swimmer. She decided she would swim out as far as she could. As she swam out, Beulah saw a huge silver flash in the water. It was a great big massive fish, and with one gulp, it swallowed her whole! Beulah found she was trapped in the stomach of the huge fish Gookum had warned her about.

“Oh no,” she cried. “I should have listened to Gookum!”



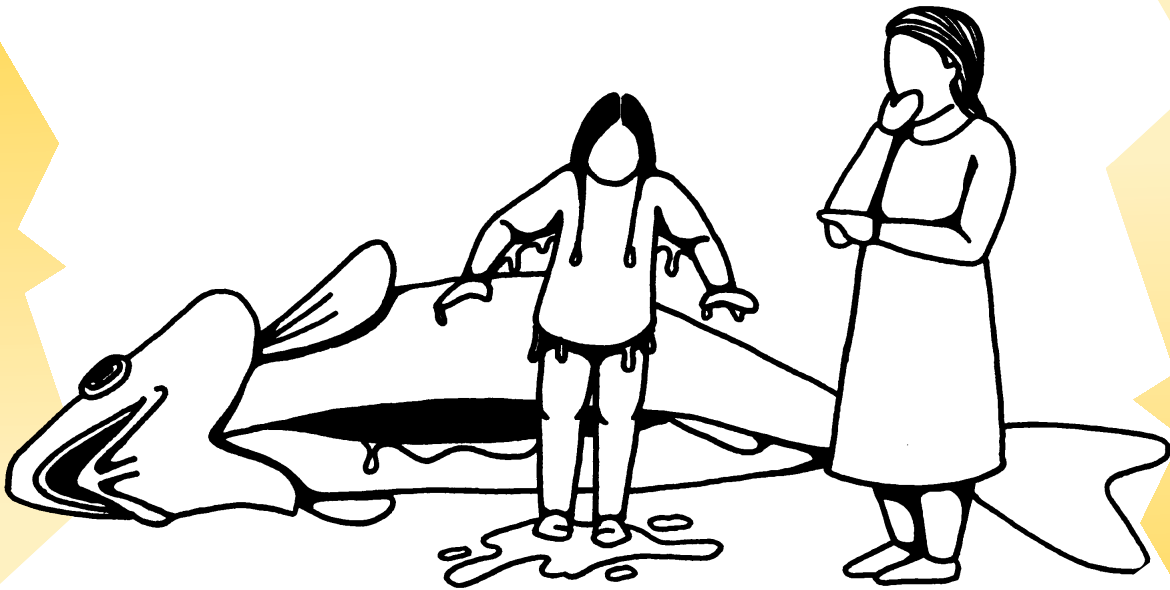
Beulah had been gone a long time. Gookum thought that she had found an adventure and forgotten to get water. There was no point in worrying about her — there were chores to be done around camp. She cut wood and made dinner. When Beulah wasn't home by night, Gookum was worried, but she knew the little girl was able to take care of herself in the woods.

The next day, Beulah still was not back. Gookum needed food, so she gathered the fishing net and went down to the lake. She caught six fish. One was a huge creature that stretched as long as her arms and more. That big fish would feed a whole family for a week.

She started cutting up all the fish. When she finally got to the big fish, she slid the knife into the belly. Beulah jumped out, very much alive.

At first, Gookum was startled, but she quickly realized it was Beulah, who was covered head to toe in slimy, sticky fish innards.

She shook her head at Beulah, and began to laugh at her. "I told you, I told you not to swim in the lake." Beulah bowed her head and said nothing. She just went to the lake to clean off all the smelly fish slime.



2. DISCUSSION — THE GRANDDAUGHTER WHO WAS EATEN BY A BIG FISH

After telling the students “The Granddaughter who was Eaten by a Big Fish,” ask them to talk about some of the themes of the story. Some questions you may want to ask them are:

- Why didn't Gookum want her granddaughter to swim in the lake?
- What was Beulah's reaction when she was told not to swim in the lake? Do you think that was the right way to act?
- Why did Beulah disobey Gookum? Do you think there may have been other ways for her to cool off without swimming in the lake?
- How did Gookum react when she discovered Beulah in the big fish? How do you think she felt?
- Do you think Beulah has learned something? What did she learn?
- What did you learn?

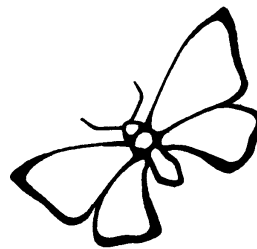


3. ROLE-PLAYING — THE GRANDDAUGHTER WHO WAS EATEN BY A BIG FISH

In the story “The Granddaughter who was Eaten by a Big Fish,” which you have shared with the class, Beulah is visited by three animals on her trip to the lake: a squirrel, a butterfly and a blue jay. Remind the class about Beulah’s encounters with these three animals, and how she treated them. Now have the class imagine that the animals were trying to remind the girl of what Gookum had said.

What would the animals be trying to tell Beulah? For example, the blue jay may say, “Squawwwwk... Gookum told you not to swim. Not to swim.” Choose four members of the class to act out the four roles:

- Granddaughter
- Squirrel
- Butterfly
- Blue Jay



After the class has discussed what the animals might have been saying to Beulah, ask the students playing the animals to act out a skit exploring these encounters. Encourage the actors to take on characteristics of the animals they are portraying.



4. WINTER — A TIME FOR STORYTELLING

Among many First Nations, winter was the time for storytelling. As well as teaching the young, storytelling was a way for adults to enliven the long, cold winter nights.

Often, certain men and women in the community would have a greater gift for storytelling than others. In some First Nations, these individuals acted as “professional” storytellers and travelled from lodge to lodge during the storytelling seasons. They carried with them a bag filled with items they used as teaching devices. For example, the storyteller might reach into her bag and pull out a doll made of corn husks, or a crow feather. She would look at it, show it to everyone, and then begin a tale.

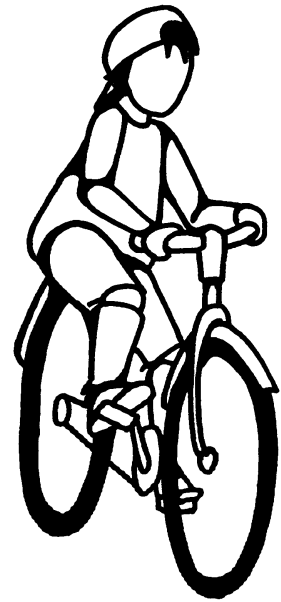
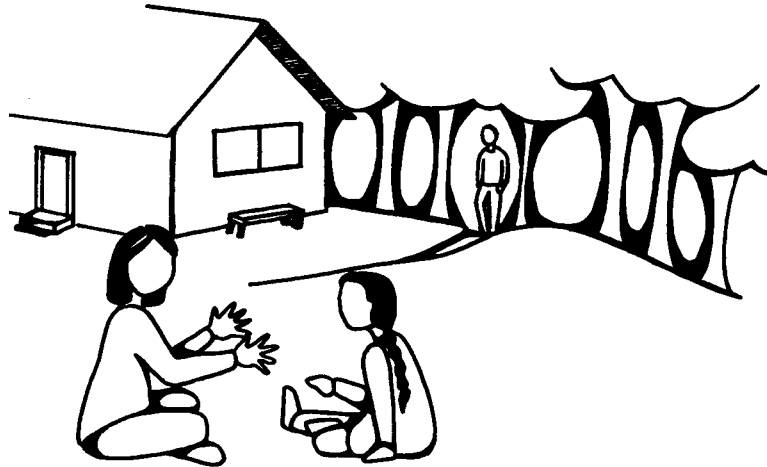
In the autumn, help the students to make a storyteller’s bag.

You may wish to gather items from the natural world, such as feathers, shells or stones, or make dolls. When winter arrives, pass the bag around the classroom each day and ask the students to tell a story based on what he or she takes out.



5. OJIBWAY STORY — THE LILY ROOT

THE LILY ROOT



Emily Muskrat was ten years old. She lived with her family on a reserve in Manitoba, north of Lake Winnipeg. Emily had a younger sister named Hattie whom she often looked after.

Emily's father worked for a First Nations organization as a community health worker. He visited First Nations communities to help develop local health programs. Emily's mother was a teacher's aide at the local school. Emily took care of Hattie on Saturday afternoons when her parents went to town to shop for food.

One Saturday, Emily was playing cat's cradle. Hattie watched her weave the tiny string between her two hands. As Emily continued to create designs, Hattie said, "Show me how to do that." Hattie pointed to the cradle between her sister's hands.

Emily replied, "Spread your hands and fingers." Emily wrapped the string around Hattie's thumbs. "Move your fingers like this," she said as she showed Hattie how to wind the string between her fingers and hands. It was not easy for Hattie to make a cat's cradle.

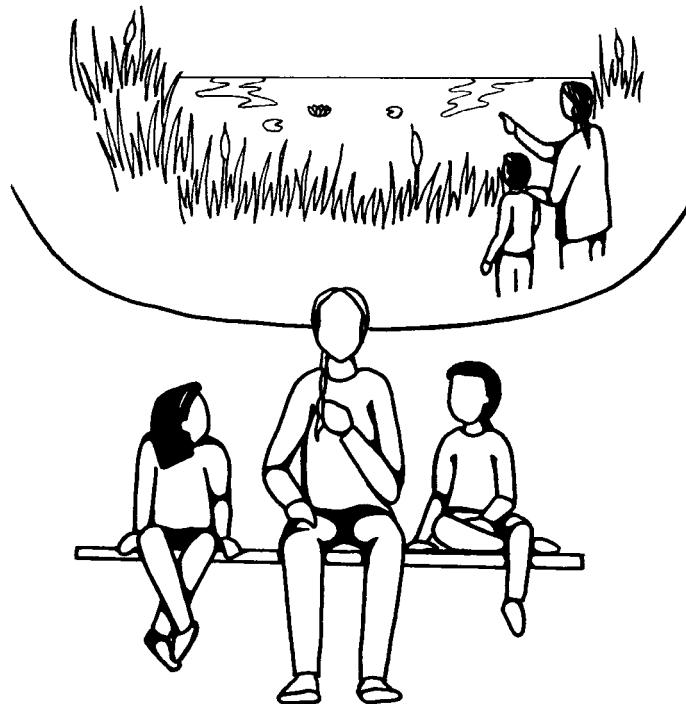
While Hattie struggled to make a cradle, Peter Crane rode his old bicycle past the girls. Emily made a face at Hattie when they saw Peter because Peter often wore

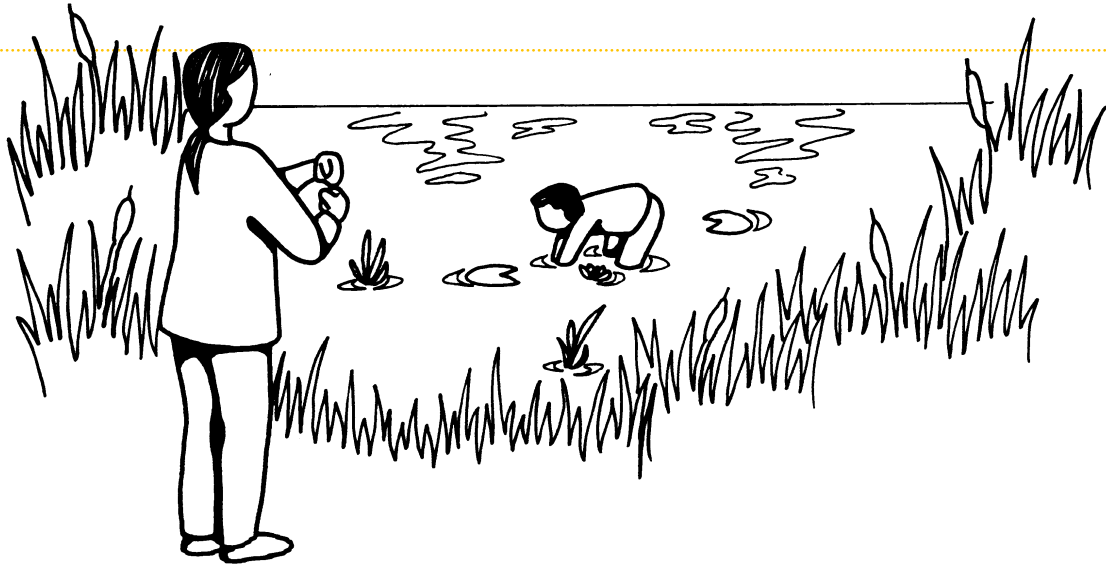
old and worn-out jeans when he played and rode his bicycle. Neither girl spoke to Peter as he went by.

As the two sisters were playing, Old John walked along the path by their home. He saw the two girls playing cat's cradle. Hattie showed Old John her first cat's cradle. Old John smiled and waved the girls over to him. Old John spoke softly to the girls. "I'm going to tell you a story," he said. "It is about the lily root." He motioned to the two girls to sit beside him on the small bench.

Old John began his story. "One day, Shomis (used in certain Ojibway-speaking communities to mean 'old man' or 'grandfather') and his grandson were walking in the bush. They came upon a small river with a big pond. Shomis saw some water lilies in the pond. He asked his grandson to get him a lily root. Lily roots were important to Shomis. When he dried the root and ground it into powder, it became medicine. Shomis would use this medicine to keep healthy.

His grandson removed his boots and socks. Then, he rolled up his pant legs. When he stepped into the pond, he felt the mud ooze between his toes. Shomis stood on shore and pointed to the lily plant he wanted.





When the boy reached the lily plant, his pants and legs were wet and muddy. The oozing muck from the bottom of the pond was smelly and dirty. He reached into the water quickly to pull out the root.

“Be careful,” Shomis told him. “You must not break the root when you pull it up. The medicine will be spoiled if it is taken from a broken root.”

When his fingers were around the root, his grandson gave a hard yank. Nothing happened. He put his other hand around it.

“Be careful, now,” instructed Shomis.

When he yanked the second time, the boy’s shirt became wet with the muddy water. But the root still did not move. The boy could hear his grandfather on the shore. “Reach deeper with both hands,” said Shomis.

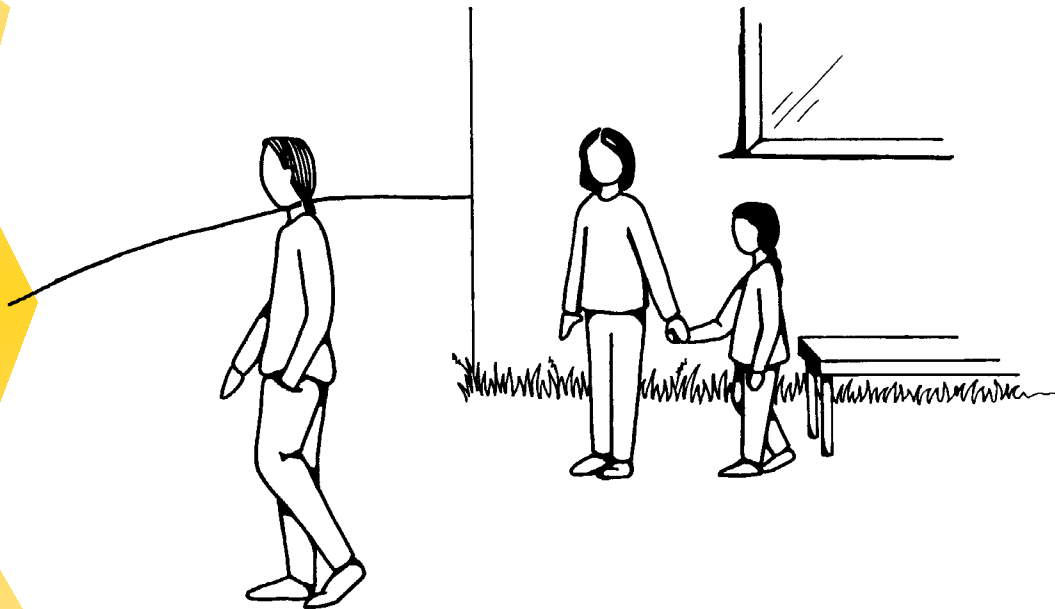
Very slowly, the boy bent over the beautiful white lily flower. He reached with both hands for a better grip around the root. His shirt sleeves were soaked. He pulled hard. The root refused to budge.

Finally, he realized he would have to get all wet with the muddy water. It still smelled. He held his breath. Quickly, his face went under water. He bent right over the plant with both hands deep around the stubborn root. He pulled and pulled. When the root came free he almost fell over in the water.

He walked back to shore to Shomis. He was wet from head to toe. His skin was itchy. Mud covered his feet, his pants, and his shirt. He carried the lily in his muddied hands. At one end of the plant was the beautiful white flower. At the other end was the muddy root.

As Shomis cleaned the mud from the lily root, he hummed softly. Then he cut off the flower.

He looked at his grandson who stood beside him. He was wet and muddy. His clothes smelled like the muddy pond. His toes and feet were still slippery with mud. Shomis laughed at the sight of his grandson.



storytelling

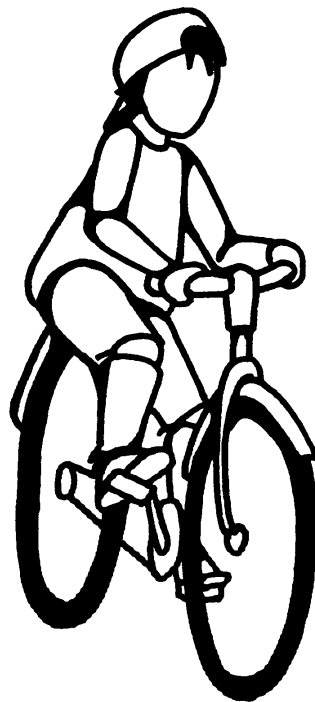
Shomis held the lily root very gently. “This will make me feel strong and healthy,” he said to the boy. Next to Shomis, the beautiful white flower lay discarded on the ground. “The root is more important than the flower,” he said. “Many people are interested only in the pretty flower,” he said. “Remember the lily root.”

Hattie and Emily sat quietly next to Old John. They listened carefully to everything Old John told them. The story was over. Old John stood up. He patted Hattie on the head and walked away. Emily and Hattie walked to their house. They, too, would remember the lily root.

6. DISCUSSION — THE LILY ROOT

After telling the students the story “The Lily Root,” ask the students to identify some of the themes of the story. Questions you may want to ask the students are:

- Why did Shomis ask his grandson to get the lily root?
- What was the grandson’s reaction when he had to go in the muddy water?
- Shomis told him that the root was more important than the flower. Can you think of any time that you found something important in a dirty or unpleasant place?
- Do you think Hattie and Emily have learned something? What did they learn? Why do you think Old John told the girls the story?



UNIT 2

THE SEASONS

MAIN IDEA

The seasons are part of the natural, dynamic process of change and the circle of life. We are all affected by the change of seasons.

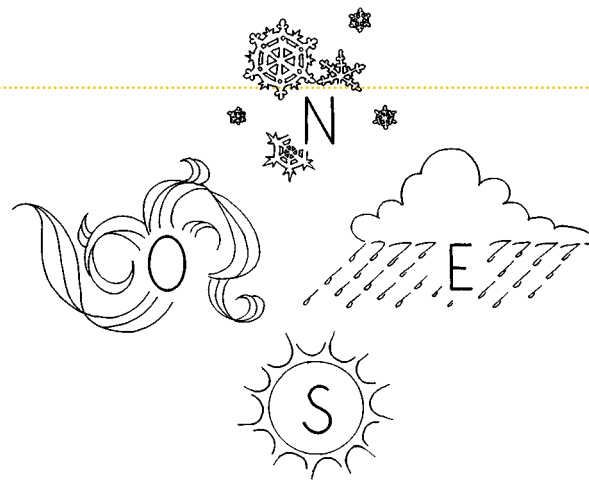
OBJECTIVES

1. to have students recognize the changes that go along with the seasons
2. to ensure students understand the effect of seasonal changes on their environment
3. to teach students how First Nations dealt with the changing seasons

TEACHER INFORMATION

For First Nations, seasons embodied the cyclical nature of life: birth, youth, adulthood and death. Seasons meant changes in lifestyle, food, social activities, religious and spiritual practices and economic pursuits. Many First Nations noted the changes in their lives that were influenced by the seasons by naming the months of the year after major events occurring during these periods. It was important for their survival that they observe and keep track of these changes.

The primary focus of this unit is to encourage children to take note of the seasonal changes going on around them. Children should have an opportunity to examine the natural world closely and better understand how they are affected by the change in seasons. These activities are intended to introduce the children to Earth science.



SPRING

For First Nations, spring was a time of birth and renewal. The land was freed from winter, snow disappeared, and river, lake and sea ice gradually melted. In spring, various First Nations communities were able to hunt birds like geese and ducks, and large game animals, such as caribou, that migrated from southern locations to more northern environments to bear their young. These annual animal and fowl migrations provided vital food supplies. As plants, trees and herbs began to renew themselves after the winter cold, many First Nations harvested and gathered roots, new leaves, plants and bark for food and medicine. Many First Nations still do so today.

SUMMER

Summer was an important season for hunting and gathering food. First Nations harvested wild grasses, along with various berries, edible roots and herbs.

For First Nations, the summer was a time of considerable activity. Many communities hunted large game animals for food, and as important sources of domestic and economic products. Hides produced clothing and footwear, ropes and babiche (lacing) for snowshoes. Animal horns were made into spoons and hand tools. Hair from animal skin served as stuffing in dolls, and balls for games. Sinew was used to make strings and lashes. First Nations used bones for scrapers, knives, spoons and ladles. They used hooves for ceremonies and dances.

Many communities had a variety of techniques to catch large quantities of freshwater fish during the summer. Using nets, elaborate weirs and spears, First Nations caught quantities of fish that they usually dried in the sun for future consumption. One technique was to use a torch suspended from the bow of a canoe to attract fish and then spear them.

Summer was also a time for collecting and harvesting. First Nations gathered and stored tree bark, tree roots, wild berries, nuts, fruit, edible plants and roots, herbs, mosses, shells, feathers and down. They also collected fungi and some ingredients for medicines and cures. Summer was also the time for games, entertainment and social gatherings.

Many of these activities continue today.

AUTUMN

Economic pursuits continued into the fall. Many First Nations moved to traditional sites and constructed dwellings to withstand the increasingly cold winds. They also still collected foodstuffs at this time. As days grew shorter, hunting and fishing activities waned and caches of dried meat and fish became more and more important. Many First Nations stored food in earth cellars that were either deep enough to resist freezing or sufficiently insulated to protect the food from the freezing cold.

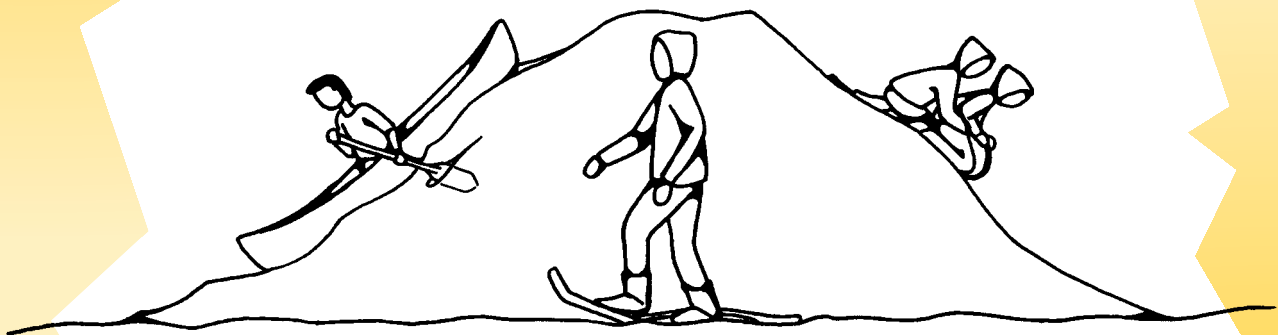
WINTER

Snow is and was an integral part of life for First Nations. First Nations people developed techniques for travelling on snow and using snow in many different ways.

Snowshoes, toboggans and sleds were effective methods for snow travel invented and developed by First Nations and Inuit. Some First Nations constructed temporary Quinzees by piling snow into a large mound, allowing it to set and then scooping out a chamber big enough for one or several people. These structures provided insulation against extreme outdoor temperatures.

Cold temperatures, heavy snowfalls and blizzards in the East, the Prairies and in the North, and long periods of uninterrupted heavy rains on the West Coast, threatened the survival of many First Nations families and communities. Long periods of darkness confined people to their dwellings, and increased the need for heating fuel. High-calorie foods were vital to ensure people produced enough body heat to withstand the cold winter temperatures. Despite winter's hardships, this was also the time for some forms of socializing and entertainment. This was the time for stories.

Of course, fresh food could still be found during the winter months. Some First Nations hunters used snowshoes to hunt large game animals such as caribou, deer and moose. Certain First Nations caught fish using nets or artificial lures that were lowered into the water through holes in the ice. In some parts of the country First Nations hunted winter birds such as ptarmigan, grouse and large owls, and smaller animals such as rabbits, beaver and lynx.



ACTIVITIES

1. A TREE'S FEELINGS

Dramatize how a tree would "feel." Students will be using large and small muscle movements to move like a tree under the following conditions:

- a gentle spring breeze
- a violent autumn windstorm
- pelting rain
- a summer forest fire
- having bare limbs in the winter
- a squirrel running up its trunk
- a bird nesting in its branches
- a person climbing it
- someone cutting it down



2. FOOD GATHERING

During the spring and summer, people gathered food including berries, plants and edible roots to preserve for the winter. First Nations gathered berries such as strawberries, huckleberries, salmonberries, blackberries, raspberries, saskatoon berries and blueberries.

Discuss with the students some of their favourite foods. Ask them to list their favourite foods by the season in which they appear. Put a list of these foods on the board.

3. FAVOURITE SEASON

For First Nations, each season brought different joys, difficulties and work. Although winter was often challenging, for example, it was also a good time for storytelling because families were confined to their dwellings. However, certain Nations would see family and community members spend winters apart, on different hunting territories. Summer was often a time of reunion, when a community would gather at traditional sites where fish or other foods, such as berries or edible roots and plants, were abundant. These sites also included areas that were near traditional trails or grasslands of large game animals. On the Prairies, some First Nations engaged in summer buffalo hunts.

Ask the students to identify their favourite season. Why is it their favourite season? For example, "I like winter because I can build a snowman," or "I like summer because I can go swimming."

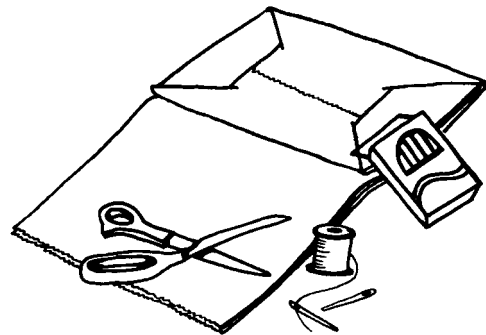
Ask the students to draw their favourite season. Encourage them to draw themselves performing their favourite seasonal activity (jumping in leaves, sledding, running through puddles).

4. CLOTHING — WHAT WE WEAR IN DIFFERENT SEASONS

Many different kinds of animals were used to make the clothing worn by First Nations people: moose, deer, buffalo, elk, caribou and bear were often used. Rabbit fur, goose and duck down often provided insulation for clothing. Some First Nations used beaver hair and wolf hair as fringes in parkas and gloves to prevent freezing caused by moisture evaporation in extreme temperatures. In most cases, animal skins or hides used for clothing were scraped clean of hair and then tanned. Once tanned, the skins were transformed into leather from which clothing was produced. For winter outer wear, skins were not tanned but were treated and made into garments with the fur side turned in, for additional warmth and insulation.

For this activity, you will need:

- butcher paper or large paper shopping bags
- scissors
- paint or crayons
- heavy needle and thread



Ask the children what types of clothes they wear during the different seasons; for example, raincoat in the spring, shorts in the summer, parka in the winter. Now get the children to explore what their clothes are made of and why they need them. Ask them where they get their clothes. Most will say, "at the store." Some may say, "as a gift" or "someone made them for me."

Divide the children into groups (if you have enough paper, each student can make his or her own coat). Have each group design a simple coat from the paper (for example, a poncho with an opening for the head in the middle). Cut the pattern out of the paper, and the children can colour and paint it to resemble any type of coat they wish (fur coat, a parka or raincoat). You may wish to help them sew the design together.

Have a fashion show and display your coats to the rest of the classroom. Have each child announce what season their coat would be appropriate for and why.

As a final discussion, ask children how First Nations people obtained the materials to make their clothing. An extension activity could include taking the children to the library to show them books on the different types of animals First Nations used for clothing.

5. SPRING — HOW DOES LIFE CHANGE

Spring is the season of new beginnings and growth. When spring arrives, ask the children what the season means to them. Have them describe all the new things that are happening to the Earth.

Take the children out to the schoolground, a nearby park or on a field trip. Ask them to look closely for the changes brought by spring. For example: trees budding, new flowers and grass, creeks overflowing, robins and other birds arriving, frogs and tadpoles, etc.

When you get back to the classroom, have them draw one of the objects they observed.

While they are drawing, ask them if they think that change is a good thing, and why. Ask them if they think it is good when people change.



6. SURVIVAL IN THE WINTER

For many First Nations, summer and fall meant labour. Starvation during long, cold winters was a serious threat to many people. Men, women and children had to labour hard to store enough food to last the long, cold season.

Gather the children together and ask them some of the things that their family has to do to make it through the winter. For example: “burn lots of wood,” “turn up the heat,” “wear warmer clothing,” or “keep the driveway shovelled.” Have the children look through catalogues and magazines for pictures of people in the winter. Cut them out and arrange them on a bulletin board called “How We Make It Through The Winter.”

7. THE LEAVES OF AUTUMN

First Nations could not afford to take nature for granted. Ignoring the signs of seasonal change would surely lead to sickness and death. In this activity, students preserve the leaves of autumn, helping to preserve their memory of that season.

You will need:

- large sealable plastic bags
- cardboard and contact paper
- newspaper for pressing leaves
- white glue
- binder rings



Take the children out to the schoolground, or an area nearby where there are several deciduous trees. Help the children collect the fallen leaves which they find the most attractive.

To dry the leaves, you will need to place each specimen carefully between two pieces of newspaper. Many leaves may be dried in one pile, as long as each leaf is covered on two sides by newspaper. Place a weight such as a heavy book on the pile and set it in a dry place. Each day, add another piece of newspaper above and below the specimen. Complete drying may take as long as two weeks.

To construct a book, give each child four pieces of pre-cut tagboard (bristol board or plain cardboard will also do). Have them lightly glue their dried leaves on each page, and then carefully place the contact paper over the tagboard. Smooth the contact paper from the centre to the edges, then wrap the contact paper around the edges of the tagboard. When all four pages are finished, the teacher can help the children punch holes in each page and connect them with binder rings.

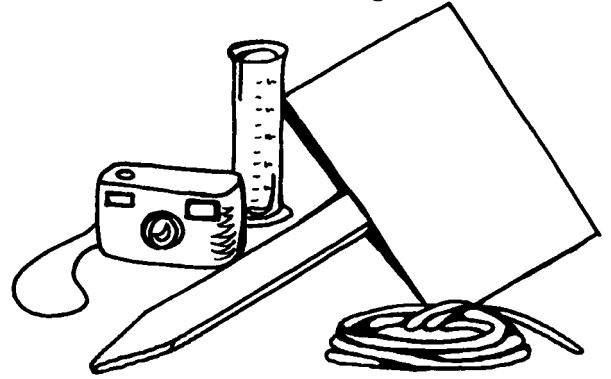
You may wish to have the student identify the colour of the leaf they are pressing (orange, red, yellow, green), then write it on the bottom of the page.

8. WHAT'S HAPPENING?

First Nations people were acutely aware that nature's life cycles must adjust to many variables. In this activity, students will have an opportunity to observe changes in nature by examining a portion of their playground. It will allow students to draw conclusions about the seasonal change in a habitat over a period of time.

The following materials will be needed:

- instant camera and film
- fencing/rope
- waterproof sign (laminated cardboard or wood and paint)
- rain gauge



Get permission from the school to fence off a small grassy or wooded area in the playground (approximately 10 square metres) for an entire school year. This may be done by the students. Assist the children in preparing a sign that says "PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB. SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT IN PROGRESS. DO NOT WATER, MOW OR FERTILIZE THIS AREA."

Designate a day and time each week to collect data. Depending on how sophisticated you wish to make the activity, students may record the following:

- a photograph of the plot, taken from the same place. Date each picture, so that changes can be seen over time.
- temperature and other weather conditions
- amount of water in the rain gauge. This may be done after every rain or snow instead of once a week.
- number and kinds of plants and insects in the plot

You might also have the children draw a weekly journal entry. Each drawing should include observations on plant growth, colour changes, and insect and animal activity. At the end of the year, the children can make a display of their charts and photographs to share with other people.

9. WHICH WAY THE WIND BLOWS

First Nations knew that wind patterns vary according to the seasons. Noting the pattern helped them make predictions about hunting and travelling. Teaching the children to observe the wind will help them understand the seasonal changes.

You will need:

- a weather vane and a fixed spot (it may be outside the classroom window)
- paper, coloured pencils and a ruler

Ask the students some of the following questions about weather: What is wind? How does it affect the weather? How is a weather vane read? Explain to them that wind is caused when air expands and rises as it is heated by the sun. Cooler surface air rushes in to take the heated air's place (circulation). We call this circulation "wind."

Now, show the class how to make a wind roads chart. Each school day, a wind reading will be taken by the class. The wind direction will then be charted by a student on the class chart. They will draw a one-inch line from the centre of the chart in the direction of the wind. The line may be an extension of a previous line whenever the wind direction is repeated. They may draw the line segment with a colour to show what type of weather it was: yellow for sunny or blue for clear skies, gray or black for clouds.

On the last day of the observations, you should discuss the wind roads chart with the children. What were the most frequent winds? When did these blow? What types of weather did they bring?

