

Grade 2 - Celebrations of Giving Thanks and Acknowledgment

Social Studies, Grades 1-6; History and Geography, Grades 1-8 (2013) Grade 2, Heritage and Identity: Changing Family and Community Traditions

Overview of Module

This teaching and learning example (TLE) helps students understand cultural diversity by comparing Aboriginal celebrations of giving thanks to those of other cultures and communities. Students learn about Aboriginal perspectives on gifts from the earth and forms of giving thanks, including song and dance. Students compare their cultural or family traditions with different Aboriginal traditions and celebrations.

Connections to Curriculum

The curriculum expectations addressed in this teaching and learning example (TLE) are identified within the TLE plan and can also be found in the Ontario curriculum: Social Studies, Grades 1-6; History and Geography Grades 7-8 (2013), Grade 2, Heritage and Identity: Changing Family and Community Traditions.

Opportunities for Cross-curricular Connections

Language, Grades 1-8 (2006), Oral Communications strand

Considerations for Planning

- Teachers may choose to begin the lesson with a short introductory task: “Whose land are you on?” Many students and community members are unaware of which traditional lands their school is located upon. Maps include: The [First Nations and Treaties Map of Ontario](http://www.ontario.ca/aboriginal/treaties) – a copy of which was sent to all schools – available at: <www.ontario.ca/aboriginal/treaties>; or a historical map such as the one found at the [Canadian Museum of History](http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/VMNF/premieres_nations/en/map/index.shtml) web page: <http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/VMNF/premieres_nations/en/map/index.shtml>
- Given the significance of the powwow and traditional song and dance in Aboriginal communities, the utmost respect must be given to the activities within this TLE.
- Songs presented in this TLE are usually sung for healing the spirit of people or giving thanks for the bounty of Earth.
- Students use the components of the **social studies inquiry process** to investigate, and to communicate their findings about, significant events, developments, and issues. By applying

the inquiry process, students develop skills that they need in order to think critically, solve problems, make informed judgements, and communicate ideas.

- The social studies inquiry process consists of five components: formulating questions, gathering and organizing information, evidence, and/or data; interpreting and analysing information, evidence, and/or data; evaluating information, evidence, and/or data; and drawing conclusions, communicating findings.
- It is important for teachers to understand that the inquiry process is not necessarily implemented in a linear fashion. Not all investigations will involve all five components; moreover, there are different entry points within the process.

Connections to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples and Perspectives Curriculum Connections

Aboriginal dances were developed through the joyous physical celebration of life and the acknowledgement of the gifts that come from the earth for the sustenance of life. Today's primary forums for First Nations dance – Traditional and Competition powwow – are celebrated among many First Nations communities. Some songs and dances are strictly ceremonial and are not included in powwows. Contemporary songs are non-ceremonial, but the dance still reflects elements of their origin. Others are social and also promote healing the spirit (e.g., Round Dance songs). Regalia has changed and adapted to newly available materials. This form of expression demonstrates the closely interrelated aspects of our spirit, mental, emotional and physical self (as represented on the Medicine Wheel).

Shaped by their unique history and the integration of First Nations, French-Canadian and Scottish lineage, Métis peoples have developed their own distinct celebrations, clothing, song and dance over hundreds of years. The most famous Métis dance is the Red River Jig (or as it is known in Michif, “oayache mannin”). The accompanying fiddle tune is considered an unofficial Métis anthem. The dance is a combination of Plains First Nation footwork with Scottish, Irish and French-Canadian dance forms. The basic jig step is danced in most Métis communities, but many dancers add their own fancy steps to identify their home community. Examples of Métis celebrations are available at the [Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture](http://www.metismuseum.ca/exhibits/celebration/) <<http://www.metismuseum.ca/exhibits/celebration/>>

Inuit celebrations of acknowledgement, too, are unique. In song and dance the Inuit tell stories of the spirits. The main instrument of Inuit ceremonies and dances is the shallow, one-sided drum, made from caribou skin, walrus stomach, or walrus bladder stretched over a wooden hoop. Some Inuit dances are religious in nature, while others celebrate a successful hunt. A “Bladder Dance” would be held to give thanks after a large hunt. The Inuit believe that the soul of the animal is found inside the bladder, so if the bladder was honoured and returned to the sea, then the animal's spirit would find a new body. Inuit women participate in throat singing, using different sounds made in their throats and

chest. One woman sets a short rhythmic pattern, while the other woman follows with her own pattern. Examples of Inuit drumming, throat singing and other aspects of Inuit culture are available at the [Inuit Online Cultural Resource](http://icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/node/25). <<http://icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/node/25>>

Cultural Implications: Communities function and differ based on culture and heritage. Concept of Social Studies Thinking (Perspective)–How does an understanding of the diverse ways gifts from the earth and the changing of the seasons are acknowledged and celebrated within Aboriginal communities help us appreciate the diversity of Aboriginal communities?

Social Implications: Aboriginal communities have acknowledged and celebrated the gifts of the seasons since time immemorial. Concept of Social Studies Thinking (Continuity and Change) – How does an understanding of the ways that Aboriginal peoples give thanks for the gifts of the seasons help us to appreciate the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to their own, and other, cultures?

| Curriculum Overall Expectations | Curriculum Specific Expectations |
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| <p>Grade 2 - Heritage and Identity: Changing Family and Community Traditions</p> <p>A2. Inquiry: use the social studies inquiry process to investigate some of the past and present traditions and celebrations within their own family and the communities to which they belong.</p> <p>A2.1 formulate questions to guide investigations into some of the past and present traditions and celebrations in their own family and the communities to which they belong.</p> <p>A2.4 interpret and analyse information relevant to their investigations, using a variety of tools.</p> <p>A2.5 evaluate evidence and draw conclusions about past and present traditions and celebrations in their own families and the communities to which they belong.</p> <p>A2.6 communicate the results of their inquiries, using appropriate vocabulary and formats.</p> <p>A3. Understanding Context: describe some of</p> | <p>We are learning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase our understanding of First Nations, Métis or Inuit community celebrations. • understand the role of dance and song in Aboriginal community celebrations. • demonstrate appropriate listening and speaking behaviour in a few different situations. <p>Sample Success Criteria</p> <p>I will know I am successful when I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine a variety of circumstances, situations and events that are acknowledged in First Nations, Métis or Inuit community celebrations. • explain the role of dance in Aboriginal community celebrations. • listen and speak appropriately in different situations. |

| Curriculum Overall Expectations | Curriculum Specific Expectations |
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| <p>the major groups in their community, including different types of families, and some of the ways in which traditions and heritage are passed on by such groups.</p> <p>A3.4 describe some significant traditions and celebrations of their families, their peers, and their own communities, as well as of some other communities in Canada.</p> | |

Getting Started

Learner Readiness

Knowledge and understanding:

- Cycle of the seasons [Science and Technology, Grade 1]

Participation in Talking Circles [hyper-link]

Terminology

- powwow
- dance
- celebrate
- acknowledge
- regalia
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- Round Dance
- Métis Red River Jig
- Inuit drum dance
- Inuit Bladder Dance
- Inuit throat singing

Materials

- Projector and computer
- Online search: Native Round Dance music and powwow videos
- Videos and background information on [Aboriginal dance](http://www.native-dance.ca/index.php): <<http://www.native-dance.ca/index.php>>
- Shki Mawtch Taw-Win En-Mook ([Path to New Beginings](#) Curriculum Project Produced by Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute, 2007), <www.ktei.net/>

Relevant Backgrounds

- Cultural/Seasonal Celebrations (Based on the Medicine Wheel)

| Minds On | Connections |
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| <p>Part 1: Large Group</p> <p>In a Talking Circle [hyperlink], ask students to identify things for which they are thankful.</p> <p>Read story book to class on First Nation and Métis perspectives on gifts from the earth.</p> <p>Recommended story books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message. (1997). Chief Jake Swamp. USA: Lee & Low Books. • Last Leaf, First Snowflake to Fall. (2012). Leo Yerxa. Toronto: Groundwood Books. • Lessons From Mother Earth. (2010). Elaine McLeod. Toronto: Groundwood Books. • Morning on the Lake. (1997). Jan Bourdeau Waboose and Karen Reczuch. Toronto: Kids Can Press. <p>Part 2: Home Assignment</p> <p>Outline goals of learning activity: “To learn about diversity by exploring celebrations and traditions of giving thanks of different cultures, communities and families.”</p> <p>Have students interview their parent(s), family members and/or caregiver(s) about how their family, communities or culture(s) gives thanks or celebrates events of significance. Suggest that students bring in a picture or artifact that represents their celebrations and traditions for small group “show and tell”.</p> <p>As a class, brainstorm a list of interview</p> | <p>Tip:</p> <p>Teachers may need to prompt students to consider things that they may be thankful for that come from the earth such as water (i.e., for swimming, drinking), air/wind (to breath and cool us down), fire (to warm us, cook with), earth/land (that grow trees, vegetable and fruits).</p> <p>Differentiated Instruction</p> <p>Use of multiple means/modes for gathering information (experiential, observation)</p> <p>Representing data through use of multiple learning strategies (visual/verbal)</p> <p>A for L: Observe/confirm students' prior knowledge of rhythm dance and feelings.</p> <p>A for L: Observe student contributions during the talking circle and note if they reflect both their own experiences, as well as inferences.</p> <p>A for L: Observe whether students are making connections and applying their knowledge and understanding of happy community celebrations that may include dance.</p> <p>A as L: Listen to determine if students are able to explain how celebrations and dance are related.</p> <p>A as L: Observe whether students use specific and relevant terminology to name and describe aspects of dance and feelings.</p> |

| Minds On | Connections |
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| <p>questions. Sample interview questions could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is being celebrated or acknowledged? • When and where does the celebration happen? • Who takes part in the celebration? • How do participants dress? • Is there food or “feasts” involved? • How does the tradition or celebration make you feel? • How is the tradition passed down between generations? | |

| Action! | Connections |
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| <p>Part 1: Small group “Show and Tell”</p> <p>Organize class into groups of 4-5 students. Direct students to use the picture or cultural artifact that they brought from home to explain to group members how their family, culture or community celebrates and give thanks.</p> <p>Sample teacher questions – Are their differences or similarities in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is involved in the celebrations? • When the celebrations happen? • The types of gifts that are being celebrated? • The location of the celebration? • How participants dress? • Whether food or “feasts” were involved? <p>Part 2: Large group</p> <p>Suggest to students that giving thanks and acknowledgement are very significant in many</p> | <p>(Assessment of, as and for learning; Tips; DI)</p> <p>A as L: Note verbal expression of student ideas.</p> <p>A as L: Direct students to discuss the large group dynamics and respectful participation in activities.</p> <p>Tip:</p> <p>See www.native-dance.ca for videos of various Round Dances and information on their history and significance. <http://www.native-dance.ca/index.php></p> |

| Action! | Connections |
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| <p>Aboriginal communities. One of the ways that Aboriginal peoples show gratitude for gifts of the earth and seasons is through song and dance.</p> <p>Remind students of the interrelationships between humans and Earth that the class explored in the Minds On section of this module.</p> <p>Show class video clips of powwow celebrations or Round Dances. A variety of videos on Round Dances can be found on: http://www.native-dance.ca/index.php</p> | |

| Consolidation | Connections |
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| <p>Large group</p> <p>Within a Knowledge-Building Circle encourage each student to share thoughts on how their own celebrations compare to different Aboriginal celebrations of giving thanks.</p> <p>Make explicit the fact that different cultures, groups and clans have different perspectives on giving thanks. And draw students attention to the fact that although Aboriginal groups having always given thanks and acknowledgement, ceremonies have changed over time.</p> <p>Opportunities for Further Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend a local Aboriginal community celebration. • Invite Aboriginal performing artists to the school to showcase traditional or contemporary dance styles. | <p>A as L: Direct students to discuss the large group dynamics and respectful participation in activities.</p> |

Related Websites/Resources

Benton-Banai, Edward. (2004). The Anishinabek Almanac. (*banaise@yahoo.com*)

Bourdeau Waboose, Jan, and Karen Reczuch. (1997). Morning on the Lake. USA: Kids Can Press.

Bruchac, Joseph. (1998). The First Strawberries. Picture Puffins.

Brummel Crook, Connie. (1999). Maple Moon. Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

[First Nations Traditional Music in Canada](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/aboriginal-music-song/028012-2100-e.html). (2009). Library and Archives Canada, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/aboriginal-music-song/028012-2100-e.html>>

Jesse. (2000). [My Summer on the Powwow Trail](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1303138515580/1303138878993). Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, <www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1303138515580/1303138878993>

Leitich Smith, Cynthia, and Ying-Hwa Yu. (2000). Jingle Dancer. Harper Collins.

MacDowell, Marsha (Ed.) (2009). Contemporary Great Lakes Pow Wow Regalia: Nda Maamawigaami (Together We Dance). Michigan State University.

Pelletier, Jeanne. (2007). The Story of the Rabbit Dance. Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Spalding, Andrea, Scow, Alfred, and Darlene Gait. (2009). Secret of the Dance. Orca Book Publishers.

Swamp, Chief Jake. (1997). Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message. USA: Lee & Low Books.

Umpherville, Tina. (1995). The Spring Celebration. Winnipeg: Pemmican Press.

Yerxa, Leo. (2012). Last Leaf, First Snowflake to Fall. USA: Groundwood Books.

BACKGROUND: Cultural/Seasonal Celebrations

(Based on the Medicine Wheel)

March 21 - Spring Equinox

The spring equinox signifies the beginning of the regeneration cycle of Earth. The arrival of the crow, usually the first bird, is a sign of the coming of spring. Also, around the Great Lakes, hearing thunder signals that the ice will go out very soon, and spring will follow.

Key Events:

- Berry Fasting
- Spring Ceremonies
- Initiation into Ceremonial Lodges
- Community powwow

June 21 - Summer Solstice

Celebrations of thanks and acknowledgement welcome the arrival of summer and the sustenance that comes from Earth (e.g., first berries of the season, medicines, plant, foods).

Key Events:

- Less use of buckskin
- Summer Ceremonies/Declaration to join Medicine Lodge
- Community powwow
- Designated Holiday – June 21st – National Aboriginal Day
- Powwow Celebration changes: Traditional and Competition, more songs/social dances, contemporary regalia is more elaborate, with the use of modern materials and glass beads, and new styles of dance, e.g., “Jingle Dress Dance”

September 21 - Fall Equinox

The fall equinox is celebrated with feasts of newly harvested, seasonal foods.

Key Events:

- Cultural Teachings/Song/Singing
- Seasonal Hunt: Cree – Goose Hunt
- Contemporary changes: more songs/social dances, ceremonial songs have their place, but not in Social Dances/Competition powwows

December 21 - Winter Solstice

The first snow that permanently blankets Earth indicates the first signs of winter.

Key Events:

- Celebrate the gifts that we carry in our bundles through fast/feast
- Acknowledge the arrival of the oral tradition, stories of our culture told in the winter
- Acknowledge Bemaadiziwin - “life”
- Contemporary changes: celebrations of the New Year, i.e., 2014, with a powwow

Sources: The Anishinabek Almanac. Grand Chief Eddie Benton-Banai.