

## **READING CIRCLE - SEASONS**

### **PROGRAMMING NOTES**

The cycle of seasons is very important. The traditional calendar has 13 moons, each with its own name. These are linked to the thirteen plates on turtle's back. It might be interesting to use turtle stories to extend the program, linking those stories to seasons.

### **TO BEGIN THE PROGRAM**

Talk with the children about important activities that are only performed in one season, and the differences found in nature in each of the seasons. How does weather change in each season? How do the animals change? How do plants change?

You can decide in which order you would like to read the books. Each time you present a new book, begin with information on the author and illustrator. Support discussion that helps the children to understand what the stories have in common and how they are different. Encourage them to comment on the books.

From your own collection select both fiction and non-fiction books that relate to this theme and display them. Encourage the children to borrow them when the program is over.

### **THE STORIES**

The Reading Circle Program provides children with an opportunity to explore stories. Encouraging discussion after reading a story lets children hear from each other about what the story means, talk about what they didn't understand, share what they liked or didn't like and how the story relates to other stories they've heard or read. You may use a talking stone or stick.

Leading the book discussion is about making it the children's discussion. Sample questions to begin the discussion are provided, but it's more important to get children to ask their own



questions. This might not happen initially but the goal is to have the children shape the content of the discussion and to be interactive with help from you. You can help by:

- Rephrasing a child's response. This lets them know you're listening and also introduces other words that have the same meaning
- Offer examples from the story that supports a comment and encourage the children to do the same
- Praising their ideas, and encourage alternative responses.

***13 Moons on turtle's back.*** By Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London, illustrated by Thomas Locker. Puffin, 2002.

and

***Moonstick: the seasons of the Sioux.*** By Eve Bunting, illustrated by John Sandford. Harper Collins, 2000.

Two versions of the traditional calendar, one which is Sioux, and the other looks at several nations.

### **Book Talk Questions**

What are the differences and the similarities between these two books? How do the 13 moons differ from the 12-month calendar?

The 13 moons are linked to the 13 plates on turtle's back, signifying connections and balance. Give some examples of balance and connections found in these two titles.

Compare the two titles, in both names of the moons, and in the illustrations.

***Coyote Fights the Sun: A Shasta Indian Tale.*** By Mary J. Carpelan. Heyday Books, 2002.

We follow a family of coyotes through a difficult time



**Book Talk Questions**

How do the coyotes lives parallel ours?.

How was coyote foolish in trying to shoot the sun?

What happened to coyote?

***Maple Moon.*** By Connie Brummel Crook, illustrated by Scott Cameron. Stoddart, 1999.

This story offers an explanation for the discovery of maple syrup. Supplementary information is included.

**Book Talk Questions**

How does Rides the Wind's discovery change the lives of the people?

Why were the other children mean to him? What name did they call him?

Why did no one believe him? How did the Chief's decision help Rides the Wind?

## EXTENDING THE PROGRAM

### ACTIVITIES

**1. Explore the changes in our environment during the different seasons.**

Draw a picture of a familiar tree, plant, or animal. Research, using books or web sites, and draw them again in each of the four seasons.

A wonderful website exists that gives activities to track the changes during the seasons.

<http://www.lakelandschools.org/EDTECH/Seasons/home.htm>

Ignoring the Britney Spears connection, this site gives some wonderful information about the reasons for the different seasons.

<http://www.biopoint.com/traversecity/seasons.htm>

Using the phrase “seasons changes” in Google will deliver a large number of school resources, which suggest some wonderful research and art projects.

**2. Make a calendar that depicts the 13 moons.**

Link the moons to the 12 months. Mark where activities occur, such as the school year, your birthday, holidays, and so on.

Take each child’s birthday, and mark on the calendar – figure out which moon it falls on.

**3. Oral history project.**

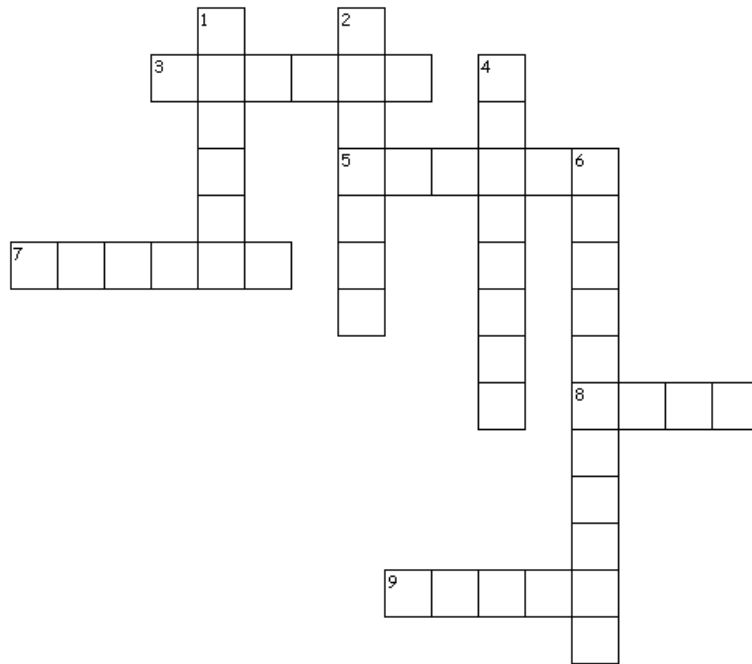
Ask the children to interview their parents, their grandparents, and elders, about seasonal stories. Get information about foods, plants, jobs that had to be done, and so on.



- 4. Write a book of seasons for the community.**  
Write your own story of the seasons in your community. Illustrate the story with photographs or pictures.
  
- 5. Crossword Puzzle**  
Let the children do the crossword puzzle, included in this kit.
  
- 5. Colouring Sheet**  
Offer the children the colouring sheet, included in this kit.



# Seasons



Across

3. The warmest season
5. When the new shoots appear
7. When we bundle up in our coats and boots
8. When the leaves turn colour
9. The type of tree that gives sweet water

Down

1. What animal's shell signifies the moons?
2. There are four of these in a year
4. How many moons are there?
6. Who tells Byron's story?





- 1 - red
- 2 - light blue
- 3 - orange
- 4 - gold
- 5 - yellow



## **OTHER STORIES**

**Byron Through the Seasons.** By the Children of La Loche and Friends. Fifth House, 1990.

**Swing around the sun.** B. Juster Esbensen. Lerner, 2003.

**Changes. By Penny Condon.** Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2000.

**The Birchbark House.** By Louise Erdrich. Hyperion, 1999.

