

READING CIRCLE - VISION QUEST

PROGRAMMING NOTES

The Vision Quest is associated with Native American traditions but similar practices happen in other cultures all over the world. It is a time set aside to be alone with nature in order to learn more about ourselves. In the solitude people seek direction to their lives and an understanding of their responsibilities to themselves, their community and to nature. Sometime understanding comes through visions or dreams. The practice is based on the belief that we have our own source of wisdom. The following site gives a good explanation of the practice. <http://www.crystalinks.com/visionquest.html>

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.

TO BEGIN THE PROGRAM

Sometimes we don't know what to do in certain situations like fighting with friends, when we know we have done something bad, or knowing someone needs help. We may ask friends or family to help us find a solution and make decisions. Ask the children what they might do about facing problems that are difficult to solve

The stories today are about the quest to find answers to problems. For many years people have left the security of their families and home, to spend time alone and face their challenges. This time alone is called a Vision Quest

You can decide in which order you would like to read the books. In keeping with the Reading Circle concept, as described in the *Reading Circle Program Guide*, consider starting with an aboriginal story. 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.



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.

Little Bear's Vision Quest. By Diane Silvey, illustrated by Joe Silvey. First Nation Education Division, Greater Victoria School District #61. 1995.

This is a story of a Little Bear who complains to Grandfather Bear that he has no friends. Grandfather Bear knows that Little Bear treats the other animals badly and hurts them by calling them names. He banishes Little Bear to an island so that he can spend time on his own and learn about himself.

Book Talk.

These questions and others can be found in the back of the book.

How do you think the other animals felt when Little Bear called them names?

Why do you think Little Bear made fun of the other animals?

How did Little Bear change throughout the story?



The Vision Seeker By James Whetung, illustrated by Paul Morin. Stoddart, 1996.

This is the story of a young boy who shares with his people his vision of building a sweat lodge. This story takes place long ago when there was a great deal of fighting and war. Because the men were fighting there was no food for their families. A young boy goes on a journey by himself in order to find a way to help his people.

Book Talk

The boy receives four kernels of corn from his family before he starts out on his quest. What other things happen in fours during the quest?

We are not told what the sacred instructions are that the boy receives from looking into the vessel. But we know from the beginning of the book that this is tale of how the Anishinaabek people received the Sweat Lodge. There are seven Grandfathers who, from the water in the vessel, give the boy knowledge, love, honesty, strength, bravery, respect and humility. If he shares these things with his people, how will they be better able to solve the problems they face?

Crazy Horse's Vision. By Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by S.D. Nelson. Lee and Low Books, 2000.

Curly was a leader even as a young boy, taming wild horses and hunting powerful buffalo. But all his bravery could not prepare him for the trouble he and the other Lakota Indians would face with the white settlers. Wanting to help his people after a fierce battle that kills Chief Conquering Bear, Curly defied traditional custom and risked his own life by running away up to the hills to seek a vision.

Book Talk

In the story Curly is described as a leader. What does it mean to be a leader and how does Curly act like a leader?



What is the same about the vision quests in the stories read today and how are they different?

What do you think of the illustrations in this book? How do they help with the telling of the story?

POEM

The Seven Mateinnu. by Joseph Bruchac.

Long ago, seven wise men
lived among the people.
They knew so much that everyone
was always asking them for advice.

They grew so tired that
they decided to hide from the people,
and turned themselves
into seven big stones.
But before too long,
the people found them,
and because they were stones,
they had to sit and listen
to everyone asking for help.

They tried a second time to hide,
and turned into seven cedar trees.
But once again, the people found them,
and because they were rooted,
they still had to listen.

At last they accepted
that they could not hide.
They changed themselves
into seven stars dancing in the middle
of the sky.

Each night the people look up to them
And see the answers to their questions
in the light of those stars.

From *The Earth Under Sky Bear's Feet. Native American Poems of the Land.* Joseph Bruchac . Philomel Books. 1995.



Mateinnu means “ a person of power” in the Lenape language. Medawinnor or medawlinno is an Abenaki word that means the same.



EXTENDING THE PROGRAM

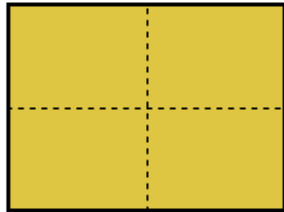
ACTIVITIES

1. **Crossword Puzzle**

The gifts given by the Seven Grandfathers to the young boy in the **Vision Seeker** can be explored further by working with the words Love, Respect, Honesty, Bravery, Knowledge, Strength and Humility. A crossword puzzle comprised of these words appears at the end of this guide. Children can work on their own or the group can work together to fill in the puzzle. The puzzle is a way to explore the meaning of the gifts

2. **Seven Gifts from 7 Grandfathers Mini Books**

This project relates to the story of the **Vision Seeker**. Make photocopies of the template at the end of the guide. Mini books are easy to make and are best made with 8 ½ by 14 inch (legal size) paper, but can be made with 8/12 by 11 inch paper.



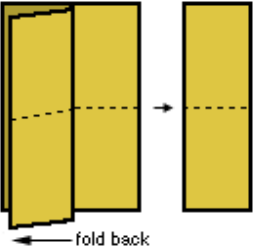
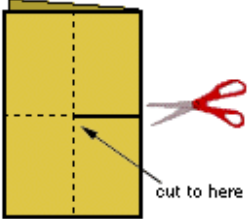
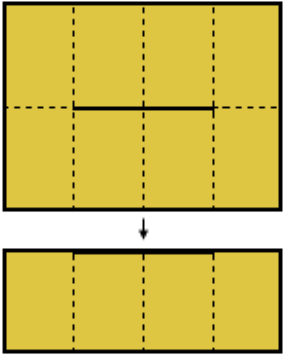
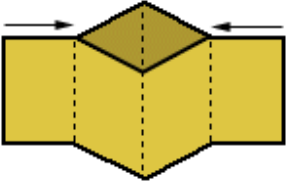

Step One.

With the print side away from you or face down on a table, fold the paper over long ways so that the corners meet.

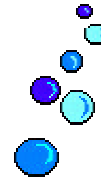
Crease well and unfold .

Fold the paper over in the other direction. Crease well.

Don not unfold

	<p>Step 2.</p> <p>Fold back one side as shown in the illustration. Repeat with the other side.</p>
	<p>Step 3.</p> <p>Unfold the last two folds. Holding the folded side in your hand, cut along the center line until you reach the first vertical fold.</p>
	<p>Step 4.</p> <p>Open the paper so that eight sections are showing. Fold the page over long ways.</p>
	<p>Step 5.</p> <p>Holding on to each side, gently push the ends together to form the pages of the book.</p>
	<p>Step 6.</p> <p>Fold the front and back covers around so that the corners meet. Crease well.</p>





Bubble Art for Decorating a Mini Book

Here is one suggestion for decorating the mini book. The paper doesn't get too wet when bubble are used. The trick to having coloured bubbles, is to make the solution up ahead of time so that it can steep. The following recipe makes a solution that works well in a small, plastic margarine container or any container the size of a sandwich. Make several different colours of solutions.

Mix together in a small plastic container and let sit overnight:

4 tablespoons of dish soap
½ cup water
2 teaspoon tempera paint

Using a straw (a flexible straw works well if you place the small bent end into the dish) blow bubbles until they're piled well above the top of the container.

Carefully hold a page of the mini booklet over the bubble and move the paper down through the bubble, stopping before the paper touches the sides of the container. Blot the page on another piece of paper to remove the excess. Repeat the process with the same colour or other colours of bubbles until you are satisfied with the results.

Plan B – Food Colouring

If you don't let the solution sit overnight, the bubbles won't have much colour. To enhance the colour, or if you don't have paint, blow bubbles in the water and soap solution and carefully drop food colouring onto the bubbles. This makes nice strong colours, but food colour is more likely to stain things that it comes in contact with and needs to be refreshed frequently.

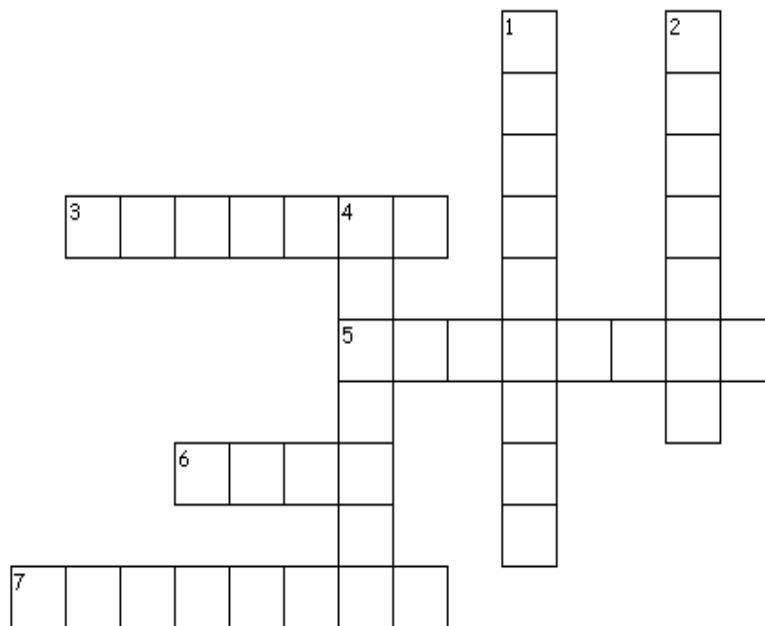
Seven Gifts from 7 Grandfathers

Across

3. Showing courage when facing danger
5. Resist great forces
6. To give affection
7. Showing respect by not being boastful

Down

1. To have understanding and experience
2. To be truthfully
4. To honour



OTHER STORIES

Beardream. By Will Hobbs. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1997.

The Lost Island. By E. Pauline Johnson. Atanas.

The Ghost Dancer. By Alice McLerran, illustrated by Paul Morin Stoddart, 1995.

Gift Horse: A Lakota Story. S. D. Nelson. Harry N Abrams, 1999.

Hidden Buffalo. By Rudy Wiebe, illustrated by Michael Lonechild. Red Deer Press, 2003.

The Wave of the Sea - Wolf. By David Wisniewski. Clarion Books, 1994.

Love
Knowledge
Honesty
Strength

**SEVEN GIFTS
FROM 7
GRANDFATHERS**

Humility
Bravery
Respect

Southern Ontario Library Service

