

**Integrating First Nations and Metis Content and Perspective**

**Grade4**

**Earth and Space Sciences; Rocks, Minerals, and Erosion**

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## **Rationale: NEED TO REFER TO PROTOCOL FOR REMOVING ROCKS**

Rock and earth are found in the summer section of the Medicine Wheel (the Circle of Life). This unit is therefore intended to be taught in the late spring/early summer when outdoor activities are best enjoyed. It is hoped that students will gain a greater appreciation and respect for all things in nature - the beauty, incredible age (wisdom) and usefulness of rocks and minerals.

Students should become familiar with the earth materials that make up their world. They should be provided with opportunities to learn that rocks are used for many things within a community and rock characteristics help determine their use. ." The focus in this particular unit is guided by the Aboriginal (specifically Plains Cree) belief system of the Beardsy's Okemasis First Nations. Conversations with Elders from that reserve have been very helpful. I have attempted to create experiences and discussions that adhere to that perspective. Students are expected to gain the same scientific knowledge as they would with any other unit.

**Understanding:** The reverence evident in the above descriptions suggests that we treat this subject with great respect and that we look for opportunities to connect the First Nations beliefs and teachings about rocks to scientific knowledge as often as we can.

First Nations had and still have a very strong relationship with the land (Appendix 4). Aboriginal cultures will leave an offering when selecting things from the Earth for their use. (Appendix 2)

## **Incorporating Medicine Wheel Philosophy**

### **Spiritual**

There is a purpose for every Life form in existence. Rocks and minerals are important in ceremonies for many people and hold significant spiritual value. Students need to be encouraged to treat rocks and minerals with respect as an integral part of nature but also as significant parts of ceremonies for many people. Rocks are a part of the natural world around us and are therefore gifts from the Creator.

### **Physical**

First Nations ways of teaching are traditionally through storytelling, observation and direct experience. To implement these fundamental strategies students will be given opportunity to collect, touch, observe and examine rocks found in the environment around them. They will understand the importance of the use of rocks and minerals in our lives.

If we alter the life form of one, we alter the life form of all (The Sacred Tree). Students will be encouraged to leave an offering if they remove rocks or minerals from the environment in recognition of the gift that everything in nature is.

## Emotional

Students will discuss and analyze their attitudes towards rocks and minerals prior to this unit of study. They will compare their attitudes after they have completed this unit of study. It will be important to provide an opportunity for students to share their thoughts and feelings either through a talking circle or journaling.

## Mental

Students will have investigated the physical properties of rocks and minerals. They will have investigated the processes of weathering on the landscape where rocks and minerals are found. They will be challenged to consider the amazing age of the earth and the rocks and minerals that are a part of it. They will be challenged to consider their views towards rocks and how they have changed throughout this unit.

## Deeper Understanding Questions

The deeper understanding questions are based on universal values and beliefs and are intended to bring students to focus back to the belief system of the local people. General directions to guide the students would be:

**Respect** – all things are created equally

**Humility** – humans are not above other things in creation

**Happiness** – the world is an interesting and beautiful place

**Love** – humans need to be encouraged to appreciate all things in the natural world

**Kinship** – we are related to and affected by all things in nature and by changes experienced by any parts of nature

**Thankfulness** – we are fortunate to live in such an interesting and beautiful place and we are privileged to be able to use things like rocks and minerals for our own use

- Should we be able to use the Earth's minerals and rocks as we please? Why or Why not?
- How can we show respect and appreciation for the items we remove from the Earth and use?
- Does everyone share the same belief and value of rocks and minerals?
- Rocks and minerals are ancient beings. What can we learn from the wisdom of having been around for a long, long time?
- How would our lives be different if there were no cycles in nature?
- Do you use minerals? How do you know?
- What would it be like without minerals? What items would you miss? Why?
- How can we show we are grateful for minerals? How can we use them with respect and appreciation?
- Why should we be careful with things that are made of rocks and minerals?

- How does wind erosion affect us? Why is it important to learn about it?
- Do we have a responsibility to try to stop wind, water, ice, erosion?
- What would happen if all of our soil blew away?
- What feelings do you have towards wind, water and ice?
- As we alter land do we hold a responsibility to try and keep it balanced? How?
- In what ways do you use rocks?
- How do you treat rocks? Why do treat rocks the way you do?
- How can we develop an emotional and practical appreciation for rocks and minerals?  
(Appendices 2 )
- How can we show respect for another culture even though our culture's beliefs are different?
- Where do human beings fit in the web of life?
- How could knowing something about minerals help us take better care of the earth?
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## Unit Outcomes

RM4.1 Investigate physical properties of rocks and minerals, including those found in the local environment.

RM4.2 Assess how humans uses of rocks and minerals impact self, society, and the environment.

RM4.3 Analyze how weathering, erosion, and fossils provide evidence to support human understanding of the formation of landforms on Earth

## Suggested Resources:

Keepers of the Earth pages 61 and 62 – “Rock to Rock: A Fantasy Journey”

Who Wants Rocks? By Michael Kusugak

Elder Wisdom – Norman Gardipy, Herb Seesequasis Sr.

The Sacred Tree

Cool Facts About Rocks and Minerals

Rockhound (Scholastic) – student books and teacher’s guide

Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture Series – 2008, Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, Calgary

[www.shannonthunderbird.com/medicine\\_wheel\\_teachings.html](http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/medicine_wheel_teachings.html)

The Dust Bowl, David Booth

## References cited:

SICC – Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre – We Are All Treaty People

Cree (Niheyawak) Teaching - Elder Mary Lee

## Uses of Rocks

*The Yesterday Stone* by Peter Eyvindson

Anna’s grandmother has a yesterday stone in which they view the worlds of the past. Now Anna has her own **yesterday stone**, and she wants to show it to her friend Molly. Will Molly believe in the yesterday stone?

## Importance of Rocks

Tunka-shila, Grandfather Rock Keepers of the Earth pg. 57

Weathering

Old Man Coyote and the Rock Keepers of the Earth pg. 57

## Rock Movement

*Loo-Wit The Fire-Keeper* Keepers of the Earth pg. 43

fall.

Why mountain rocks

## Types of Rocks

Old Man Coyote and the Rock Keepers of the Earth pg. 57

Rock Formation

Tunka-shila, Grandfather Rock Keepers of the Earth pg. 57

Old Man Coyote and the Rock Keepers of the Earth pg. 57

## Living and Non-Living

*Tunka-shila, Grandfather Rock* Keepers of the Earth pg. 57

Importance of rocks

## Engaging Activities

- Share personal stories about rocks and ways they have used them perhaps through the usage of a talking circle. (Appendix 1)
- Students research and become experts on one of the type rocks; Igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic.
- Create a dramatization of the process in which their type of rock is formed.
- Journal and illustrate the types of rocks and the formation process using a cartoon strip to show sequencing of events.
- Perform different observations using minerals and testing their hardness, properties, and whether they streak or not.
  
- Research and work in groups to find examples of minerals, what they are used for, and where they are found.
- Compare rocks and minerals to chocolate cookies and solid chocolate
- Explore the surrounding areas and find evidence of erosion. Discuss and find examples of how erosion can be positive and negative.
- Explore ways in which water is powerful and can create different landforms. Identify when water/rain seems not powerful. Investigate the effects of no water, and no water movement. What would we be without?
- Create landforms, and model weathering using water, a fan, and/or ice cubes.
- Identify cracks in sidewalks, buildings, etc. Infer different possibilities of where these cracks might have come from.
- Create a model of the Earth and its layers using plasticine.

## Outcome

RM4.1 Investigate physical properties of rocks and minerals, including those found in the local environment.

## Important Understandings

First Nations had and still have a very strong relationship with the land (Appendix 1). Aboriginal cultures will leave an offering when selecting things from the Earth for their use.(Appendix 2)  
Rocks are also very sacred, as they have spirits that assist and guide us through life.(Appendix 3)

- Rocks were, and still are often used for making tools. The durability, strength, texture, shape, and malleability are important factors to consider when choosing a rock for specific purpose. (Appendix 4) Rocks were and are still used today for;
  - Supporting weights to surrounding a tipi
  - Construction of a medicine wheel (Appendix 5)
  - Burials
  - Tools such as; tomahawk, arrowheads, knives(cutting tools)
    - A Native American Thought Of It (MacDonald, 2008)
    - Go to “Aboriginal Flaked Stone Tools(accessed on 02/15/11)  
[http://www.dpced.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/35876/AA\\_04\\_StoneTools\\_12.06.08.pdf](http://www.dpced.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/35876/AA_04_StoneTools_12.06.08.pdf)
    - Go to “aboriginal stone tools in Saskatchewan” (accessed on 02/15/11)  
<http://www.royalsaskmuseum.ca/research/what/postpyro.shtml>
- Rocks are a significant part of Aboriginal culture and are used in many legends. (Appendix 2 & 3) The following legend describes the strength of rocks and its’ use for protection.
  - Nanabosho How Turtle Got its Shell (McLellan J. , 1994) in this legend the turtle has been given a rock as a shell because of its strength.
- People enjoy collecting rocks. Many of us choose one special rock that feels good to hold and may bring comfort to us based on its physical properties. Aboriginal cultures will leave an offering when selecting things from the Earth for their use as a means of thanks. (Appendix 2)
  - The Yesterday Stone (Eyvindson, 1992)
  - Everybody Needs a Rock. (Baylor, 1974)

## Outcome

RM4.2 Assess how humans uses of rocks and minerals impact self, society, and the environment.

## Important Understandings

First Nations had and still have a very strong relationship with the land (Appendix 1). Aboriginal cultures will leave an offering when selecting things from the Earth for their use.(Appendix 2) Rocks are also very sacred, as they have spirits that assist and guide us through life.(Appendix 3)

- Within Aboriginal cultures rocks are living with spirits. (Appendix 3) Rocks are wise and sacred because of everything they have seen and experienced. Rocks have spirits that guide and assist us. You may wish to invite an Elder to speak about the significance of rocks within Aboriginal culture and ceremonies. (Appendix 7). The following legends depict rocks as our wise grandfathers, sharing their wisdom. (Appendix 6)
  - Keepers of the Earth “Tunka-shila, Grandfather Rock” p. 57 (Bruchac, 1988)
  - Keepers of the Earth “Of Science and Indian Myths” p. 3 (Bruchac, 1988)
  -
- The following resources explain the importance and benefits of having your very own rock to guide you.
  - The Yesterday Stone (Eyvindson, 1992)
  - Everybody Needs a Rock. (Baylor, 1974)
  - Summer Adventure (Adams, Summer Adventure, 2009)
  -
- Identify some of the ways in which different cultures, including First Nations and Metis, value and respect rocks within different ceremonies.
  - Sweat lodge ceremonies (Appendix 8)
    - Grandfather, what is a sweat lodge? (Lam, 2009)
  - The Medicine Wheel (Appendix 5)
  - Use of Rocks in Vision Quests (Appendix 9)
    - Loon Rock (Trottier, 1996)
- Aboriginal peoples did not alter the land to meet their needs, they adjusted to their environment. (Appendix 10) This book describes the actions of people altering the landscape for their own uses and the impact it has on the environment.
  - Read Who Wants Rocks? This book could be used as an introduction to a unit on rocks and minerals.



## Outcome Continued

RM4.2 Assess how humans uses of rocks and minerals impact self, society, and the environment.

### Important Understandings

First Nations had and still have a very strong relationship with the land (Appendix 1). Aboriginal cultures will leave an offering when selecting things from the Earth for their use.(Appendix 2)  
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- Inukshuks were built in the North to signify that people were there. There were different types, depending on the reason they were there. They may have been a marker to tell you which way the people went, a cache where you may find food buried (Appendix 11), a marker to warn you of dangers, a place where there were good fishing grounds. (Wallace, Inuksuk Journey, 2008)
  - The Lonely Inukshuk (School, 1999)
  - Make Your Own Inuksuk. (Wallace, 2001)
  - I is for Inuksuk (Wallace, I is for Inuksuk, 2009)
  - Hide and Circle (Kusugak, hide and Seek, 2001)
  
- People of all ages enjoy playing with rocks. These books provide visuals of First Nations people enjoying rocks from their local area.
  - The Enormous Rock (Adams, 2009)
  - Skipping Rocks (Adams, Skipping Rocks, 2009)
  
- Rock carvings & paintings (petro glyphs) were a way to document hunting cycles, and native stories. “Animal bones, antlers, or stones were sometimes used to carve into the hard rock.” (MacDonald, 2008)
  - Loon Rock (Trottier, 1996)
  - The Aboriginal Rock Paintings of the Churchill River by Time E H. Jones
  - Go to “petro glyphs in Saskatchewan”(accessed on 02/15/11)  
[http://www.virtualsk.com/current\\_issue/st\\_victor\\_petroglyphs.html](http://www.virtualsk.com/current_issue/st_victor_petroglyphs.html)
  - Go to “rock paintings in Saskatchewan” (accessed on 02/15/11)  
<http://canoesaskatchewan.rkc.ca/arch/rockart.htm>  
[http://www.virtualsk.com/current\\_issue/visions\\_on\\_rock.html](http://www.virtualsk.com/current_issue/visions_on_rock.html)  
<http://www.grandmothersbay.ca/RockPaintings/rockpaint.htm>

## Outcome

RM4.3 Analyze how weathering, erosion, and fossils provide evidence to support human understanding of the formation of landforms on Earth

- Explore the concept of rock being a living life force. (Appendix 3) Rocks are believed to be living with spirit within First Nations cultures. Identify ways in which rocks move by reading the following legends. (Appendix 6)
  - *Old Man Coyote and the Rock* from *Keepers of the Earth* (Bruchac, 1988)
  - *Loo-Wit The Fire-Keeper* from *Keepers of the Earth* pg. 43 (Bruchac, 1988)
  - **CREATION OF MOUNTAINS< VOLCANOES>**
  - *Kahaso and the Loon* by Terri Cohlene
- Read *The Dust Bowl* by David Booth to help students feel empathy for people whose livelihoods are affected by erosion

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- Appendix 9 Vision Quests
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### Appendix 1 - Relationship with the Land

The First Nations were well adapted to the natural environment: they were knowledgeable about the geography of the land; they were experts at hunting, trapping and gathering food; they knew how to survive the harsh winters; they had a special relationship with the land and they respected all living things. As natural conservationists, they used only what was necessary for survival and did not abuse the land, nature or the environment.

First Nations peoples used plants, animals and other resources carefully so that their children and grandchildren would be able to use them as well. They cared for these resources as a way of respecting the land which they believed the Creator gave them; therefore, they treated the resources and took what it had to offer as gifts. First Nations peoples realized their relationship to the land gave them the big responsibility of caring for the natural resources.

*Teaching Treaties in the Classroom, A Treaty Resource Guide for Grade 3, pg. 27*  
Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2008

First Nations peoples are spiritual in nature. The Creator provided many spiritual ceremonies to First Nations peoples so they would be able to show their appreciation and spiritual connection to him. These ceremonies are carried out in recognition of certain life achievements and events which have special significance. Ceremonies are a means of showing respect and gratitude to the Creator, to others and to the natural world.

*Teaching Treaties in the Classroom, A Treaty Resource Guide for Grade 2, pg. 26*  
Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2008

First Nations peoples only use what was needed from the land. In recognition of thanks an offering would be made back to Earth. Offerings are made during hunting and gathering of different plants and foods. Most commonly used as an offering was tobacco. As plants and animals were taken from the Earth tobacco was offered with a prayer of thanks in which it is believed that the offering and prayer would please the Earth and the resources and allow for replenishing to take place.

“We learn to give thanks: to always be thankful for the Creator’s bounty, which we are privileged to share with others, and for all the kind things others do for us.”

“We are not above or below others in the circle of life. We feel humbled when we understand our relationship with Creation. We are so small compared to the majestic expanse of Creation, just a ‘strand in the web of life.’ Understanding this helps us to respect and value life.”

**Elder Mary Lee**

We need to show respect for all of creation including rocks and minerals. We need to show respect for the teachings of our Elders and those of other communities.

## Appendix 2 – Protocol of Offerings

Traditional tobacco has been used by many Aboriginal people in ceremonies, rituals and prayer for thousands of years. Using tobacco in non-traditional ways like smoking cigarettes or chewing tobacco or snuff is abuse of its traditional purpose.

*"Traditional tobacco is our SACRED connection to our Creator."*

- **Pauline Shirt**, Elder, Cree Nation

1. For information about Sacred Tobacco follow the link below:

<http://www.tobaccowise.com/cms/One.aspx?portalId=44644&pageId=46570> "tobaccowise"  
accessed on 01/13/10

### **Traditional Tobacco Use**

Tobacco is often smoked in a sacred pipe during certain ceremonies. Tobacco acts as a communication link between the people and the Creator. Thus when tobacco is smoked from a pipe or burned as an offering, all thoughts, feelings, and prayers are carried in the tobacco smoke directly to the Creator.

Tobacco is not always burned. It is also used as a means of giving thanks. Before and after killing an animal such as a deer, a hunter will often say a prayer while holding the tobacco in his left hand (the one closest to his heart) to give thanks to the Creator and to the animal for giving up its life so that the hunter can feed his family. First Nations people will also place tobacco on the ground and say a prayer as an offering when picking medicines to give thanks to Mother Earth.

Peterborough County-City Health Unit. Accessed on 01/13/10.

<http://pcchu.peterborough.on.ca/TUP/TUP-traditional.html> "traditional tobacco use"

See People of the Buffalo by Maria Campbell (1983) last paragraph of pg. 14

### Appendix 3 Rocks are Living with Spirit

*Many Aboriginal cultures recognize four basic elements which sustain life: air, water, earth, and fire. The ancient Greeks also identified these four basic elements of life. These elements often have a spiritual significance. Each may be represented by a special colour and a particular direction. These vary among different people. (Boreal Forest pg. 7).....*

It is because of the belief of their spiritual significance that the elements are considered living factors. Aboriginal People have ceremonies that celebrate the elements. These celebrations/ceremonies are believed to help with the survival of their nation. For example, the sundance, rainedance and other songs like the 'stone spirit song' were opportunities for First Nations People to communicate with the spirits and ask for guidance and seek prayer.

Within a sweat ceremony rocks and their spirit are used to help the spiritual journeys of members in attendance. A rock that has not been used in sweat is strong and firm unbreakable to human strength. The same rock will be used in many sweats until the spirit has left. Spirits have left when the rock is able to be broken by human strength with little force. A rock song can be sung at the end of a sweat as way of communicating thanks to the rock for giving heat and giving up its spirit.

*In this view, there is no distinction between living and non-living (biotic and abiotic) factors in an ecosystem. All four elements and their countless organizations into life forms are part of life. For example, a rock is sometimes thought to be abiotic(non-living). But, as the rock breaks down, particles and minerals are absorbed by plants or animals. The rock becomes part of the plant or animal and contributes to the health and life of the organism. (Boreal Forest..pg. 8)*

Rocks are the wisest; they've seen a lot; fires, drought, battles...they possess a lot of knowledge that is why they are the grandfathers used within a sweat.

"Some cultures have a "stone spirit" song that is sung to give thanks and honor the spirit of the stone/rock." Herb Jr. Seesequasis

The Rock Spirit can be gentle or harsh and strong. Just like people. There are times when you need to be gentle but others when strength is needed to teach or persevere through a situation. (1, 2009)

#### **The elements**

It is good that you never forget about the Creator, Grandfather Moon, who watches over us from above and Mother Earth, who we all survive from. Everyday the Father Sun watches over us as he travels around this earth. The wind also protects us. Everything that is not good is blown away. This is what is going to take us a long ways. A person should not dislike the wind; he is there to protect us, that is his work. Each new day, Father Sun watches over us as we walk along Mother Earth's surface. At night Grandfather Moon comes out, he looks after us the whole night.

Elder Albert Morningchild taken from Voice of The Elders Compiled by Marlene Millar

## Appendix 4 Use of Rocks and Minerals

### ABORIGINAL USE OF ROCKS

There are many links between Aboriginal people and the geological environment around Brisbane Water.

Their engravings on the Hawkesbury Sandstone have a distinctive style which is unique in Australia. At Patonga their artwork combines natural tessellations with figurative drawings.

Cliff overhangs were used to provide caves for shelter and a water supply from rock seepage.

Some caves were decorated with artwork. They powdered different coloured rocks to make ochres for painting.

Local sandstone was ideal for sharpening hand tools such as spears and axes.

You can see many sharpening grooves that surround waterholes in the rocks of the Gosford area.

Hard stone for tools like axeheads was scarce. Large tools such as axes were made of durable black basalt from Peats Ridge and Mogo Creek. Local Aborigines probably traded for basalt and for large pebbles out of conglomerate from Norah Head, and further north.

Judy Adderley, "Traditional Uses of Rocks. Accessed on Jan. 27, 2010.

Retrieved from: [http://www.adderley.net.au/geology/exhibition/07/07\\_01.html](http://www.adderley.net.au/geology/exhibition/07/07_01.html)

### Death Customs

Inuit in different areas of the Arctic had different customs related to death. Because much of the Arctic is rocky or permanently frozen, the dead were not buried. The body was left uncovered, or it might be covered with driftwood or a pile of rocks.

Sometimes the body was placed inside a circle of small stones. Tools belonging to the dead person were placed with the body. If some of these tools could not be spared, miniature copies were used instead.

The Inuit Thought of It Amazing Arctic Innovations (Ipellie, 2007)

Other Websites;

- See website search engine; "Aboriginal Flaked Stone Tools"

[http://www.dpced.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/35876/AA\\_04\\_StoneTools\\_12.06.08.pdf](http://www.dpced.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/35876/AA_04_StoneTools_12.06.08.pdf)

## Appendix 5 The Medicine Wheel

Medicine Wheels are constructed out of rocks or stones. “The Medicine Wheel is a major symbol of peaceful interaction among all living beings on Mother Earth – it represents harmony and connections.” “First Nations people believe in a creation-based form of spirituality which has at its centre, the symbol of the sacred circle.” This sacred circle was constructed of stones. “It is believed that the circle represents a harmonious relationship with nature and with all living things who are our relatives and that all things are connected and equal because there is no beginning and no end.” “A standard Medicine Wheel was built of between 12 and 36 stones.” The number of stones used depended upon the knowledge of the person leading the building of the Wheel. “The Centre Stone is the ‘Many Worlds’ stone that contains the essential person – the deepest inner soul.”

**Shannon Thunderbird,**

[www.Shannonthunderbird.com/medicine\\_wheel\\_teachings.htm](http://www.Shannonthunderbird.com/medicine_wheel_teachings.htm)

In one resource it is suggested that the West is connected to sacred rocks. In other sources the South has been cited as the place for rocks. “WEST – Sacred rocks. I will stand here for humankind. I carry the history, music and words of the everlasting great circle of life. In my sweat lodge I will pour life-giving , life-sustaining water onto the grandfathers(rocks) and spiritual, emotional, mental and physical life will regenerate through the mist of endless time. Balanced emotions will be sought through the braiding and scent of the sweet grass. Women sit in the West.”

**Shannon Thunderbird**

[www.shannonthunderbird.com/medicine\\_wheel\\_teachings.htm](http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/medicine_wheel_teachings.htm)

For more information and pictures go to “bighorn medicine wheel” @ <http://solar-center.stanford.edu/AO/bighorn.html> accessed on 03/22/11 at 10:17 a.m.



## How to Construct a Medicine Wheel

St. George's Indian Band; Medicine Wheel. Accessed on Jan. 27th 2010. Retrieved from: [http://www.sgib.ca/index\\_files/Page2702.htm](http://www.sgib.ca/index_files/Page2702.htm)

The Medicine Wheel consists of thirty-five (35) stones or rocks, plus one that will be the center, called the "Eye of The Creator" or the Source. The center could be something other than a stone, it could be a Buffalo Skull or a Sacred Fire. The first stone is always placed by the spiritual leader who is leading the ceremony. If there isn't any sacred fire, the first stone is placed in the center of what will be the medicine wheel.

Now, the leader will ask for seven volunteers to select one stone each from the mound of stones that have been collected and "smudged" prior to the ceremony. These seven people will be asked to place the stones in a circle around the center rock (or the sacred fire). This circle of seven stones represents the spiritual realm or spirit world.

Now, the leader will ask for one volunteer to select one stone that will be the first of the directional stones. This stone will be placed approximately 8-10 feet from the center circle of stones in the direction of EAST – where the sun rises. The leader will explain that this stone, placed in the EAST represents: spirituality, a reminder to believe in the Creator and respect all things.

The leader will then ask for another volunteer to select a stone and place this stone in the direction SOUTH, the same distance away from the center circle as the eastern directional stone. The leader will then explain that this stone, placed in the south, represents the environment, a reminder to respect our precious mother earth and to make sure we don't destroy all the trees or the water.

Then, the leader will ask for another volunteer to select a stone and place this stone in the direction of WEST – where the sun sets. This stone will be directly opposite the eastern directional rock of course on the other side of the center circle, the same distance away from the center as the other two directional rocks. The leader will explain that this stone, placed in the west represents the physical, a reminder to keep our physical bodies healthy by looking after ourselves. Eat properly and get plenty of exercise.

Next, the leader will ask for another volunteer to select another stone and place this stone in the direction of North. The leader will explain that this rock, placed in the north represents good mental health, a reminder that we should always try to stay healthy in our minds even when things happen that make us sad or angry.

Now, the leader will ask for three volunteers to select a stone each and place them between the eastern directional rock and the center circle, thus completing the eastern directional spoke of the medicine wheel, then the leader will ask for three more volunteers to select a stone each and place these between the southern directional rock and the center circle connecting the southern directional rock to the center circle, thus completing the southern directional spoke of the medicine wheel. Then three volunteers for the western spoke and

lastly the northern spoke. These spokes or arms are called the four great paths to the Creator, illumination and clarity in the east; love and trust in the south; introspection and transformation in the west and wisdom and knowledge in the north.

Now the leader will ask for three more volunteers to select a stone each and place them between the eastern directional rock and the southern rock, thus completing one fourth of the outer circle. Then three more volunteers will select a stone each and place them between the southern directional rock and the western directional rock, thus completing half of the outer circle. Then three volunteers to complete the western to the northern, thus completing three quarters of the outer circle and lastly three volunteers to place their stones between the northern directional rock and the eastern directional rock, thus completing the outer circle. Your medicine wheel is now complete. The medicine wheel is to be treated with the greatest respect. You shouldn't cross back and forth over it or step on the rocks and try to never turn your back on the Sacred Fire.

The medicine wheel is a reminder of how to live our life. If you live according to the medicine wheel teaching, you will be living a well balanced life, you will be living life to the fullest.

At the St. George's Indian Band's Sunrise Ceremony, we make a giant medicine wheel of stones as a part of our sunrise ceremony. When our medicine wheel is complete, we pray and we sing the Honour Song to the four directions. We seek the protection of the spirits from the four directions beginning with the East. We pay our respects to the four colors of man, the four times of day, the four seasons, four spirit guides, four sacred medicines, four elements, and the four stages of life. The medicine wheel teaching is shared in the early morning at the Sunrise Ceremony and then and for the rest of the day, we try to live by that Teaching.

Creating the medicine wheel together is a great learning experience for the people present. A lot of people have commented that it is the first time they really understood the medicine wheel teaching. Usually I will wait until the four spokes of the medicine wheel have been completed before I explain what the directions represent as it always surprises and excites volunteers to discover that the direction they chose to help construct has a very special meaning to them in particular. I always tell people that everyone has a particular direction that they will feel the strongest in or a direction that has special meaning for them.

Medicine wheels may be constructed out of stones (rocks) or out of materials: leather, beads, a wooden or metal hoop and feathers. Pictures of a medicine wheel of stones (that is a smaller version of the one we make on Aboriginal Day out of large rocks) and one that may be made to hang in your home, vehicle or office to always remind you of the teachings of our culture and a reminder to live life on earth to the fullest and be the best that you can be.

St. George's Indian Band; Medicine Wheel. Accessed on Jan. 27th 2010. Retrieved from:

[http://www.sgib.ca/index\\_files/Page2702.htm](http://www.sgib.ca/index_files/Page2702.htm)

## Appendix 6 Understanding Legends and Oral Tradition

Oral history is a way to store knowledge and pass it along by word of mouth. Legends and stories are part of the oral history of First Nations peoples. These stories have many themes: the creation, trickster and animal stories that teach about the beliefs and values of these cultures. They are entertaining, humorous and easy to understand. They tell about the world of animals, plants, the sky and the universe. Stories differ from nation to nation but have similarities, too. First Nations cultures have their own languages, traditions and customs that are learned through storytelling and ceremonies.

The Elders in First Nation cultures are usually the ones who tell these stories. Elders are very important in First Nation cultures because they are wise and knowledgeable about their traditional teachings and spiritual ceremonies. They taught children how to live in balance and harmony with the environment. The Elders told stories to the children so they could learn the beliefs and values of their cultures. Many First Nations Elders continue to pass on these teachings and ceremonies today.

Office of the Treaty Commissioner. Accessed 11/04/09.  
Retrieved from: [http://www.otc.ca/TEACHERS/TTIC\\_K6\\_and\\_TELS/](http://www.otc.ca/TEACHERS/TTIC_K6_and_TELS/)

Within First Nations societies, storytelling is an important developmental and educational tool, and is a central characteristic of their rich oral traditions. Legends, stories and teachings, which remained intact, were passed down from generation to generation over thousands of years. Storytelling was not only used as an important instructive tool, it was also a means of entertainment during the long winter season.

The stories include prayers, songs and dances, which also have a type of story in them. Some stories provide practical instruction on traditional living, such as food preparation, child rearing, friendship, love, hunting routes, bird migrations, family lineage, and prophecies that describe major ecological and spiritual events.

First Nations peoples give great honour to their ancestors because without them, there is no gift of life. One of the most important and common themes is creation stories, which explain how life began on Earth and how each First Nation came to be. Each story is part of a greater whole, providing the particulars on spiritual, emotional, mental and physical teachings – in particular the “natural laws” that remain inherent in traditional teachings and tell how to live in balance with creation.

*Teaching Treaties in the Classroom, A Treaty Resource Guide for Grade 1*, pg. 31  
Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2008

Among Native North American cultures there were certain stories that were usually told at specific times of the year. Northeastern Indians told stories during the long cold season between the first and last frosts. Although you may not be able to restrict your use of these

stories to this period of time, it is good to point out to children the traditional storytelling seasons.

*Keepers of the Animals*, pg. 10, (Bruchac & Caduto, 1991)

Drums are often used to tell stories, many elders that use a drum with first light some sweetgrass and with the smoke they will smudge the four directions, the drum and himself. Smudging will enable to storyteller to give good, honourable stories. Legends and stories are traditionally told in the cool months as Mother Earth prepares for the long sleep of rest and rejuvenation and as the animals prepare for hibernation and migration.

*Grandfather Drum* (Plain, 1994)

## Appendix 7 – Talking Circles

The Talking Circle is an excellent teaching strategy which is consistent with First Nations values. The circle symbolizes completeness.

"When you put your knowledge in a circle, it's not yours anymore, it's shared by everyone."

- Douglas Cardinal, architect (*Regina Leader Post*, November 28, 1995).

In a Talking Circle, each one is equal and each one belongs. Students in a Talking Circle learn to listen and respect the views of others. A stick, stone or feather (something that symbolizes connectedness to the land) can be used to facilitate the circle. Whoever is holding the object has the right to speak and the others have the responsibility to listen. Those who are hesitant to speak may eventually speak because of the safety of the Talking Circle. The object "absorbs" the words said in the Circle. This emphasizes that what is shared in the Circle is not to be spread around outside the Circle. Many Talking Circles begin with words which foster the readiness of the Circle. This is an excellent opportunity to have Elders involved in the classroom. The intention is to open hearts to understand and connect with each other.

### **Guidelines for Talking Circles:**

(Adapted from The Sacred Tree Teachers' Guide (1982) published by the Four Worlds Development Project).

- if using a large group of students (thirty or more, perhaps) it is recommended that they are organized into an inner circle and an outer circle. Whoever is sitting in the inner circle can speak while those in the outer circle listen. Students can take turns being in the inner circle.
- during the circle time, people are free to respond however they want as long as these basic considerations are followed:
- all comments are addressed directly to the question or the issue, not to comments another person has made. Both negative and positive comments about what anyone else has to say should be avoided.
- only one person speaks at a time. Generally the person holding the object speaks. Students can indicate their desire to speak by raising their hands.
- silence is acceptable. There must be no negative reactions to the phrase, "I pass."
- going around the circle in a systematic way invites each person to participate without a few vocal people dominating the discussion.
- the group leader facilitates the discussion in non-judgmental way. In other words, instead of responding with words like, "great" or "good", the leader can acknowledge or clarify comments, such as, "I understand you are saying that..."
- speakers should feel free to express themselves in any way that is comfortable: by sharing a story, a personal experience, by using examples or metaphors, and so on.

Talking Circles last, in general from eight to fifteen minutes at the start of the lesson or to bring it to closure. Positively-focused topics can include:

- a success you recently had
- where you would live if you could live anywhere in the world
- something you would like to achieve in the next few years
- something you like about yourself

- something you wish you could do better
- something you wished for that came true

(Reprinted from the document *The Circle of Life: First Nations Content & Perspective for Middle Years Students*, an inservice, February 23, 1996, Maureen Johns Simpson, Indian and Métis Consultant, Regina Public Schools. *Used with permission.*)

To teach students about the concepts of the Talking Circle, have them work on the [Talking Circle learning object](#).

[http://www.saskschools.ca/curr\\_content/aboriginal\\_res/supplem.htm](http://www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/aboriginal_res/supplem.htm) “first nations talking circle accessed on 01/13/09

**For more information on talking circles see;**

<http://www.danielnpaul.com/TalkingCircle-FirstNations.html> “talking circle first nations” accessed on 01/13/10

## **Appendix 8                  Sweat Lodge**

Sweat Lodges are ceremonial places created by Aboriginal peoples to pray and sing. All people are welcome to join in a sweat.

Within a sweat ceremony rocks and their spirit are used to help the spiritual journeys of members in attendance. A rock that has not been used in sweat is strong and firm unbreakable to human strength. The same rock will be used in many sweats until the spirit has left. Spirits have left when the rock is able to be broken by human strength with little force. A rock song can be sung at the end of a sweat as way of communicating thanks to the rock for giving heat and giving up its spirit.

For Sweat Lodge Etiquette and a detailed explanation of the structure of a sweat lodge, materials used, and philosophies read pages 26-28 of Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies (Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, 2009)

## **Appendix 9                  Vision Quests**

### **Appendix 10 Conservation**

Aboriginal people, traditionally, were conscious as to how their activities would affect all life forms as they understood their existence depended on the quality of mother earth. It was understood that if you alter the life form of one, you alter the life form of all.

Aboriginal people never altered their environment to suit their needs. They adjusted to their environment and lived with the natural forces.

Traditional conservation was based on respect for plant and animal life and taking only what one needed and being thankful. The beliefs and practices were not an attempt to manage animal or plant life but to live in harmony and balance among them. The needs of animal and plant life came first and were respected as they were created first and depended on for human survival.

The Sacred Tree Reflections on Native American Spirituality Produced by Phil Lane

## **Appendix 11                Inukshuks**