Standard One

Curriculum Summary

Grades:

Third - Fifth

Standard One Goal: Students will develop knowledge and understanding of traditional American Indian land-related values and special relationships to land that formed the foundation for Indian cultural identity and sense of place on earth.

Rationale: The survival and successful continuation of American Indian tribal societies is dependent upon their abilities to know and retain special connections to their homelands. This is because traditions, origin stories and prayers that provide tribal uniqueness and identity are so often based upon special places, land-related incidents or natural gifts from the land. Additionally, tribal societies were once supported and sustained by their lands and may wish to again prosper in homelands that support the existence of those special places and natural gifts from the earth.

Lesson 1: Develop knowledge of various tribal origin stories.

Achievement Goal: Retell several tribal origin stories and respectfully discuss similarities and differences.

There are as many different origin stories as there are different cultures and peoples. Each group of people has their own beliefs about how the world and universe came to be. The origin stories relate how the universe and the earth were created and how time and space were established. In this lesson the students will learn about origin stories of other tribes and how to demonstrate respect for others’ beliefs.

Lesson 2: Learn about the origin of a tribal community.

Achievement Goal: Learn about the origins and history of several tribal communities, including one’s own.

Many reservations were established when American Indian tribes signed treaties with the United States government. Some reservations were reserved for one tribe only. Other reservations became home to several American Indian tribes who had never shared land before. Some tribes never moved to a reservation or their reservations were taken away from them. The students will listen to a tribal resource person and research the history of a local Indian community from the days before the treaties to the present day.

Lesson 3: Identify “gifts of nature” that exist in the community environment.
Achievement Goal: Prepare a list of “gifts from nature” and present a photo story about these gifts.

In this lesson, students will be asked to think about the useful items or materials nature provides to people and animals.

Lesson 4: Know ways of being respectful caretakers of community environments.
Achievement Goal: Describe ways students and their families can provide respectful care for the environment to ensure it is healthy for future generations.

Students will think about and discuss the Indian proverb “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children.” They will also be asked to discuss the traditional principle that plants, animals, and other aspects of the environment are relatives and should be treated as such. Students will learn what it means to be a good relative – to their families and to the community environment.

Lesson 5: Identify things that make one's community and the land around it special.
Achievement Goal: Identify things, buildings, landmarks or landscapes in the community that tell a story about the community's history.

A long time ago, peoples' homes and special places were not identified by a street address. People remembered where places were using stories, memories, and other landmarks or places. In this lesson, students will find and research the oldest landmark or structure in a community or certain area. Learning more about this landmark, they will uncover interesting stories about their community and how that community is special to the people who live there.
Background:
There are as many different origin stories as there are different cultures and peoples. Each group of people has their own beliefs about how the world and universe came to be. The origin stories relate how the universe and the earth were created and how time and space were established. In this lesson the students will learn about origin stories of tribes and how to demonstrate respect for others’ beliefs.

American Indian tribes, like many other peoples, have explanations for how they originated as a distinct, unique people. Many stories tell of powerful beings that created peoples’ place in the world. From these stories, tribes derived laws, values, traditions and ceremonies. Many origin stories stressed kindness, generosity, cooperation and respect for the earth. In these stories, the universe could not be created without these teachings.

Some of the American Indian creation stories tell of bad or mean beings or characters. These bad characters rarely prevail, but their presence and actions serve a useful purpose by teaching valuable lessons about the potential for harm in bad decisions.

Many tribal individuals consider their beliefs as important everyday elements that contribute to rich tradition and cultural heritage. These stories are represented in ceremonies and teachings. They are passed on to each new generation in stories. The beliefs and traditions connect people to the land, plant life, all living creatures, and to the mysteries of birth, life, death and the spirit world. Some native people compare these connections to those they have with family and relatives.

American Indian origin stories are not to be treated or told as simple "fairy tales." Respect for others’ beliefs will make this lesson an experience that teaches appreciation of diverse communities.

Student Activity:
- Explain briefly what an American Indian origin/creation story is to the class.
- Engage the students in a search for local American Indian origin stories. If found, bring the story(s) into class for discussion.
• Acquire a video from (1) below and show selected creation stories to the class.
• Have the students study the Internet web sites (2), (3) and (4) below and read selected origin stories. If Internet connections are not available for students, print and distribute copies of selected origin stories for them to read.
• Compare in class an American Indian origin story to another culture's origin story. Facilitate a discussion. Remind the students that American Indian stories are just as valid as other cultures' stories and these beliefs must be presented with respect.
• Have the students create a classroom mural that depicts an American Indian creation story and share with the school by placing it in a hallway or gymnasium.
• Have the students interpret the mural in a brief written report.
• Conduct a class discussion on the similarities and differences between American Indian origin stories. Origin stories teach of creation but also many other lessons. Ask the students what lessons, values, and beliefs the stories reveal. What cultural knowledge and skills do the origin stories teach?

Evaluation:

• Assess students’ abilities to search for and find American Indian origin stories using the resources below.
• Evaluate the students’ discussion participation.
• Assess students’ respect for the similarities and differences between various American Indian origin stories.

Resources:
Video: Tales of Wonder II, Traditional Native American Children’s Stories, 1998
Rich-Heape Films, Inc. 60 min. (http://www.richheape.com/native-american-videos/Tales_of_Wonder_II_Native_American_Stories_For_Children.htm)

1. “Native American Culture Site”, listing several traditional stories from a variety of tribes, http://www.ewebtribe.com/NACulture/stories.htm
4. http://www.indianlegend.com/default.htm Several origin stories and traditional tales from more than a dozen tribes. The website is in a easy-to-use format.
Achievement Goal:
Learn about the origins and history of several tribal communities, including one’s own.

Time:
Two class periods

Core:
Cultural Arts, History, Language Arts

Grades: 3rd - 5th

Background:
Before the creation of reservations, American Indian tribes lived in every part of this continent. Origin stories place them here soon after the land’s creation. The areas in which the tribe traversed or settled, in which they hunted, fished, gathered, or planted were their aboriginal homelands. In the cases of the great nomadic tribes, these homelands were hundreds of millions of acres. Other native societies settled in smaller areas and irrigated lands for cultivation of food.

As non-native people began to settle upon Indian lands and overwhelm native communities, many tribes began to sign treaties with the United States government to stop this encroachment and retain some of their lands for the tribe’s exclusive use and benefit. This is how many reservations were established. However, some reservations were reserved for one tribe only. Other reservations became home to several American Indian tribes who had never shared land before. Some tribes never moved to a reservation or their reservations were taken away from them after the treaty was signed.

Moving to reservations or losing homelands caused many changes in the lives of tribal people. Tribes had to adapt to living in a smaller area or to living in a type of environment they were not familiar with. Despite the hardships this created, tribes and tribal communities still value the land they have and are always seeking to gain back land and use the lands they have wisely. Many American Indian people carried with them their ancient values, traditions and cultures. Some leaders successfully kept their extended families together by moving into certain areas on the reservations and establishing communities. Each of these newer communities has a different, unique history that is important to know and understand.

In this lesson, the students will listen to a tribal resource person and research the history of their community and several other Indian communities or tribes.

Student Activity:
- Reprint the “Tribal Territory and Reservations” diagram following this lesson on a poster board or transparency. Discuss the difference between aboriginal territory and reservations of the Apache, Sioux, and Cherokee.
• Show a map of American Indian reservations to the students and have them identify their own location as well as the present-day homelands of a few other tribes.

• Recruit a tribal resource person who is familiar with local American Indian community history and culture to come into the classroom. Set up a video recorder and record the presentation.

• Have the tribal resource person relate the history of the local Indian community from earliest treaties and reservation days, presenting important historical events.

• Have the tribal resource person assist the students with developing a list of tribal words that are used in and around the community to describe places, animals and other items of local or tribal significance. List the names on the board for the students to copy and repeat out loud.

• Allow time for students to ask questions about community origins, special relationships the people have with the land, and places that are sacred to the people.

• List some names of tribes on the board and assign students the task of conducting an Internet search on another American Indian reservation or tribal community. Tell them to find at least two American Indian reservations and gather as much information as possible about the people who live there and the origins of their tribal communities. For example, they may have originally come from Tennessee or New York but now live in Oklahoma. See if students can find out how that happened.

Evaluation:

• Students will be evaluated based upon their participation in discussions with the tribal resource person on community origins and connections.

• Assess students’ abilities to effectively research the Internet for other tribal community information.

Resources:

Fig. 1.2 Some maps reflect the differences in interpretation of original territory and the greater reliance on ethnographic or cultural data, mainly languages, culture elements, etc., rather than political territoriality. These examples are based upon Kroeber's Culture Area map (1939). Source: Sutton, Indian Land Tenure (1975). The composite idea is borrowed from U. S. Congress, House, 1953. (See section 4). Keep in mind that Kroeber did not perceive his culture area boundaries as equivalent to political territoriality. See my discussion in Sutton (2002). Also note that the Kroeberian areas, even if they appear to correspond at times to adjudicated claims areas, were not perceived as legal entities when first designed in the 1930s. Map copyrighted by Imre Sutton.
Achievement Goal:
Prepare a list of “gifts from nature” and present a photo/drawing essay about these gifts.

Time:
Two class periods

Core:
Cultural Arts, Science

Grades: 3rd - 5th

Background:
In this lesson, students will be asked to think about the useful items or materials nature provides to people and animals.

In the past, American Indians were very innovative in how they survived by relying on their environment. They observed nature very closely and they became extremely knowledgeable about wildlife, plants and natural resources. They knew the life cycle patterns and characteristics of plants and animals. They knew where to find food and medicinal plants. They knew the correct seasonal times to harvest plants for medicinal use and for food. They harvested plants where they grew in abundance and harvested the plants only after the seeds were scattered into the wind. To ensure the survival of a species they took from nature only what was needed for survival. This knowledge and care ensured the welfare of the tribe and the continuation of the plants animals they relied upon.

They relied so much on the environment for their survival that they considered the items, materials and foods they reaped from the environment as gifts from nature. In turn, many American Indian groups were reverent towards nature, respected the forces that produced the gifts they used, and gave thanks for these gifts in the forms of celebrations, such as the Green Corn Festival celebrated by Creek, Cherokee, Seminole, Yuchi, Iroquois and others.

The following passage illustrates this relationship well. It is written by a member of an Eskimo tribe in Alaska called the Yupiaq (the full citation for this passage is found in the resource section at the end of this lesson.)

Products of nature extended to [the Yupiaq] ideas for developing their technology. The spider web provided the idea for a net; the snowshoe hare’s feet and tracks, their snowshoes; the mouse’s chamber lined with grass, their houses; the moon’s phases, their calendar; the Big Dipper and the North Star, their timepiece at night; wind directions, their indicators of weather; flint and slate, their cutlery.

Certain plants and herbs gave them their healing powers and they discovered that certain living things were adapted to live in certain areas, while others were able to make physical adjustments through changes in coloration, forming a heavier coat for winter, hibernation, estivation, all under trying conditions. They noticed change across time and conditions,
Preparation:

- Contact a member of the tribe’s Natural Resources office or a biologist/ecologist familiar with plants and wildlife in the area. Ask them to come to the class to conduct a nature walk and speak to the children about some “gifts of nature” that come from the local environment.
- Review and prepare for the lesson plan listed in resource (2) that enables children to create natural dyes from plants.

Student Activity:

- Read the Yupiaq passage above to the students. Conduct a class discussion on the meaning of Angayuqaq’s writings and what makes something a gift from nature.
- Have students create a list of indigenous gifts of nature from their own region of the country. Remind students that these gifts can include food, medicinal plants, sources of water, materials for artwork and adornment, etc.
- Recruit a person from a tribal natural resource office or a plant and wildlife biologist to guide the students on a nature walk at a nearby location.
- Have students bring a note pad to write down what the guide identifies as an indigenous gift of nature. Look for birds, insects, types of trees and plants, seeds and water sources. Take photographs or make drawings of these gifts.
- Return to the classroom and conduct a class discussion about the students’ observations and drawings and why each item presented during the walk is a gift of nature. Make a list of these gifts on the board.
- Make a display of the photographs or drawings from the field trip. Identify each of nature’s gifts.
- Assign students the task of writing a short essay about one of their favorite gifts.
- If dye plants were collected during the nature walk, show the children how to create dyes from those plants.

Evaluation:

- Evaluated students in their overall participation in discussions, activities, and nature walk.
- Assess their understanding of the teachings of the Yupiaq.
- Assess their understanding of what makes something a gift from nature as expressed in their essay.

Resources:

Background:

There is a saying that is often attributed to a variety of American Indian tribes and native leaders, although its exact origin is unknown: “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children.”

This saying expresses a principle that is common to many American Indian cultures. The well-known Haudenosaunee principle called the “Seventh Generation” philosophy states it a different way and relates it to government and important decisions: “The Chiefs are instructed that when they deliberate on the serious matters of the Council, they are to consider the impact of their decisions on seventh generation into the future. This way, they are to proceed cautiously, thinking of what effect their decisions will have on the welfare of their descendants. It requires a special attention to the future. But it also produces a sense of stability (quoted from resource (2) below)."

In addition to taking into consideration future generations in important decisions, many American Indian cultures believe that respect should be shown to plants and animals currently living in the environment as well. This is because all things are interdependent and rely upon each other as relatives do. Thus, being a respectful caretaker of the community involves being aware of the interrelationships within the community environment. It means being a good relative.

In the first part of this lesson, students will discuss how one can be a good relative by thinking about the children of tomorrow and listening to one’s elders. The second part of this lesson will help illustrate the principle that things in nature are interdependent and our relationship with them resembles the relationship we have with relatives.

Preparation:

- For day 2, obtain a copy of Luther Standing Bear’s book listed in the resources section of this lesson.
- Review the lesson plan “Food Chains & Food Webs” at [http://www.unr.edu/nnap/PW/pw_fdchain.htm](http://www.unr.edu/nnap/PW/pw_fdchain.htm). Review and prepare for the activity “A Student Food Web.” This lesson helps illustrate the fact that
all living organisms are interdependent. While reviewing the lesson, think about the plants and animals the local tribe or tribal community relied upon. Substitute these organisms for the ones mentioned in the Washoe-focused lesson.

**Student Activity:**

**Day 1:**
- Begin the lesson by discussing with the children what the following proverb means: “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children.”
- Have the students brainstorm about what it means to be a good relative. Ask them how they would apply this idea of being a good relative to members of their family who aren’t born yet. Ask them to think up scenarios in which actions or decisions today may affect relatives who are not born yet.
- Read out loud sections of the Seventh Generation article found in resource (2). Explain to students that decisions made about land often affect people who are not yet born because the land is ever-present but also capable of being changed. Its enduring presence connects ancestors, people living today, and future generations.

**Day 2:**
- Study American Indian wisdom and teachings concerning relationships with the natural world. Have the students study Luther Standing Bear’s book, (1) below, particularly Chapter VII. Lead a class discussion on Standing Bear’s teachings regarding land connections.
- Lead a class discussion on basic responsibility of being a respectful caretaker of the environment. If the student treats the environment as a respected living relative, what does that mean in terms of careful treatment of the environment? Have the students discuss and answer that question.
- Demonstrate to the children the interdependence of all living things through the activity “A Student Food Web.” Discuss with the children how one can demonstrate care for the environment by not over-harvesting, over-hunting, or damaging one particular organism in the web. Relate this mistreatment to mistreatment of a relative by stealing from them, damaging their property, or harming them.

**Evaluation:**
- Students will be evaluated on the quality of their participation in discussions and activities regarding what it is to be a good relative and responsibilities for the environment.

**Resources:**
2. “Culture: What are the values, beliefs, and traditions that the Haudenosaunee seek to maintain?”, Haudenosaunee Home Page, http://sixnations.buffnet.net/Culture/?article=seventh_generation
Achievement Goal:
Identify things, buildings, or landmarks in the community and the land around it that tell a story about the community’s history.

Time:
Multiple class periods

Core:
Science, Cultural Arts

Grades: 3rd - 5th

Background:
A long time ago, peoples’ homes and special places were not identified with a street address. People remembered where places were using stories, memories, and other landmarks or places. In this lesson, students will find and research the oldest landmark or structure in a community or certain area. Learning more about this landmark and speaking to elders, they will uncover interesting stories about their community and how that community is special to the people who live there.

Preparation:
- Review the lesson plan “Find the Oldest” at http://www.pbs.org/wnet/newyork/laic/lessons/e1_t2-lp.html. You may want to research old man-made landmarks in the area to help the students generate ideas about what landmarks they should research and what resources are available at the local library, historical society, or city hall. Before the class discussions, you may want to assign to the students the task of asking their parents or grandparents what they think the oldest man made structure is in their community.
- Invite an elder to speak to the children about an old building or structure. Remind students about how one respectfully listens to an elder.

Student Activity:
- Have the students research the oldest structures in the community in groups. Have them present their findings in class and determine which community structure is the oldest.
- Have an elder speak to the students about a particular building or a landmark. Ask the elder to share their memories of the building or landmark and relate it to events that have happened in the community.

Evaluation:
- Evaluate the students on their group research skills. Evaluate the completeness of the information they present to the class.
- Evaluate the listening skills of the students while they are being spoken to by the elder.
Resources:

1. PBS Kids, Learning Adventures in Citizenship, 