

FOUR DIRECTIONS LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Elder	Stephen Augustine
Nation	Mi'kmaq
Lesson Plan Grade Level	Junior (Grades 1-6)
Time Required	3 days
Subject Strand Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Arts • Dramatic Arts • Visual arts • Healthy Living • Geography • Science
Traditional Teachings	Mi'kmaq Creation Story
Teacher Summary	<p>The Mi'kmaq Creation Story describes how life began for all things. This process occurred in seven stages or levels of creation and is described as follows:</p> <p>Level 1: The sky represents the Giver of Life, Gisoolg, who creates everything. Creation is a mystery that contains everything and is within everything. It is regarded with awe and reflected in all aspects of life, seen and unseen.</p> <p>Level 2: The Sun creates life and gives us our Shadows. The shadows reflect the identities, characteristics and spirits of <u>ancestors</u>. The Shadows are the joining of earth, matter, and the blood of human life. The Sun connects the spirit world to the physical world and is represented by the centre direction.</p> <p>Level 3: The third level of Creation is on the surface of Mother Earth. In the Mi'kmaq language, several words are directly related to the word for "Earth." For example, the word for the skin of a drum and the word for the Mi'kmaq people are related to each other and to the Mi'kmaq word for Mother Earth. The beat of a drum is the <u>heartbeat</u> of Mother Earth. The surface skin of Mother Earth gives rise to life, including people, and this is reflected in the word <i>Oosgitjinoo</i> which means "the person who has peeled himself off the surface of the Earth and is standing erect." <i>Oosgitjinoo</i> is a word used to refer to the Mi'kmaq people.</p> <p>Level 4: The first man, Glooscap, is created from a bolt of lightning. The bolt hits the Earth and his body is created on the Earth's surface. He is lying with his head in the direction of the rising sun and his feet are facing the setting sun. His arms are outstretched to the north and south. When the lightning meets with the</p>

elements of the Earth that made up Glooscap's body, a life force is created. When lightning hits a second time, Glooscap develops fingers and toes, and seven sacred parts to his head (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and a mouth) appear. At the third bolt of lightning, Glooscap is freed from the surface of the Earth to walk and move about.

Glooscap gives thanks to Mother Earth and Grandfather Sun for his creation, and pays his respects to the **South**, the **West**, the **North** and the **East** directions. Once returning to the east where he was created, Glooscap is visited by an eagle that tells him he will soon be joined by his family to help him understand his place in this world. The eagle drops a feather, which Glooscap catches. This feather gives him strength and serves as a symbol of connection between his people and the Giver of Life, Grandfather Sun and Mother Earth.

Level 5: Glooscap meets his **Grandmother**, who is born from a rock. She teaches him to respect her wisdom and knowledge about the stars, the wind, the seasons and the tides, the characteristics and the behaviour of the plants and animals, and how to make food, clothing and shelter. For their sustenance, Glooscap takes the life of a **marten**, asking *permission* of the animal first, and giving thanks to the Giver of Life, Grandfather Sun and Mother Earth afterwards. Then, using the seven sparks from the bolts of lightning that created Glooscap, and seven pieces of dry wood, cousin **Whirlwind** is invited to create the Great Spirit **Fire**. Grandmother and Glooscap then feast to celebrate Grandmother's arrival into the world.

Level 6: Glooscap meets a young man who says he is Glooscap's nephew, a creation of Whirlwind, who passed through the ocean in the direction of the rising sun, causing foam to form and blow ashore. This foam has rolled in sand and picked up rocks and wood and feathers, eventually resting on sweet grass. With the help of the Giver of Life, Grandfather Sun and Mother Earth, the **nephew** was created. The nephew offers vision to the future and comes as a gift of the ancestors. Nephew is also a responsibility for Glooscap to guide, since the young turn to the old for direction in life. And just as Glooscap took the life of the marten for survival, the nephew calls upon the fish to give up their lives. Glooscap gives thanks, apologizing for taking the shadows of the fish and for taking elements of Mother Earth for their own survival. Again they feast, and continue to learn from Grandmother.

Level 7: Glooscap's **mother** appears, coming first as a leaf on a tree that falls to the ground and collects dew. The Giver of Life, Grandfather Sun and Mother Earth have made Glooscap's mother from this dew to bring gifts to her children. These gifts include the colours of the world, understanding and love, so that her children will know how to share and care for one another. Glooscap has his nephew gather food for a feast to celebrate the creation of Glooscap's mother. Glooscap provides leadership, respecting the teachings of the elders, the vision and strength of the young people, the gifts of the ancestors, and the

	<p>teachings on how to rely on each other and to respect and care for one another. In this way, they live a good life.</p>
Learner Objectives	<p>Knowledge/Understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand creation from a Mi'kmaq perspective • To reflect, deconstruct and evaluate the Mi'kmaq Creation Story <p>Inquiry/Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide theoretical aspects of the creative process to role playing • To explore characters and issues drawn from the Mi'kmaq Creation Story • To appreciate the importance of physical fitness and health <p>Skills/Applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop proficiency in listening, speaking, writing, questioning and negotiating • To experience first hand the roles of performer, audience, and playwright • To use non-verbal communication to portray character and define relationships amongst characters • To create art pieces that reflect emotion and mood
Suggested Teaching Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generate a discussion on where the first people came from. Introduce the concept that people have different ideas on where humans come from. The Mi'kmaq, for instance, have a story about Creation. One of their Elders, Stephen Augustine, has traditional teachings to share about the Mi'kmaq story of Creation. 2. View www.fourdirectionteachings.com together as a class to hear the <i>Mi'kmaq Creation Story</i> and teachings of Stephen Augustine. 3. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Individually or in pairs, have students listen to Stephen's teaching, "The First Level of Creation." Discuss seasons and other concepts of <u>cycles</u> (e.g. life and death, the calendar, weather patterns, etc.) On a piece of flipchart paper, have the students make illustrations and/or list how cycles are important to life and to the creation story. b) Listen to "The Second Level of Creation," and lead a discussion about shadows and how they are cast. Take a walk outside with your students and have them notice their shadows. With chalk, have the students work in small groups or pairs to outline their shadows. Have them pose in different ways. Have them notice how stretched out they are at certain times of the day and how short they are at other times. Ask the students if they can figure out any patterns related to time of day and shadow length. For indoor activities, have the students create silhouette drawings of their bodies or profiles. Make shadow puppets using the Mi'kmaq Creation Story characters. c) Listen to "The Third Level of Creation," and discuss the importance that Mother Earth has for

everyone. Ask the students what they can do as a class to show kindness and respect towards the Earth. Suggest that the students plan a clean up day once or twice a month of the school yard, or if possible to participate in a gardening project. This will allow the students some extra time to spend outside. Other ways to get outside and learning are to plan a walk to a nearby park or trail area, or even around the block. Have the students notice any small and interesting plants; try to identify different tree species in your area by using a species key.

Since the heartbeat of Mother Earth is the drumbeat, schedule a visit from a First Nations drummer. If a professional drummer is not available, bring in some drums to the class and teach about beat, rhythm and coordination. Have students build simple drums by using simple materials.

d) Listen to “The Fourth Level of Creation,” and discuss how the senses are important for us. Have students understand about the importance of hearing by taking them outside to listen to as many sounds as possible. Have the students write down in a list all of the kinds of sounds that they can hear. Have them categorize which sounds they find calming, annoying, loud, high-pitched, natural, and human-made. Ask the students if trees make sounds. Do different trees make different sounds? Do trees make specific sounds right before it rains? Have the students create their own sound effects to emphasize specific situations/scenarios, e.g. wind, traffic jam, train. Let the students know that listening is extremely important to the Creation Story.

e) Listen to “The Fifth Level of Creation,” and discuss rocks and minerals. Grandmother was born from a rock, which is part of Mother Earth. Teach the students about different types of rock (metamorphic, sedimentary and igneous). Visit some areas where the students can gather small rocks and stones to make a small rock garden. Students can learn about fossils and how mildly acidic rainfall affects certain types of rock (limestone). Let the students look at rocks and minerals more closely with magnifying lenses.

f) Listen to “The Sixth Level of Creation,” and discuss the importance of good physical fitness and health. Have the students perform fitness tests with kits provided by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. These kits have short jumping ropes and double dutch lengths. Jumping rope and creating other types of games are fun ways to promote physical fitness. Plan a full or half day of fun physical activities (e.g. winter or summer obstacle courses, sled races, race relays, three-legged races.)

g) Listen to “The Seventh Level of Creation,” and discuss the colour wheel. Teach the primary colours and how to make secondary colours by mixing the primary colours. Make a large collaborative art piece which focuses on colour as the main element of the piece. Divide the students into major colour groups and have each group design and paint images and symbols that can be associated with their

colour, e.g. yellow sun, birds, flowers. Collage the pieces together to create a classroom collaborative art piece. The students will be reminded of the association of Glooscap's mother's gift of colour to the world.

3. In groups, have students review the seven levels of creation as told by Stephen Augustine. The directions are very important to the creation of Glooscap. Ask the students if they can point out the four directions. Play a game with the students: block out the curtains/windows and have students move to the parts of the room that they believe that direction to be in. If you call out "East!" the students should move to where they believe East is located. Do not give them any hints but the students can assist each other if you permit. Make it an elimination game where students who are not in the Eastern direction are eliminated and need to sit on the ground or in the middle of the class. The remaining students can continue to play. Call out "North!" and the first three students to get there can continue to play and everyone else is eliminated. Call out any other direction and have a single winner. You can play this type of game outside or blindfolded and have the students use their other senses to guide them in choosing the correct direction e.g. sound cues, traffic, school yard noises, etc. In winter, the students can map out the route that Glooscap took on his earlier journeys. The students can start out in the East and then walk towards the west, tracking their steps in the snow. The student then walks to the South and then North to finally meet up to the east again. What design/shape is in the snow? Have the students compare these shapes with images that were etched into the cliffs of Kejimikujik National Park, located in Southwestern Nova Scotia. These images are called *petroglyphs*.
4. Discuss the meaning of the Mi'kmaq Creation Story. Why do the Mi'kmaq use the terms "Mother Earth" and "Grandfather Sun?" How was Glooscap created? Why did Glooscap ask permission to kill the animals? What did Glooscap do after killing the animals? Why did he do this? What did Grandmother teach him? What did Glooscap learn from his mother?
5. As a class, make a master chart of all the ideas on the characters of the story, their looks, and their words. Develop a script to tell the story from beginning to end and act it out in a drama production. Assign characters to play the roles of Glooscap, Grandfather Sun, The Giver of Life, Grandmother, Mother Earth, Whirlwind, and Glooscap's mother and nephew. Play a drum to represent the heartbeat of Mother Earth and/or play a Mi'kmaq song (see links below). Invite parents to see the final production.

Optional Exercises:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mi'kmaq have many stories about Glooscap. If possible, invite a Mi'kmaq elder to the class to tell more stories about Glooscap, his twin brother, etc. • Reflect on the Mi'kmaq Creation Story in journals. Explain what it says about how people should treat animals and plants and why. • Make a petroglyph class mural using finger paints, charcoal, and pastels. The students can model their images from the ones seen in Kejimikujik National Park. Add other elements such as handprints, animal prints, animal images, etc.
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation • Level • Permission • Petroglyph
Materials Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart • Costume materials • Drum • Paper • Paints, pastels, charcoal • Magnifying glasses • Physical fitness kits, jumping ropes
Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher evaluation of charts for completion and accuracy 2. Teacher evaluation of script development participation 3. Peer evaluation of role-playing creativity 4. Student observation checklist 5. Physical fitness heart rate chart 6. Anecdotal records

Diagram for MI'KMAQ Curriculum

