

TURTLE ISLAND CONSERVATION

Miskwaadesi and A'no:wara

CURRICULUM-BASED ACTIVITIES GUIDE





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TURTLE ISLAND CONSERVATION (TIC)

The Toronto Zoo's Ways of Knowing Partnership Turtle Island Conservation programme shares the hopes and goals of our First Nation partners in the commitment to preserve wild life and wild places for those yet to come. The TIC programme partners with Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee First Nation communities in Ontario, to incorporate Traditional Knowledge into turtle and wetland conservation programming.

The intention of this partnership is to bring together Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders, First Nation community members, and TIC programme team members to support cultural and natural history priorities of the individual community, while building awareness with non-Aboriginals. The programme employs First Nations youth and is guided by a First Nation Advisory group.

All knowledge and teachings remain with the partner community, while awaiting their decisions on how the information is to be used.

Mission

Turtle Island Conservation partners with First Nation Communities to preserve cultural and natural landscapes.

Vision

Preservation of First Nation Ways of Knowing will be utilized to preserve Traditional Knowledge to guide communities for generations to come.

Our Objectives are:

1. To foster respect for self, community, Mother earth and the Creator.
2. To recognize and record significant landscapes valued by First Nations communities.
3. To integrate traditional ways of knowing with western science to monitor, protect, respect and restore landscapes.
4. To integrate language, art, and crafts to sustain traditional ways of knowing and living.
5. To facilitate understanding of the diversity of First Nation culture and way of knowing among non-Aboriginals



ways of knowing partnership
TURTLE ISLAND
conservation

For further information and companion resources available from this programme please visit:

www.turtleislandconservation.com

www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/FrogWatchOntario.asp

www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/TurtleTally.asp

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The TIC programme, located at the Toronto Zoo, respectfully acknowledges the wisdom and guidance of all First Nation Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers. The sacred Turtle Teachings this project is based upon have existed since the beginning of time and are shared to foster and guide generations to come. It is with good hearts and minds we honour these original teachings so that each one of us walks the good red road our ancestors planned for us.

We respectfully acknowledge with infinite gratitude those who have contributed including all First Nation Elders; First Nation community members; Traditional Knowledge Keepers; First Nation Advisory group members; funding partners; First Nation authors; previous TIC programme coordinators Benny Michaud, Candace Maracle, and Barbara Fillion; Turtle Island summer students Andrea Harquail, Kaitlyn Watson, Skye Vandenburg, Marilyn Desani, Jocelyn Pelltier and Randy Pitawanakwat; Toronto Zoo staff; and the many children and youth who continue to inspire us for generations to come.

All my relations,
Misheeken n'dodem, Shkode Neegan Wawaskone,
Shawanaga n'doonji Anishinaabe Kwe n'dow.
 Turtle Clan, Kim Wheatley, Head of the Fire Flower,
 Shawanaga First Nation, Anishinaabe

CURRICULUM-BASED ACTIVITIES

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AS THE JOURNEY BEGINS

The Toronto Zoo's Turtle Island Conservation programme partners with Ontario's First Nation communities to bring together Keepers of Traditional Knowledge, Elders, and First Nation community members to establish conservation needs. With these partnerships, the value and awareness of Traditional Knowledge with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is recognized and promoted.

At the request of our First Nation partners, this TIC Curriculum-based Activities document is a companion to the *Walking with Miskwaadesi* and *Walking with A'no:wara* books, developed as culturally appropriate, Aboriginal-focused education resources. These documents incorporate both western science and Traditional Knowledge of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. This document was designed to complement the book, *The Ways of Knowing Guide Earth's Teachings*, and become a part of the education bundle from TIC. This guide is a detailed, cross-cultural tool for teachers and community members to aid in understanding some of the traditional practices and teachings of both Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. Using these resources together provides an opportunity to engage First Nations and non-Native people to celebrate the relationships between people, land, and water.

Grounding oneself in the worldview, traditions, beliefs, and stories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Nations gives participants the opportunity to engage with sustainable solutions for generations to come.

This includes the importance of species preservation and biodiversity. *The Ways of Knowing Guide Earth's Teachings* illustrates the importance of this worldview:

The First Nation worldview recognizes all that exists on Mother Earth reinforcing the significance of what has and will continue to sustain them. By continuing to practice the value of respect, relationship and responsibility Traditional Knowledge meaningfully contributes to the continued existence of all plants, animals, lands and waters for generations to come. (11-12)

Miskwaadesi, the Painted turtle, is the only Ontario turtle species which is not currently on the Species at Risk list. This turtle is utilized as one of the last turtles whose voice is still strong enough to communicate the difficulties faced by turtles in Ontario. Turtles play a critical role in the maintenance of healthy water and watersheds. They are also an important member of the wetland ecosystem. As turtle populations decrease, changes in wetland health are apparent, ultimately affecting larger bodies of water such as the Great Lakes.

The turtle is spiritually significant in First Nation cultures as a knowledge holder and teacher. Both Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Nations recognize the turtle as a crucial member of the Creation Story. The turtle is recognized as a continuous time keeper, using the scutes of its shell to record the thirteen moons of the year and the twenty-eight day lunar cycle.

This resource was created for students in grades four to six. However, teachers of other grades may wish to adapt exercises for their own grade and culturally appropriate activities. This resource is written from a First Nations perspective and is culturally infused with Traditional Knowledge and Teachings. This information is important in the educational development of First Nations youth, and is of equal importance for cultural awareness and sensitivity of all youth. This resource also promotes dialogue between Elders and youth, which is important in the transfer of Traditional Knowledge.

Each activity, within the thirteen chapters, begins with 'Teacher Background,' outlining important information about the activities and additional resources such as supplementary web links. The 'Materials' section outlines the tools needed to complete the activity, while the 'Steps' section gives a step-by-step breakdown of the activity. Worksheets needed for applicable activities are found at the end of the document in the 'Activity Worksheets' section.



Suggested Toronto Zoo resource links to bookmark:

Turtle Island Conservation

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/tici.asp>

Ways of Knowing Guide

http://www.torontozoo.com/pdfs/Stewardship_Guide.pdf

Native Language Frog call CD

<http://www.torontozoo.com/conservation/tic.asp?pg=cds>

Adopt-A-Pond Turtle Curriculum

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/turtleCurriculum.asp>

Adopt-A-Pond

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond>

Ontario Turtle Tally

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/TurtleTally.asp>

FrogWatch Ontario

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/FrogwatchOntario.asp>

English Turtle Identifier Guide

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/turtles.asp>

Ojibway Turtle Identifier Guide

<http://www.torontozoo.com/pdfs/tic/ojibway-turtle-new.pdf>

Mohawk Turtle Identifier Guide

<http://www.torontozoo.com/pdfs/tic/mohawk-turtle.pdf>

English Turtle Identifier Guide

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/turtles.asp>

English Frog Identifier Guide

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/frogs.asp>

Native language road signs

<http://www.torontozoo.com/conservation/tic.asp?pg=TurtleCrossing>

The thirteen chapters mind the thirteen moons, the thirteen moons on the turtle's back (scutes or sections of shell), and may be undertaken in whole or in part after reading the appropriate chapter of *Walking with Miskwaadesi* or *Walking with A'no:wara*.

This activity document outlines and promotes collaborative engagement with the interconnections which surround people on earth. It is important for young people to understand the connections within their culture and with the world around them.

In addition to the supplied resources in the Curriculum-based Activities document, the books *Walking with Miskwaadesi* or *Walking with A'no:wara* are available to help reinforce experiences from the activities. TIC also has many other resources available to address First Nation-focused education about Species at Risk including Species Identifier Cards, Frog calls CDs, and turtle crossing signs in both the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee languages.

SACRED SPACES AND SPECIAL PLACES

TEACHER BACKGROUND



Before *'Walking with Miskwaadesi'* or *'Walking with A'nó:wara,'* one must take time to appreciate Ontario's First Nation communities for the rich culture embedded within them. First Nation communities across Ontario have unique knowledge and histories, as well as interconnected relationships which form the basis for many historical practices. The activities outlined in this book ask students, teachers, and community members to explore these relationships and encourage a learning process fostered through dialogue between Elders and youth. Many teachings and practices regarding sacred spaces and places within communities involve animal life, plant growth, or changing seasons. This multi-layered dynamic reflects a web of information which is interconnected and wholistic.

There are special spaces and places located in all communities and it is crucial to learn where they are and the stories related to them. This knowledge is held by Traditional Knowledge Keepers. While knowledge may be known by some, information is slowly being lost as Elders pass on into the spirit world. Traditional Teachings and place names regarding topics such as medicine picking, hunting territories, and food harvesting preserve cultures which have existed for thousands of years.

Cultural preservation begins with the education of youth, while fostering dialogue between Elders and youth. With the creation of a secure online mapping

system, communities have the opportunity to record and archive the spaces and places which are important to the individual community. This allows information to become accessible to students and the entire community. A community cultural map identifies special places to increase awareness of local environment, spirit of place, to guide community planning, and help preserve Species at Risk. This map is a wholistic teaching tool and will continue on as a living document.

The online community cultural mapping initiative will provide a means of preserving and geo-referencing Traditional oral Knowledge in a form which is user-friendly while remaining private to the communities gathering this information. Geo-referencing is a way to visually connect Traditional Knowledge with the land and unite that knowledge with western science. This will be a means to record oral history, both cultural and natural. Collecting oral histories helps satisfy the struggle to find a balance of Indigenous identity in a modern Euro-Canadian world. Using an online Google Application Programmable Interface (API), pictures, video, and audio can also be geo-referenced. This adds another rich layer to the map, similar to the natural way of teaching or passing on Traditional Knowledge. All of the information collected is geo-referenced and then transferred to the Global Information System (GIS), while maintaining privacy for the community who holds the information.



ACTIVITY

SACRED SPACES AND SPECIAL PLACES: MAPPING OUR COMMUNITIES

Process: The first step in this journey is to acquire a map of the community which can be obtained from a variety of sources such as the internet. This will be the region that students explore culturally. Distribute one map to each student.

Places and activities to record include the locations of their own homes; the locations of traditional medicines and sacred rocks/spaces; where to receive or give teachings; where to have ceremonies; places to portage or observe animals; the location of camps, villages, and scenic areas; the band administration office; and important locations of traditional culture such as the location of the Pow Wow grounds and burial grounds. Other places to map include community buildings;

areas of economic development; hunting and fishing grounds; recreational areas; locations where Species at Risk are found; and transportation areas including the location of the ferry boat, marina, docks, roads, parking lots, and walking trails. Of course, other areas may be mapped as well.

Students should contact Elders in their local community which may include parents, grandparents, Aunties, Uncles, trappers, hunters, fishermen or friends. The student should ask an Elder if he or she will share known Traditional Knowledge of the area.

Once a meeting time has been established, students should bring a map of the community to share. The Elder

Here are some questions students may choose to ask, in addition to other questions they can create:

1. Do you remember any stories about the community from your youth?
2. Has the community changed since you were young? If so, in what ways?
3. Were there sacred spaces in the community? Are they still sacred today?
4. When did the events occur? (ie. month, season, year)

or community member may be able to locate on the map where and when stories come from.

Students should try to incorporate their Native language into the map they help create. If the Elder interviewed is a language speaker, or knows traditional and modern names, this information should also be included in the map.

When students bring their maps back to the classroom, the teacher should organize the information into 'topic

layers' which will make up the class map. Students should discuss the information collected.

Because individual areas are special to some people and not others, the map will never be complete. However, the map can become a living document where continuous information will be added.

The information from the class map can be started as a community resource that is then transferred to a band or library computer. The information should also be transferred to the Turtle Island Conservation online mapping system at www.torontozoo.ca/tici.

A) WHAT IS IN MY CLASSROOM?

Materials:

- Paper and writing tools
- Colour pencil crayons/crayons
- Ruler

Steps:

Introduce mapping as a concept to the class by drawing an outline of the classroom on the board or on a piece of chart paper.

With student assistance, map the classroom from a 'bug's eye view.' Draw in the locations of student desks, the teacher's desk, bookshelves, windows, doors, the 4 directions, carpets, etc.

Remind students about the importance of a legend. A legend is a set of symbols used on a map as a visual reminder of a special place or feature.

Create a legend for the class map and hang it in a visible area.

B) MAPPING MY ROOM

Materials:

- Paper and writing tools
- Colour pencil crayons/crayons
- Ruler

Steps:

Provide each student with a letter size sheet of blank paper to map their bedroom from a 'bug's eye view.'

Have students show the location of their bed, closet, window, door, dresser, etc.

Students should create a legend on their map. Students will share their map with a friend.

CURRICULUM ACTIVITY CHAPTER ONE

MORNING PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING ADDRESS

TEACHER BACKGROUND

It is important to show gratitude and give thanks for the gifts which have been given by the Creator. Humankind is the youngest member to join Creation and they depend upon all other parts of Creation for existence. Humans have the ability to choose their path in life because Given the gift of free will, , however, with this choice comes the responsibility to be grateful for what has been given and what is yet to come.

For example, humankind must be especially grateful to the turtle as it has been given special responsibilities by the Creator to share Turtle Teachings. The turtle carries the earth on its back — the origins of Turtle Island discuss the great kindness and love expressed by the turtle in agreeing to carry the soil, plants, animals, and humans on its back, as shared in the Creation Story.

The Morning Prayer and Thanksgiving Address included in this document outline many things which humans have to be thankful for. Although each Prayer or Address mentions various aspects of Creation, Morning Prayers and Thanksgiving Addresses can be different and include many things which one is grateful for.

Additional Resources:

Anishinaabe Elder Lillian Pitawanakwat describes the medicine wheel teachings and discusses giving thanks to the Creator. To see this discussion please visit <http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com/transcripts/ojibwe.html>



ACTIVITY

1.1 MORNING PRAYER/THE WORDS THAT COME BEFORE ALL ELSE

This activity is meant to be a part of daily classroom routine, such as at the beginning of each school day. It also reinforces language use in the classroom.

Materials:

- *Walking with Miskwaadesi or Walking with A`nó:wara book*
- *Copy of the Anishinaabe Morning Prayer and the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address (located in the Activity Worksheets section of document)*
- *Paper and writing tools*
- *Art supplies*

Steps:

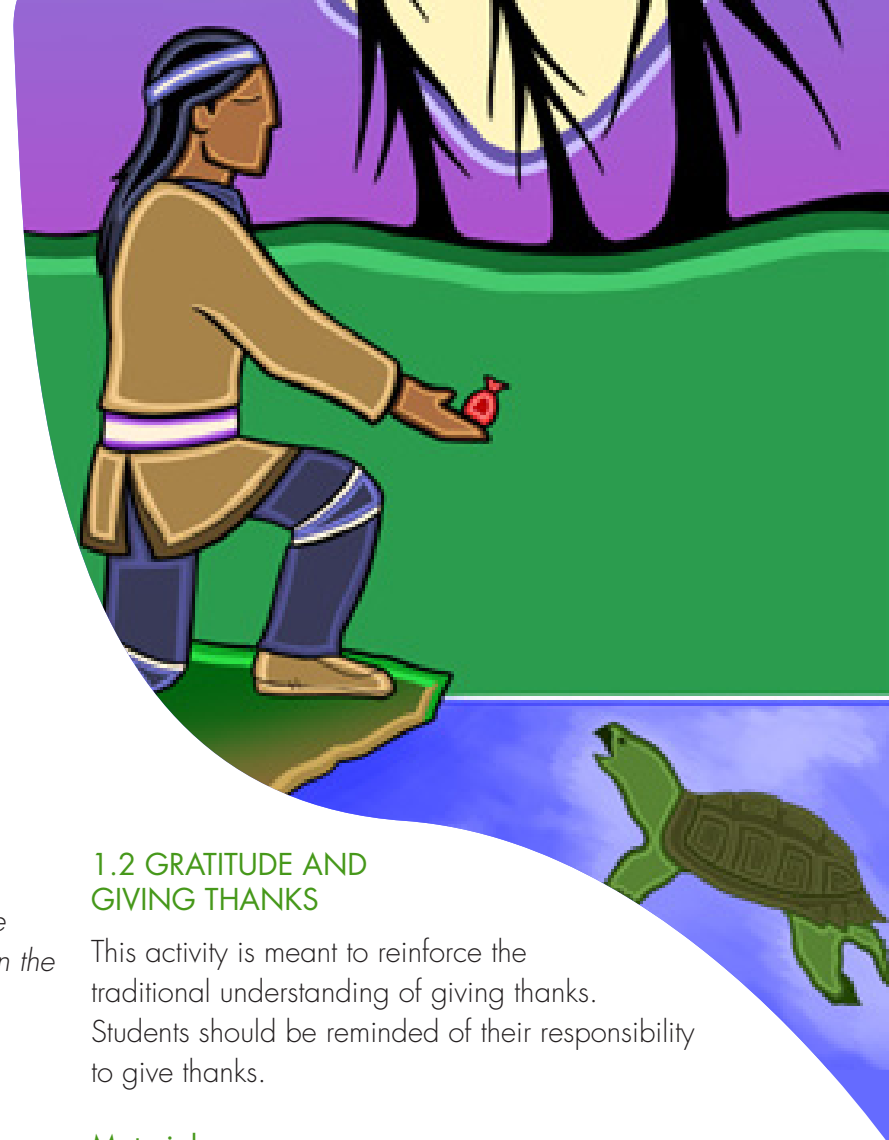
Read chapter one of *Walking with Miskwaadesi* or *Walking with A`nó:wara* to the class.

Post the Anishinaabe Morning Prayer, or the Thanksgiving Address, and/or give copies to the students.

Read the Prayer or Address together every morning, allowing students to become familiar with the content and the language.

Discuss with students why it is important to show gratitude and thanks for the gifts that humankind is given. Remind students that humankind could not exist without the gifts of the Creator.

Ask students to visually illustrate their interpretation of the Prayer/Address with coloured pencil crayons or other art supplies. These images can be displayed around the posted copy of the Prayer/Address.



1.2 GRATITUDE AND GIVING THANKS

This activity is meant to reinforce the traditional understanding of giving thanks. Students should be reminded of their responsibility to give thanks.

Materials:

- Paper and writing tools

Steps:

Ask students to complete a 'Think, Pair, Share' in which they discuss with a partner what they are grateful for. These ideas should be transferred to a mind map with the topic "I AM GRATEFUL FOR..." with related words and images surround it.

After a brief discussion, have students individually reflect upon a specific part of his or her life and submit a one paragraph explanation. These explanations may include a special person which the student is grateful for such as grandparents, parents, siblings, friends, pets, etc. The response should begin with answers to the following the questions:

1. *What does the word gratitude mean to you?*
2. *Why do you think that it is important to showgratitude?*