

Who We Are

Objectives

Children will:

- have the opportunity to explore their family, cultural identity, and build connections with story characters through a Native authored story book, classroom discussions, family engagement, and a multi-media collage project
- have the opportunity to experience “a sense of the place” in relation to where they live and attend preschool, becoming aware that Native families have been present since time immemorial living today where they live
- be able to use open ended mixed media to creatively express a message
- begin to talk about racial identity openly and consider the harmful potential of racial stereotypes*
- learn to become active listeners capable of finding and critiquing hidden messages in texts*
- begin to develop a sense of belonging in relation to the literature in their classroom*
- teachers will begin to build a safe and supportive classroom community where students can engage in literacy development and dialogue together.*

*Note: Lesson objective adapted from Teaching Tolerance (www.tolerance.org).

Materials

Card stock/ poster board (size can vary) Crayons

Oil Pastels

Photos of students & family (1-3) Markers

Colored Pencils

Scissors Glue

Assorted mixed media: fabric pieces and shapes, beans, buttons, beads, twine, small sticks, leaves, small pebbles, ribbon, noodles and anything else you may want to add

Book

A River Lost (2010 2nd Edition) Written by Lynn Bragg. Illustrated by V. “Smoker” Marchand.

Vocabulary

Introduce these words and phrases and use them in the explanation of the activity and during the process of making the collages. Reflect back on the elements of family roles and significance in the story related to Toopa and her people.

Collage

Family

Words that are specific to student’s culture

Cut

Create

Family members: mom, dad, sister, brother, grandma,

Paste

Important

grandpa, auntie, uncle, cousin, pet names

Preparing for the Lesson

- Begin gathering materials several weeks before implementing the lesson (see materials list).
- Customize the *Letter to Families* template as an introduction and explanation of what the activity is and invite families in to create this collage with their student. The letter should ask for input on what materials parents might want their child to use or ask if they might like to contribute materials. Send home reminders leading up to the event as needed. You may also have students create an invitation for parents for the day of the activity. Make sure to send home this letter and any invitations at least two weeks prior to the activity.
- Prepare an example collage. Print or show a digital copy of Emma’s collage. Share how Emma is also an Arrow Lakes Native American just like Toopa and her family, and she is a real person living today who grew up on Arrow Lakes land with her family and people. Talk about Emma’s captions with children.
 - You may also want to make a collage for yourself and encourage your support staff do the same to build a sense of belonging alongside children in this activity.

Let’s Get Started

- Begin by reviewing the story *A River Lost* yourself and the First Read template provided and plan your first read to best fit the needs of your students. After reading and discussing *A River Lost* over the span of a day or two prior to the activity, ask children to think about what is important to them and their family, such as: their home/house, the people who live with them, daily activities/ rituals, places that are special to their family, their language, pets, and other things. Tell them that they are going to create a collage, or picture of themselves and their family to show “Who they are.” Prior to the day of the project, send out an invitation to parents to come in to the classroom for the construction of the collage as stated in the *Letter to Families*. If parents are not able to either send in culturally significant items or suggestions for materials, you may want to do some research with parents on what items you could provide that speak to their child’s cultural identity (suggest parents search for images on the internet to send to you if needed). Gathering culturally significant items or pictures for each child is an important piece to this project and may take some time and extra effort.
- Explain to children that like the river, salmon, berries, friends, and family were important to Toopa, we will be thinking about what is important to us, and that we will be making a collage to represent all of those important things. You might say, “*A collage is a piece of paper with lots of different pieces on it like drawings, glued pictures, fabric, and other materials.*” Show children Emma’s collage and share about her pictures and message. Explain that “*once everyone has made their own collage, we will hang them on the wall together as a class.*”
- After all photos and materials are gathered, display all of the materials in an organized manner and give brief introductions or explanations of what all of the pieces are if children are not familiar with them. Ideally parents will have brought in or suggested some materials specific to their family culture, as well as help their child make this collage in class.

- Allow children to create their collage as they would like using the card stock and assorted materials. You may suggest that children first paste their family photo(s) and then glue the fabric, nature walk materials (optional), beans, etc, around or on top of the photos, or they could draw a picture of their families first if they prefer. Remind students that you would like to see all the members of their family on their collage (so as to not paste over any faces). This project can occur over the span of a few days or a week (or more if you'd like).
- While children are constructing their collages, teachers can assist by engaging in conversation as with children and documenting their words and narratives. Place their words around the collage display. You can invite children to share about their collage with their class.
- Once complete, create a display of the children's collages at their eye level in the classroom. You may use a quilt type layout so that the collages look like they are woven together into a blanket, or use a cedar mat type layout (shown in lesson example pictures).
- Allow display to remain on the wall for the duration of the unit as there will be other activities to add on to your classroom quilt or cedar mat display.

Nature Extension

Prior to creating the collages, you can provide natural materials such as: grasses, leaves, flower petals, twigs, and others by taking a nature walk around your school's campus. Encourage children to look closely at what they see or find interesting and to share about it. Help them to make a connection between the land and representing it in their collage.

Movement Extension

Students will get to become a salmon. Gather students outside or in an open space in your room for this activity. You might say, "Today, you are going to become a salmon. Put your salmon face on. How do salmon move? What does Toopa's river sound like? What does the water sound like when it is coming over the falls? Now, you are a salmon at Toopa's river trying to swim upstream. Now you are a salmon at Toopa's river trying to jump over the falls. Now you are a salmon swimming in calm waters."

Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Alignment

(Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Birth through 3rd Grade 2012)

Ages 4 to 5 years

1. About me and my family and culture

Family and Culture

- Take pride in own family composition and interest in others'. Understand that families are diverse.

Self concept

- Describe what he or she likes and is interested in.

Self management

- Associate emotions with words and facial expressions.

Learning to learn

- Stay with a task for more than five minutes and attempt to solve problems that arise.
- Use play as a way to explore and understand life experiences and roles.

2. Building relationships

Interactions with adults

- Seek emotional support from caregivers.

Interactions with peers

- Play with children the same age and of different ages.

Social behaviors

- Cooperate with other children, share and take turns.

Problem solving, conflict resolution

- Observe that others may have ideas or feelings that differ from the child's own.

3. Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around

Using the large muscles (gross motor skills)

- Move with purpose from one place to another using the whole body. This might include walking, running, marching, jumping, hopping or climbing. For child in a wheelchair, skills might include steering the chair into different spaces.

Using the small muscles (fine motor skills)

- Open and close a blunt scissors with one hand, and cut a straight line.
- Write some letters or numbers.

Using the senses (sensorimotor skills)

- Delight in playing with materials of different texture (such as sand, water, fabric) and conditions (wet, dry, warm, cold).

4. Growing up healthy

Daily living skills (personal health and hygiene)

- Participate easily and know what to do in routine activities (such as meal time, bed time).

Nutrition and health

- Know what self-care items are used for (such as comb and toothbrush).

Safety

- Keep a distance from wildlife.

5. Communicating (literacy)

Speaking and listening (language development)

- Remember and follow directions involving two or three steps, including steps that are not related (such as "Please pick up your toys and put on your shoes").
- Listen to others and respond in a group discussion for a short period. Remember what was said and gain information through listening.

Reading

- Know that print has meaning.
- Begin to understand the order in which a page is read (for example, English is read from left to right and top to bottom).
- Tell you what is going to happen next in a story. Make up an ending.

Writing

- Attempt to copy one or more letters of the alphabet
- Explore writing letters in different languages

6. Learning about my world

Knowledge (cognition)

- Ask adults questions to get information (as appropriate in the family’s culture).
- Seek to understand cause and effect (“If I do this, why does that happen?”).

Math

- Compare two objects using comparison words such as smaller, faster and heavier.
- Order three objects by one characteristic, (such as from smallest to largest).

Science

- Predict what will happen in science and nature experiences. Consider whether these predictions were right, and explain why or why not.
- Investigate the properties of things in nature. Begin to understand what various life forms need in order to grow and live.
- Participate (with adult direction) in activities to preserve the environment, such as disposing of litter properly, saving paper and cans to be recycled, etc.

Social Studies

- Describe family members and understand simple relationships (such as, “Marika is my sister.”)
- Draw own family, as the child understands it.
- Ask questions about similarities and differences in other people (such as language, hair style, clothing).

Arts

- Express self through art and music. Take pride in showing others own creations (“Look at my picture.”)
- Use a variety of materials to create representations of people and things (such as drawing a person showing two to four body parts).
- Participate in dramatic play activities (such as acting out familiar activities, stories or events from own life).

K-12 Since Time Immemorial Alignment

Elementary Washington State History

Exploring Washington State-Tribal Homelands

Living in Washington: Celilo Falls

Elementary U.S. History

Legacy for Us Today-Elwha