

Maawanji'idiwag - Working Together

Activity: Respectful Discussions

Overview

As described by Isaac in the video, the central theme of Maawanji'idiwag is working together, specifically a meeting. He cites this as being a very important word and concept in the story as it was during the meeting of the animals that decisions were as to how they were going to move forward. Of particular importance in this concept is also expectations with regard to the manner of the meeting and how the meeting is not confrontational, but rather a gathering and a joining together of the strengths of each of the participants.

In this lesson students will explore various focus subjects for discussion. The challenge for the students is not to debate the subject, but rather working towards a positive resolution that is respectful of the rights and needs of all parties involved.

In preparation for this lesson, teachers are encouraged to read the Capacity Building Series monograph, *Grand Conversation in the Junior Classroom: Supporting the Dialogue that Moves Thinking*. The link to the monograph is provided below.

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_Grand_Conversations_Junior.pdf

Teachers may also wish to explore the concept of *Appreciative Inquiry*, a model for discourse which focuses first on the positive and the support of the positive aspects of any given relationship.

<https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm>

Assessment:

Assessment for, as, and of learning is developed through the co-creation of learning goals and success criteria with students, based upon chosen overall and specific expectations. Teachers are encouraged to choose focus areas from the overall expectations listed in relation to this lesson.

Minds on:

Watch The Sacred Fisher Story as told by Isaac Murdoch. Teachers are also encouraged to use the transcription of the story as a shared reading lesson.

Watch the video discussing the concept of Maawanji'idiwag - Working Together. The transcription is also provided.

Discuss with students how the concept of what Isaac described is more of a discussion rather than a debate, and how in essence, the outcome satisfies some of the needs of all parties and is done in a manner that is always respectful to all.

Working with students co-create a graphic organizer that outlines the similarities and differences between our concept of a debate, and the high level discussion type of form that has been described by Isaac.

Choose one of the discussion topics suggested in the *Action* section or perhaps ask students for a good discussion topic or question. Model the desired behaviours with the students as you progress through the discussion model.

Create a checklist of desired behaviours and outcomes of a discussion modeled after the one described by Isaac. Revisit this in the *Consolidation* section of the lesson.

Action:

Working in small groups (3 - 5) ask students to choose a topic of interest to explore and discuss. Outline with students how the various perspectives of the issue will be demonstrated through the views taken by those involved. Allow students time to explore and learn about the issue.

Teachers may wish for students to prepare some specific thoughts and points from their view or perspective taken on for the discussion.

Discussion Topics:

- All students should have daily chores.
- Every home should have a pet.
- Every student should play a musical instrument.
- Homework should be banned.
- School uniforms should be required.
- Year round education is better for students.
- Children should not be allowed to drink pop.
- Single-sex schools are better for education.
- Students should be held legally responsible for bullying in schools.
- Children under 14 should not be allowed on Facebook.
- All people should be vegetarians.
- Solar energy should replace all traditional forms of energy.
- Zoos should be abolished.
- Macs are better than PCs
- Androids are better than iPhones

- The moon should be colonized.
- All students should be required to take a cooking class.
- All students should be required to take a shop or practical arts class.
- All students should be required to take a performing arts class.
- All students should be required to learn sewing.
- Democracy is the best form of government.
- Sports stars are paid too much money.
- Students should never be forced to repeat a year at school.
- Grades should be abolished.
- Teachers should be replaced by computers.
- Students should be allowed to skip grades in school.
- The voting age should be lowered.
- Video games are too violent.
- Students should not be required to show their work in math.
- Every home should have a robot.
- The government should provide wireless service for everyone.
- School pictures should be abolished.
- Performance enhancing drugs should be allowed in sports.

Portion of list found at:

<http://712educators.about.com/od/lessonplans/a/Middle-School-Debate-Topics.htm>

Consolidation:

Ask students to conduct their *discussions* for the class, and following each, examine the process and the outcome of the discussion.

Following the presentation of all of the discussions, revisit the checklist that was created in the *Minds On* portion of the class.

Ask students to ask of themselves the lessons that they have learned through the process of the learning experience.

Scripture Reflection:

11. Hebrews 10:24-25

Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

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Grandfather Teaching: Gwayakwaadiziwin—Honesty:

Honesty is often associated with the East where the sun rises as it represents the beginning of things and so honesty should begin with yourself first in order to be honest with others. To be honest must also come from the heart in order to live with integrity. To have the courage be able to face any situation. Honesty is also in our connection to Creation. Mother Earth always provides us with everything we need. We need to be honest with the Earth with what we are taking and why.

~Nancy Rowe, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

The Ontario Catholic Graduate School Expectations provide a set of overriding principles that serve to guide Catholic students through their Catholic education faith journey. The expectations serve as a continuous reminder of the behaviours that are to be exemplified throughout their lives.

Connected Expectation:

An Effective Communicator who: speaks, writes, and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values

Virtues Program

Virtue: Acceptance (May) is the ability to respect the dignity and rights of all persons, even those whose beliefs and behaviours differ from our own. Everyone should strive to love and respect their neighbour, as they love and respect themselves.

Virtue: Fairness (June) is the ability to be open minded and act in a just and fair way. Fairness allows us to treat others with mercy and compassion – to feel and act with and for another person.

Possible Connections to Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum Documents

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

GRADE 4

Living a Moral Life

ML2: Explain how we are called, through the help of our consciences, to discover God's truth and obey God's will.

Living in Solidarity

LS2: Focus: the common good and stewardship of creation

Demonstrate an understanding of how the gifts received as human beings invite us to be responsible stewards of creation (i.e. natural world created by God) and to bring about His reign in the human community (i.e. common good of societies and nations of the earth).

GRADE 5

Living a Moral Life

ML2: Demonstrate an understanding of conscience as a source of help in judging our moral actions and our responsibility for the results of our actions.

ML3: Explain the importance of the teaching role of the Church (i.e. Magisterium) in assisting society and individuals to reflect on moral issues and to respond in ways that promote the dignity of the human person and the call to holiness.

Living in Solidarity

LS2: Focus: Fundamental love for the poor and vulnerable

Understand that human solidarity in our Christian living, understood as "friendship", is reflected in the example of Jesus who calls us to act justly by putting the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

GRADE 6

Living in Solidarity

LS1: Understand that each person is responsible for participation in society, to discern, to freely choose their vocation and to make a contribution in the world.

LS2: Focus: Principle of Rights and Responsibilities

Understand that by virtue of our human dignity, out of respect for equality and diversity of being and the common good, all human beings are to enjoy certain fundamental human rights (e.g. the right to life, liberty, religious freedom, food, shelter, health care, education, and employment).

FAMILY LIFE

Living in Relationship

B2. Exploring Human Nature: demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which the bonds of family and friendship are central to human life and shape human identity and development.

B3. Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing: apply an understanding of the role of relationships in shaping human identity and development in personally relevant contexts.

Living in the World

E2. Exploring Human Nature: demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which humans participate in society and fulfill the responsibility to care for and build God's world.

E3. Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing: apply an understanding of the global dimension of human nature in personally relevant contexts.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Oral Communication

1. listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes;
2. use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes;

Reading

1. read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;
2. recognize a variety of text forms, text features, and stylistic elements and demonstrate understanding of how they help communicate meaning;

Writing

1. generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience;
2. draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience;

SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE 4

People and Environments: Political and Physical Regions of Canada

B2. Inquiry: use the social studies inquiry process to investigate some issues and challenges associated with balancing human needs/wants and activities with

environmental stewardship in one or more of the political and/or physical regions of Canada (FOCUS ON: Perspective)

GRADE 5

People and Environments: The Role of Government and Responsible Citizenship

B1. Application: assess responses of governments in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit governments, to some significant issues, and develop plans of action for governments and citizens to address social and environmental issues (FOCUS ON: Interrelationships; Cause and Consequence)

B3. Understanding Context: demonstrate an understanding of the roles and key responsibilities of citizens and of the different levels of government in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit governments (FOCUS ON: Significance)

GRADE 6

People and Environments: Canada's Interactions with the Global Community

A1. Application: assess contributions to Canadian identities made by various groups and communities, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, and by various features of Canadian communities and regions (FOCUS ON: Cause and Consequence; Patterns and Trends)

A2. Inquiry: use the social studies inquiry process to investigate different perspectives on the historical and/or contemporary experiences of a few distinct communities, including First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit communities, in Canada (FOCUS ON: Perspective)

A3. Understanding Context: demonstrate an understanding of significant experiences of, and major changes and aspects of life in, various historical and contemporary communities, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, in Canada (FOCUS ON: Significance; Continuity and Change)

SCIENCE

GRADE 4

Understanding Life Systems: Habitats and Communities

1. analyse the effects of human activities on habitats and communities;
2. investigate the interdependence of plants and animals within specific habitats and communities;
3. demonstrate an understanding of habitats and communities and the relationships among the plants and animals that live in them.

GRADE 5

Understanding Life Systems: Human Organ Systems

1. analyse the impact of human activities and technological innovations on human health;

3. demonstrate an understanding of the structure and function of human body systems and interactions within and between systems.

Understanding Matter and Energy: Properties of and Changes in Matter

1. evaluate the social and environmental impacts of processes used to make everyday products;
2. conduct investigations that explore the properties of matter and changes in matter;
3. demonstrate an understanding of the properties of matter, changes of state, and physical and chemical change.

Understanding Earth and Space Systems: Conservation of Energy and Resources

1. analyse the immediate and long-term effects of energy and resource use on society and the environment, and evaluate options for conserving energy and resources;
2. investigate energy transformation and conservation;
3. demonstrate an understanding of the various forms and sources of energy and the ways in which energy can be transformed and conserved.

GRADE 6

Understanding Life Systems: Biodiversity

1. assess human impacts on biodiversity, and identify ways of preserving biodiversity;
3. demonstrate an understanding of biodiversity, its contributions to the stability of natural systems, and its benefits to humans.

Understanding Earth and Space Systems: Space

1. assess the impact of space exploration on society and the environment;
2. investigate characteristics of the systems of which the earth is a part and the relationship between the earth, the sun, and the moon;

THE ARTS

DRAMA

- B1. Creating and Presenting: apply the creative process to dramatic play and process drama, using the elements and conventions of drama to communicate feelings, ideas, and stories;
- B2. Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing: apply the critical analysis process to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of drama works and experiences;