

Teachers Guide

Stories from the Seventh Fire: Spring

Wawhitchsey, an Ojibway prophet from Georgina Island, Canada, foretold of the time of the Seventh Fire: "Seven prophets came to the Indian people long ago. These prophets left us with seven predictions and each of these was called a fire, seven fires in all. It is said that in the time of the Seventh Fire, a new people would emerge to seek out the old teachings and find a way to live in harmony with one another and with Mother Earth. We are now in the time of the Seventh Fire."

The Stories from the Seventh Fire television programs, *Legend of the Giant Beaver* and *The First Spring Flood* are the achievement of a unique collaboration: original work from an internationally famous first nations artist, Norval Morrisseau, talented Western Canadian animators, ancient legends and nature stories, aboriginal actors and filmmakers who have produced these animated/live-action videos for a new generation of young and old alike.

The program reflects the Spring season, in a multi-award winning television Four Seasons series that features the unforgettable images of artist Norval Morrisseau; key voice actors Tantoo Cardinal (*Dances With Wolves, Legends of the Fall*), Gordon Tootoosis (*Big Bear, Don't Call Me Tonto*) and Johnny Waniandy (*Stories From The Seventh Fire*); work from Bardel Animation (2D) and Aurenaya Entertainment Inc. (3D); and wildlife footage from Karvonen Films. It was produced through Storytellers Productions Ltd. by western Canadian filmmakers Greg Coyes, Gerri Cook, and Ava Karvonen, in association with Tantoo Cardinal.

Background Information:

"It is believed that storytelling is both a gift from the Creator and an art that requires a great amount of skill and technique to hold the audience spellbound. The storytellers must possess a gift of memory, creativity, humor and drama. The role of the storyteller is also as a historian or keeper of knowledge who educates the audience about life, the past, and provides insights into minds and spirits to facilitate a better understanding of who we are."

Stan Cuthand, Cree Elder, Saskatchewan

"North American Aboriginal stories are based on an oral tradition. For at least ten thousand years, story telling was the way that the knowledge and the history of the people was passed on until the arrival of written language. Aboriginal people believe that some stories also had a season. The Wesakechak stories are best told in the winter months when the days are short, the nights long and the need for communal entertainment is greatest."

Maria Campbell, Gabriel's Crossing, Batoche, Saskatchewan; author of the international best-seller, *HalfBreed*

Each story can be told in different ways, depending on the storyteller's use of local elements familiar to each audience - a Plains Cree story might use bison and the

Stories from the Seventh Fire: Spring

same story by the Ojibway might use moose. What remains true are the spiritual values and lessons the stories present.

"In all aspects of Learning regardless of what topic is being discussed – An Aboriginal Elder's perspective should be incorporated according to that region's beliefs, stories and myths. Through the appropriate protocol, an Elder should be approached and asked to tell the stories that are regionally specific and that relate to the topic that is being taught or discussed. This enables students, especially Aboriginal students, to relate to these stories because their local Elder(s) made reference to it. Certain morals and lessons will come out of each story depending on the region. From an Aboriginal perspective, the appropriate guest Elder can be recommended by the local school in conjunction with the curriculum development director and the community's cultural centre. The appropriate cultural protocol gift (tobacco, blanket, or sweetgrass perhaps) for that region should be followed when an Elder visits a school."

Darrell Gerrits, Osaw Maskwa, Alberta

The animal world, too, has its storytellers. In *Legend of the Giant Beaver*, Mother Wolf tells a bedtime tale to teach her young cubs about the world outside the den, because the cubs are still too young to go hunting. This tale is about a prehistoric time when giant creatures roamed the land, including beaver the size of today's Black bears. Today's beaver are the cousins of the Giant beaver who used to live in northern Canada. Other creatures mentioned or illustrated include Saber-toothed tiger, Muskox, Cougar, wetland birds, grazing animals, amphibians and insects.

"For all things share the same breath – the beast, the trees, the man, they all share the same breath. What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth."
Chief Seattle, 1854

LEGEND OF THE GIANT BEAVER - A Wolf Tale

Story Synopsis:

Mother Wolf tells her cubs a bed-time story before joining the hunt: In ancient times, giant-sized mammals existed, including beaver the size of Grizzly bear. They were strong swimmers but were slow on land, just as they are today. They were the favourite food for Saber-toothed tigers and other large predators.

One day, the Beaver called a council to discuss ways they could save themselves. A Beaver Mother suggested they ask the Creator for help. The Creator told the Beaver to use their special gifts and build their home in the many lakes that remained after the retreat of the Glaciers. They cut down trees and wove branches together to make lodges surrounded by water where they could be safe. But as their climate grew warmer, the lakes grew smaller. Once again the Giant Beaver were threatened. The Beaver remembered what the Creator told them to do. They used their constantly growing teeth to cut down more trees, and their hand-like paws to make dams plastered with mud to re-create ponds around their lodges.

Today, all the Giant animals are gone, but the beaver, although much smaller, remains. Every Spring, they build new lodges and dams causing wetlands which provide food and homes for many other creatures. Wetlands are where water and land merge together.

Giant Beaver

Modern beavers are the largest rodents in North America, and the second largest in the world, weighing up to 100 pounds as adults. This is small compared to prehistoric beavers. Fossil records indicate that the average prehistoric beaver was 5-6 times larger than a modern beaver, often 7-8 feet long, and about the size of a Black bear. The giant beaver was at home in the water just like modern beavers. A scale comparison would suggest that a giant beaver could construct a dam 60 feet high, however giant beavers aren't known to have built dams like their modern descendants do. The giant beaver had a tail similar to the distinctive tail of the modern beaver, although slightly less widened. Judging by tooth data, it seems that the animals' diets were largely the same. Again considering scale, a giant beaver could gnaw through a tree 2.5 feet thick in less than 30 minutes. (Richards)

Overall Themes:

- Working together accomplishes more than working alone.
- We should use the special gifts that we each have to make our world a better, safer place.
- We should respect the power of Mother Earth, which can generate weather changes, over long periods of time, that affect the environment.
- We must understand the importance of wetlands which Beaver help create and maintain.

Language Arts:

- Students will learn about oral tradition as a form of storytelling around the world.
- Students will identify varying points of view in literature.
- Students will make connections between themes, characters and events in literature and their own experiences or between other literature and cultures.
- Students will research various stories, legends and myths based on oral tradition about similar themes from different cultures around the world, where animals are the storytellers.
- Students will compare the role and type of storytellers found in different cultures.
- Students will explore the art of storytelling and the importance of good listening skills, through telling stories to their peers, using only the tools available to oral storytellers.
- Students will use a variety of resources including various websites to research recent facts on current issues affecting the environment of endangered species that live in the wetlands. Almost half of endangered and threatened species in North America rely upon wetlands.

Visual Arts:

- Students will create animal and bird images in response to distinct First Nations

art styles.

- Students will explore the impact and effect of art images adapted into different mediums as a storytelling device, i.e. book illustrations, animation storyboards, television reenactments, written descriptions, website designs, logos, symbols, etc.
- Students will create images inspired by the wildlife depicted in this story.
- Students will look at visual representations and their symbolic meaning to people throughout the ages and from different cultures using some of the wildlife presented in this story, i.e. beaver, wolves, cougar, muskox, etc.
- Students will research prehistoric drawings, paintings and artifacts that depict prehistoric North American creatures, including bison, beaver, mammoths, etc.

Environmental Studies:

- Students will understand and describe the interrelation of nature within a habitat.
- Students will study changes in climate from the ice age to modern times.
- Students will recognize the evolution of various animal forms over thousands of years..
- Students will discuss the short and long term impacts of using renewable and nonrenewable natural resources.
- Students will study how a species in isolation might evolve unique differences to their closest relatives.
- Students will describe ways in which species interact with each other within the same habitat.
- Students will learn the definition and importance of a wetland and how beaver create them.

Music:

- Students will study the relationship of different instruments and sounds to personalities of various animals as demonstrated in this piece and others (i.e. *Peter and the Wolf*).
- Students will experiment with music to tell stories and create different moods.
- Students will learn about Aboriginal music from different cultures (didgeridoo, drums, chants, etc.), and the importance of music and song in ceremonies and for entertainment, in both traditional and modern use.

Potential Activities

The concept of telling a story has to be heard from an Elder(s) in the First Nations communities to fully appreciate the teachings, lessons and moral of the stories. It is a true art and the videos and the Elders should be incorporated into a curriculum, especially when dealing with First Nations material.

"In an oral culture, the technology of survival consists of an intimate knowledge of one's environment and respect for all beings, of all "accepting" and "understanding" each other. This is achieved by "becoming the other". The teaching of this way of thinking was and still is communicated in the form of a story. Hence, a good storyteller is a person who has the gift of being able wholly to involve herself into her words, to incarnate herself in

flesh and blood in her subject matter."
Jovette Marchessault

- Ask the students to choose one of the other animals shown in the story to retell the events from that point of view, for example, a hungry Saber-toothed Tiger. How would the point of view of another animal differ from the wolves' version of the story?
 - Have the students tell a new version of the story to an audience, taking on a specific role such as a Mother Beaver, a Cougar, a Bear, or a Moose dependent on the wetlands created by beaver colonies, and presenting the story from that point of view, in as exciting way as possible. The intent is to try and have the audience share all the main emotions and lessons through the art of the storyteller - pain, sorrow, laughter, anger, hope, inspiration - without becoming preachy or moralistic.
 - The mother wolf shared her story with her young in much the same manner as the First Nations people have passed on their stories in the past. Ask the students to suggest reasons why listening was an especially important skill for people in the traditional First Nations societies. In discussing their responses, explain the concept of oral tradition.
 - Together, create class criteria for good listeners based on their discussion. Have the students work in pairs to retell *The Legend of the Giant Beaver*, practicing their listening skills and the ability to recount all the key points of the story to a second, third or more party. Have them think about the importance and difficulty of passing on stories as heritage from generation to generation over thousands of years.
 - Have the students create a poem or short narrative in the voice of the Beaver clan. The poem should include elements of *The Legend of the Giant Beaver* as well as descriptions of its appearance, habitat and behavior. Ask the students to orally present their Beaver tributes.
 - Have the students act out how they see the animal or bird and how they would sit or stand to tell the story as that creature. Making costumes and/or masks would also help to assist the imagination and creativity of the students for how they interpret the animal or bird.
 - Share other First Nations legends with the students. Use local Elders whenever possible to ensure the legends, morals, and the storytelling remains distinct and true to the region. Introduce myths and stories from other cultures in an effort to illustrate the themes that are common among these stories. (Examples from other cultures include *Aesop's Fables*, *Hans Christian Anderson's Fairy Tales*, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, etc.) Modern stories from movies, comics, novels can also be discussed that use animals as the storyteller.
 - Have the students research other First Nations legends that contain Wolves and/or Beaver as key characters. What are the characteristics of the Wolf or Beaver in the legends? What do the legends tell us about how First Nations people viewed them as a symbol in their stories? Explore the Wolf and Beaver in other cultures and how the Wolf especially is viewed by other cultures.
 - With the class, create a story chart with headings that describe common themes
- Stories from the Seventh Fire: Spring

found in these stories (i.e.: nature lessons, respecting gifts from the Creator, problem solving, animals, spiritual/moral lessons, creation of the world stories). Assign the students to summarize at least three legends according to the identified themes.

- Have the students then create their own legend based on the themes. Include animals/birds that are regionally specific for they will have special meaning and compare them with other cultures and societies.
- Why was the Beaver chosen as a symbol of Canada? The beaver is tied to the history of Canada through the significance of the Fur Trade. How did this impact on the original beaver population in North America? Who was Grey Owl and Anahareo? Why are they important in the survival of Canada's Beaver population? www.waskesiu.com/greyowl.htm
- What animal or bird symbols exist representing other countries? Examples include: Bald Eagle for the U.S., Lion for the U.K.
- Have the students discuss the use of animal symbols to represent countries, provinces, states, cities and team sports (for example). Have the students design an advertisement or poster communicating the symbolism and importance of the Beaver.
- Have the students view *Legend of the Giant Beaver* a second time, noting the variety of living things that depend on wetlands. Ask the students to choose one of these to research in more depth, reporting on their habitat, food, care of young, and enemies. Their research report should include an illustration of their chosen inhabitant.
- Divide the class into small groups, preferably into round-table discussions which is a more traditional First Nations environment, and have each group choose a natural resource that is part of a larger habitat such as: water, grass, trees, birds, animals, insects, fish. Assign the group to research how interrelated the chosen natural resource is to the rest of the habitat. How would the habitat change with the absence of the chosen resource? Have the students demonstrate their findings using an illustrated web showing the ecosystem found in the wetlands. Discuss the impact of wetland destruction on those inhabitants.
- Choose an essential resource such as water and debate or discuss questions such as the following in small groups or together as a class:
 - How should the resources be accessed?
 - What should the resource be used for?
 - Who should decide when a resource should be used?
 - Who should decide how much of the resource should be used?
 - How can the future of a resource be protected?
- Have the students research the issue of endangered wetlands. What work has already been done to protect this habitat? What still needs to be done? Why is it important to save the wetlands? www.nwf.org/nwf/kids/cool/wetland1.html
- Have the students research the Beaver in more detail www.csh.rit.edu/snell/beaver.html and <http://beaversww.org/beaver.html>. In their research, students should explore the current issues surrounding the management and survival of the beaver.

- Have the student's research Prehistoric Beaver and its greatest enemy, the Smilodons (Sabre-toothed tigers). www.expage.com/giantbeaver, www.calverley.dawson-creek.bc.ca/Part01-FirstNations/01-007.html. Old Crow Flats, located near the Arctic Circle, south of the Beaufort Sea in the Yukon is an Ecological Site designated as a wetland of international importance which has an important fossil history that includes hyaena, large camel, giant moose, giant pika, the giant beaver, the short-faced skunk, the ground sloth and muskoxen: <http://eqbdqe.cciw.ca/eman/reports/publications/> and search for Old Crow Flats.
- Have the students research animals and/or birds that have evolved over the past 10,000 years. Compare/ contrast them to their nearest relative. Woolly Mammoths, Muskox, Woolly Rhinos, Eohippuses (small horses), etc. Look for evidence that early humans hunted these animals and may have told stories about the giant beaver for thousands of years. <http://www.calverley.dawson-creek.bc.ca/Part01-FirstNational/01-100.html>
- Have the students view the end of *Legend of the Giant Beaver*, paying attention to the musical interlude around the fire. Brainstorm and list ideas with the students about the role and purpose of music in any culture. Ask the students to discuss the reasons for music in First Nations cultures compared to the list they created. When and why are traditional songs and music used in their own culture? How has it changed and evolved over time?
- Invite a First Nations musician to speak and perform for the class. Have the students prepare questions about what this person's role is in his or her community and how that compares to the role of the musician in traditional society. Provide an opportunity for the students to participate in music-making with the guest musician. Look at traditional music and also modern First Nations musicians and how they are using traditional instruments in a contemporary way.
- Demonstrate the steps taken to animate a story and characters. Invite an animator to the class to discuss the different kinds of animation techniques. This story used 3D, Flash animation and live-action wildlife footage. Students can storyboard the story or one of their own. One of the voice actors could be invited to talk to the students to explain about his/her involvement and the opportunities it can offer as a type of creative work. (to contact any of the actors and animation companies used for the Wolf-Tales and Cree Wesakechak stories, call Reel Girls Media at 780-488-0440)
- Research the effort needed to film wildlife. Invite a wildlife filmmaker or wildlife camera person to the class to discuss the behind the scenes work done to create the kinds of wildlife images like those edited into the story told by Mother Wolf. (www.karvonenfilms.com)
- Divide the students into different animal and bird groups. These become their totems. Have them make masks, pictures, rules of behavior, music and sounds based on their totems. www.kuruna.com/en/school/goentot.htm Have them research the use of totems by North American First Nations people and other cultures. www.ravensyeyesdesign.com/archives/kinshipconference/hoof_fin.htm Discuss why First Nations people often modeled their behavior after animals and the environment. www.nhc.rtp.nc.us:8080/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/natrel.htm, www.educ.sfu.ca/gentch/pbl/curriculum.html

- Do animal and bird totems still exist today?
<http://www.nald.ca/CLR/chikiken/titleiii.htm>

Additional Resources

Aesop's Fables

Additional Wolf Tales in the *Stories From the Seventh Fire Series*, including the multiple award winning, *Legend of the Spirit Bear*, *Legend of the Caribou* and *Legend of the First Thanksgiving*. In addition there is a behind-the-scenes, twenty-minute educational documentary, *The Art of Storytelling*, also available through:

Reel Girls Media, 9860A-33rd Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6N 1C6, 780-488-0440

Animal Myths & Legends From Around the World

www.planetozkids.com/oban/legends.htm

BC Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Initiative

<http://www.est.gov.bc.ca/abed/welcome.html>: site provides information on BC First Nations Studies as well as a First Nations Library Database

Tale of the Beaver, 25 minute wildlife video. Follow wild beavers overland and underwater through the seasons. Video available through www.karvonofilms.com.

How the Robin got its Red Breast - Legends of the Sechelt People, Harbour Publishing, Box 219, 4434 Rondevue Road, Madeira Park, BC V0N 2H0: retelling of the legend of how the robin got its red breast

Learning by Doing - Northwest Coast Native Indian Art, by Karin Clark and Jim Gilbert, 1993: elements of Northwest Coast Aboriginal art is analyzed by form, line, color, and characteristics

Little Bear's Vision Quest, by Diane Slivey, 1995: a modern Aboriginal legend that teaches the importance of respect for others

Native American Cultural Curriculum Materials www.kstrom.net/isk/books/cultcurr.html

Native American Spirituality www.religioustolerance.org/nataspir.htm

Rediscovery: Ancient Pathways-New Directions, Western Canada Wilderness

Committee, 20 Water Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1A4: exploration of Aboriginal traditions and their relevance to contemporary society including personal, cultural and environmental awareness

Shared Learnings - Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K-10, 1998, Aboriginal Education Initiative, British Columbia Ministry of Education, 5th Floor, 620 Superior St., Box 9887 Stn. Prov. Govt., Victoria, BC V8W 9T6: comprehensive document with curriculum links, learning activities, resource data base and lesson plans for Aboriginal themes throughout the K-10 curriculum

School Net: <http://schoolnet2.carelon.ca/english/ext/aboriginal/index2.html>: site sponsored by Assembly of First Nations in conjunction with Federal Government of Canada - with numerous lesson plans for teachers

www.Wildfiles.tv is a Canadian virtual clubhouse for kids to explore the world of wild animals. It's fun, educational and free.

Welcome To the World of Beavers Author, Diane Swanson. Whitecap Books, Vancouver/Toronto. www.whitecap.ca

Wetlands: Cradle of Life, 51 minute wildlife video. The waters of earth have journeyed endlessly since the world was born. There are many places of renewal during this epic

cycle-places called wetlands. Video available through www.karvonenfilms.com.

THE FIRST SPRING FLOOD - A Cree Wesakechak Tale

There are many, many different stories about Wesakechak and he has many different names. In the language of the Cree, he is known as Wesakechak, the Blackfoot people call him Napi and the Ojibway call him Nanabush. Throughout North America, many tribes tell legends of this being. His name is different, but the lessons are the same.

Story Synopsis:

In the beginning, before there were any people on Turtle Island, the Creator put Wesakechak on the earth to take care of all the creatures. He had special powers. He could shape-shift and he could communicate with all the animals. This makes Machias, a bad spirit, very angry and envious.

Wesakechak is tricked by this jealous spirit and is almost drowned by a spring flood caused by Machias. But Wesakechak is able to save himself with the help of a Jackfish, a Canada Goose and the dam building talents of the Beaver clan.

The story deals with the negative effects of envy and the power of friendship and old favours repaid in times of trouble.

Cree Words for this the story:

Wesakechak – (Wi/sa/ke/cahk – A special being created by the Great Spirit

Maci Manito – (Ma/ci/ Man'toh) - Bad Spirit

Keche Manito – (Kici Man'toh) - The Great Spirit

Kiwetin – (Ki/we/tin) - North Wind

Waskwayatihk – Was/kwa/ya/tihk – Birch Tree

Niska – Kis/ka – Wild Goose

Amisk – A/misk – Beaver

Tanisi – Tan'si – Hello

Cree Pronunciations:

There are many Cree Dialects. This is just one of them. A Cree language consultant worked with the bilingual Cree/English language actors for each of the stories in this production. The video program is available in English, Cree, and in English with French subtitles.

Animation Style:

The look of the characters and landscapes were inspired by artwork of Ojibway artist, Norval Morrisseau who was commissioned by Storytellers Productions Inc. to interpret each Wesakechak legend using a different season as background. His resulting work was used as the inspiration for the animators who then recreated Norval's unique style and vivid colours as computer-generated Flash animation. Norval's initial response to the completed animated series was, "I've been talking to these characters for a long time, and now everyone can talk with them!" For more on Norval and his work,

<http://www.coghlanart.com/norval.htm> and

http://www.kstrom.net/isk/art/morriss/morr_bio.html

Overall Themes:

- Friends are very important
- Acts of kindness will be repaid

- Jealously and envy are destructive
- The power of a beaver dam (friendship) can stop a Spring Flood (malicious acts)

Language Arts:

- Students will learn the importance of storytelling in First Nations cultures.
- Students will identify and practice effective storytelling techniques.
- Students will make connections between themes, characters and events in literature and in their own experience.

Visual Arts:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the roles of artists and visual arts in reflecting and sustaining beliefs and traditions in modern society. Norval Morrisseau as a case study.
- Students will create visual images in response to distinct art styles from a variety of cultures, artists and periods.

Environmental Studies:

- Students will discuss and research historical and current examples of spring flooding on the environment. Students will understand cycles of nature which include the build-up of snow and ice and the sometimes dramatic consequences.
- Students will understand how beaver damns can monitor and control spring runoffs.
- Students will personalize what it means to show respect and conservation in one's environment.

Social Studies:

- Students will describe how the physical environment influences human activity.
- Students will demonstrate understanding of the ways First Nations people interact with their environment.

Drama:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of how storytelling techniques reflect a culture's beliefs and attitudes.
- Students will practice the skills of storytelling to portray a theme and story.

Potential Activities

- After viewing *The First Spring Flood*, have the class participate in a retelling. If possible, have the students sit in a circle. Divide the students into groups and give each group a section of the story. Have them dramatically act out each of the roles of the characters that interact with Wesakechak, throughout the story. Record the results. Replay the original video, and compare and contrast the original with the retelling.
 - Have they followed the original sequence?
 - Has anything important in the story been missed?
 - Do the morals and values still remain in the story?
 - How is the story different from the original?
- Discuss how First Nations people preserved their stories by passing them on for possibly thousands of years. Humour is an important part of all Cree Wesakechak

stories. Why?

- After reviewing the story have the students complete the following questions:
 - What time of the year is it when our story begins?
 - What message do the birch leaves give Wesakechak? Who carries them to him?
 - Why is Machias so jealous of Wesakechak?
 - What happens when Wesakechak tries to find Machias?
 - Who helps Wesakechak and why?
 - What happens to Wesakechak's special powers? Does he get them back?
- What existing fairy tales are similar to this story? (i.e.: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*) In what way are they the same? In what way are they different, regarding the moral of the story?
- Role-play situations where you help a friend in trouble. I.e.: A friend is being bullied, a friend is sick, someone is making fun of your friend.
- Divide the class into small groups. Have each student write three positive things about the abilities of each of the others in the group. Why is it important to believe in yourself and your talents?
- Ask the students to brainstorm ideas on new adventures for Wesakechak. Have them work alone or in partners to create a new story with a problem to solve and new lessons to learn.
- Ask them to illustrate their story and practice it for oral presentation. Include humour and drama.
- Discuss the trickster character archetype with the students. Assign them to research other literature that contains a trickster.
- Have them compare and contrast Wesakechak with other characters they have researched and report similarities and differences.
- Invite an Elder storyteller to the class to tell stories that represents his or her First Nations heritage. Ask the students to be prepared to respectfully ask questions about the Elder's family/tribal history and how they received these stories. Contact the nearest Friendship Center for an Elder recommendation.
- After the visit, assign the students to create thank you notes inspired by the art of Norval Morrisseau as seen in *The First Spring Flood*.
- Research the works and life of Norval Morrisseau who is known as the Picasso of Canada and as the Father of the Woodland Art style. He is also a hereditary Shaman.
- Have the students use the scenes in the story to describe the art of Norval Morrisseau in their own words. Morrisseau's work is known for its black outlined, brightly colored shapes and forms that bring to life the First Nations themes, symbols and spirituality. www.kinderart.com/multic/norval.shtml.
 - Assign the students to use Norval Morrisseau's style to create masks of the characters from *The First Spring Flood*.
 - Assign the students to use Norval Morrisseau's style to create their own painting that represents their interpretation of First Nations themes, stories and symbols.
 - Ask the students to research a Canadian First Nations artist of their choice

describing both the artist's life history and work. Have them present their findings to the class through a visual and oral presentation.

- What is a Shaman and how does it relate to some First Nations people's spiritual beliefs?
- Have the students animate this story or their own using drawings/art similar or inspired by a different artist. Invite an animator to the class to explain the process of computer animation compared to the cell animation style (such as was used by Disney in *Snow White*.) Invite an animation company representative to talk about the different kinds of animation that appeared in this story and how it's done.
- Assign the students to research the scientific reasons for spring flooding after winter. What other kinds of floods are there? How powerful are they? How damaging can they be? What is the positive benefit to the environment from floods?
- Have the students research examples of the environmental impact of humans not respecting their environment, which encourages flooding. The research should include current as well as historical examples. Both national and local examples should be presented. Included in the research should also be examples of how society has positively responded to environmental issues.
- Have the students present their findings to the class. In debriefing the activity, ask the students to reflect upon how they can personally take a more active role in showing respect for their environment.
- What does *The First Spring Flood* teach us about the First Nations people's beliefs about a relationship with the environment? How does this compare to what our society practices?
- Invite an Elder or knowledgeable person from the First Nations community to discuss both contemporary and traditional seasonal activities that occur in Spring. Describe what was/is done and the reasons it was done. Compare and contrast seasonal activities on the West Coast, the Prairies, the North, the Woodlands.
- Have the students work in groups to answer the following questions:
 - What activities were done early in the year? Were/are these done only by the men, the women, the children?
 - What activities were only done long ago and not today?
 - Which are/would be your favourite activities and why?
- In the story *The First Spring Flood*, the snow begins to melt and the water rises. Because Wesakechak no longer has his special powers that allow him to shape-shift and fly, he has to travel like everyone else. Provide the students with materials on the evolution of early First Nations transportation methods like walking, dogs, horses, birch and cedar canoes and travois. In small groups have the students represent a method of transportation and brainstorm ways that available resources, geography and climate affected the design of certain transportation methods. (i.e. cedar canoe for ocean travel, birch canoe for inland). Include First Nations inventions such as the canoe, snowshoes, snow goggles, toboggan, kayak, etc.
- Have the students construct or design a mode of transportation or other

Stories from the Seventh Fire: Spring

equipment (Example: raft, motorboat, skidoo) that would have helped Wesakechak on his journey. How would he have built this using existing elements before the invention of plastic/iron?

- Wesakechak also brought his bow and arrows. Have the students research the evolution of types of spear heads and arrow heads from prehistoric hunters to the first rifle. How were weapons influenced by the animals hunted?
- Have the students work in pairs to retell *The First Spring Flood*. Have the students talk about what makes a good storyteller and ask them to demonstrate effective storytelling techniques. Invite a younger class and pair older students with the younger ones. Have the older students perform their stories for the younger ones. In debriefing the activity, have the students talk about their experiences and self-evaluate their storytelling techniques. Did they hold their younger audience's attention? Did their audience follow the story and understand the important underlying messages?
- In debriefing the activity ask the students to discuss if the younger students showed respect for the storyteller and the story's beliefs and lessons. Ask them to evaluate their experience and discuss how they would change their presentation if they had to do it again.
- Have the students list all the ways to tell a story today. Examples: oral storytelling, books, radio, television, DVD, web pages, movies, comics, music, theatre, etc. Genres include: drama, reality, documentary, animation, etc. What is their favourite way to tell or hear a story? Why?

Additional Resources

Alberta Aboriginal Studies

www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bysubject/aborstidy/default.asp.

Additional Cree Wesakechak legends in the *Stories From the Seventh Fire Series*, including the multiple award winning, *Why The Rabbit Turns White*, *How Wesakechak Got His Name*, and *Wesakechak and the Medicine*. In addition, there is a behind-the-scenes twenty-minute educational documentary, *The Art of Storytelling*, also available: Reel Girls Media, 9860A-33rd Avenue, Edmonton, Alta, T6N 1C6 780-488-0440
The Adventures of Txamsm Series, First Nations Education Services, School District #52, 825 Conrad Street, Prince Rupert, BC, V8J 3B8: four myths featuring Txamsm, a Tsimshian trickster

Bardel Animation: Animators for the opening sequence and Legend

www.bardelentertainment.com

BC Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Initiative:

<http://www.est.gov.bc.ca/abed/welcome.html>: site provides information on BC First Nations Studies as well as a First Nations Library Database

First Nations Art Projects and Activities, First Nations Education Division, School District #61, 923 Topaz Ave, Box 700, Victoria, BC V8T 2R1: introduction to the basic art forms of the Pacific Northwest

First Nations and Inuit Contributions and Inventions Colouring Book, (English and French), published under the authority of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, QS-6126-000-BB-A1, Catalogue No. R21-194/1998 ISBV 0-662-63472-1,

Stories from the Seventh Fire: Spring

Indian and Northern Affairs. www.inac.gc.ca

First Nations University of Canada www.sifc.edu/indian%20studies/ISRC/research.htm.

Kinderart Lesson for Grades 3+ and 7+, Norval Morrisseau.

www.kinderart.com/multic/norval.shtml

Learning by Doing - Northwest Coast Native Indian Art, by Karin Clark and Jim Gilbert, 1993: elements of Northwest Coast First Nations art analyzed by form, line, color, and characteristics

Looking at Indian Art of the North West Coast, Douglas & McIntyre, 1615 Venables St., Vancouver BC V5L 2H1: components, features, and themes of North West aboriginal art
Norval Morrisseau, A Biography: www.kstrom.net/isk/art/morriss/morr_bio.html, For samples of his work: www.kinsmanrobinson.com/html/morrisseau.html

Shared Learnings - Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K-10, 1998, Aboriginal Education Initiative, British Columbia Ministry of Education, 5th Floor, 620 Superior St., Box 9887 Stn. Prov. Govt., Victoria, BC V8W 9T6: comprehensive document with curriculum links, learning activities, resource data base and lesson plans for First Nations themes throughout the K-10 curriculum

School Net: <http://schoolnet2.carelon.ca/english/ext/aboriginal/index2.html>: site sponsored by Assembly of First Nations in conjunction with Federal Government of Canada - with lesson plans for teachers.

The Trickster's Web, Drew Hayden Taylor: First Nations storytelling, humor and drama

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