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In the Mi'kmaq culture Elders are people who have been learning and practicing traditional values and ceremonies. They have and share the knowledge of our past, help to keep us healthy and safe in the present and guide us to a kind and peaceful future.

This week, Elder Donna Augustine of Elispogtog, shares her knowledge on the importance of respecting women and respecting oneself.

On May 5th many people all over the land wear red, this is to show respect for Indigenous women. This red is a symbol for us to remember and honour Indigenous women who are not always treated with kindness.

Elder Donna says that women are highly regarded and respected within her culture because they are the nurturers and care givers; life givers!

Women are gifted spiritually because they have the gift of the ability to have children. Giving life is a sacred responsibility and one of the most sacred things a woman can do. All our children are the most sacred gift from the Creator. If something happens to a child, the mother can feel it; that strong connection is an honour.

In traditional ways men are taught to respect women and women were always seen and regarded as leaders. When European explorers arrived on Turtle Island they requested to speak to the leaders. They were brought to the women which confused the explorers as the leaders within their communities were only men.

Elder Donna reminds us to honour and respect your grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, nieces and friends but most importantly to always have respect for yourself by honouring who you are as a person and being your best possible self!

These teachings can be shared with everyone so that all Indigenous women in the world are safe, healthy and happy.

Learning Activities

Kindergarten-Grade 1

Rain stick

You will need:

- A paper towel tube or other long cardboard tube
- Aluminum foil
- Small dried beans, popcorn kernels, dry rice, or small pasta.
- Brown paper or construction paper
- Tape
- Glue
- Safety scissors
- Crayons or markers

Making a cap for your rain stick: Create two end caps for your rain stick by tracing and cutting a circle a little larger than the end of the cardboard tube onto a piece of brown paper or construction paper., repeat the process for the other end of the roll.

Securely tape one of the caps onto one end of your tube; leave the other end open for now.

Cut two pieces of aluminum foil that are about the length of your tube and about 6 inches wide.

Loosely roll the aluminum foil into two long, thin, snake-like shapes.

Then twist each one into a spring shape.

Place both aluminum foil spring shapes into your paper towel tube.

Pour your dried beans, rice, or popcorn kernels into the tube. The tube should only be about 1/8 or 4 inches full.

Securely tape the remaining end cap to the open ended to cap off your rain stick.

Decorate your rain stick, allow time to let your glue dry and set before using.

Extend the activity by experimenting with different amounts and different types of seeds and beans to see how it may change the sound.



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What a day for a day dream...

We all get super busy sometimes, but it is important to take a break and be quiet and still.

Find a comfy spot out in your yard and lay back. Close your eyes and take a few deep cleansing breaths. When you open your eyes take in the different shapes and sizes of the clouds, what do you see?

Can you recreate the images you see in the clouds in a drawing or painting?

Extend your break by inviting a family member to join you or invite a friend, following safety guidelines, to share in this cloud gazing activity.



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Watch the video from Elder Donna Augustine; she discusses respect of women and May 5th a day in which we honour and remember the murdered and missing Indigenous Women. <https://youtu.be/dkHofLVAApC>

Getting to know me!

As we get older we spend more time with our friends. Our friends become a big part of our lives. It is ok to share in the same likes, but it is also very important to understand that we can still like different things. Knowing the things that you like and that are important to you is a great way to build your personal identity.

Create an all about me board or scrapbook!

You will need:

Paper (plain or coloured)

Writing utensils (markers, coloured pens, crayons etc)

Pictures (you can draw them or with permission you can cut from magazine, print online or use duplicate copies of personal pics from home)

Tape or glue

Stickers

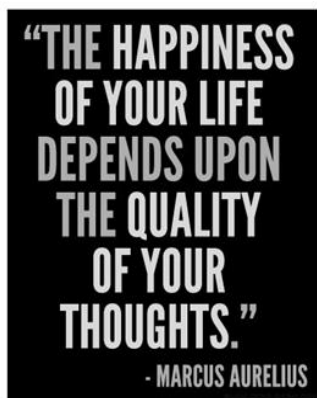
Stapler or string to hold the scrapbook together

Cardboard if you are creating a board and not a scrapbook

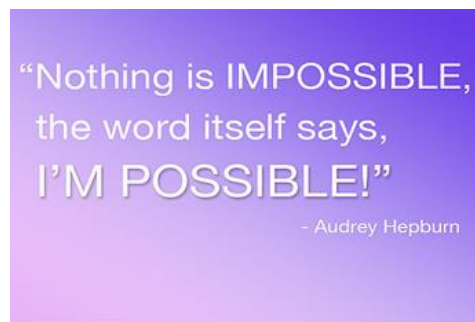
Don't forget the most important tool; YOUR IMAGINATION!

Questions you may want to consider when putting your board or scrapbook together; but remember the choices are yours and they are endless!

1. What makes me happy?
2. What is my favourite physical activity?
3. What is my favourite non-physical activity?
4. Am I a early bird or night owl?
5. What talents do I possess?
6. What is my favourite book, song, movie or poem?
7. What do I want to be when I grow up?



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Yoga

Try out this yoga lesson from the Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services of Nova Scotia

7 Sacred Teachings Yoga https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_m3b8VeL-w



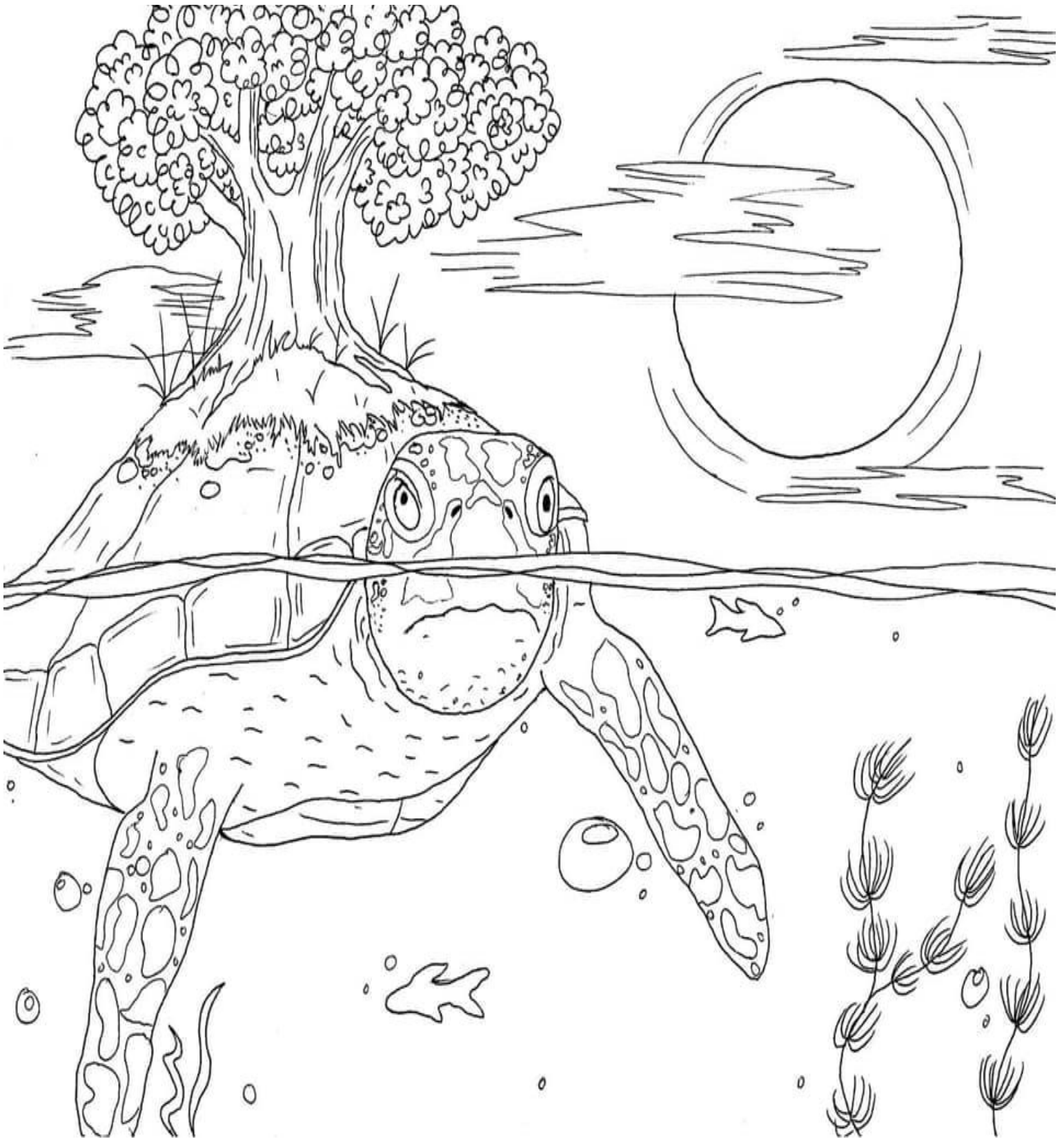
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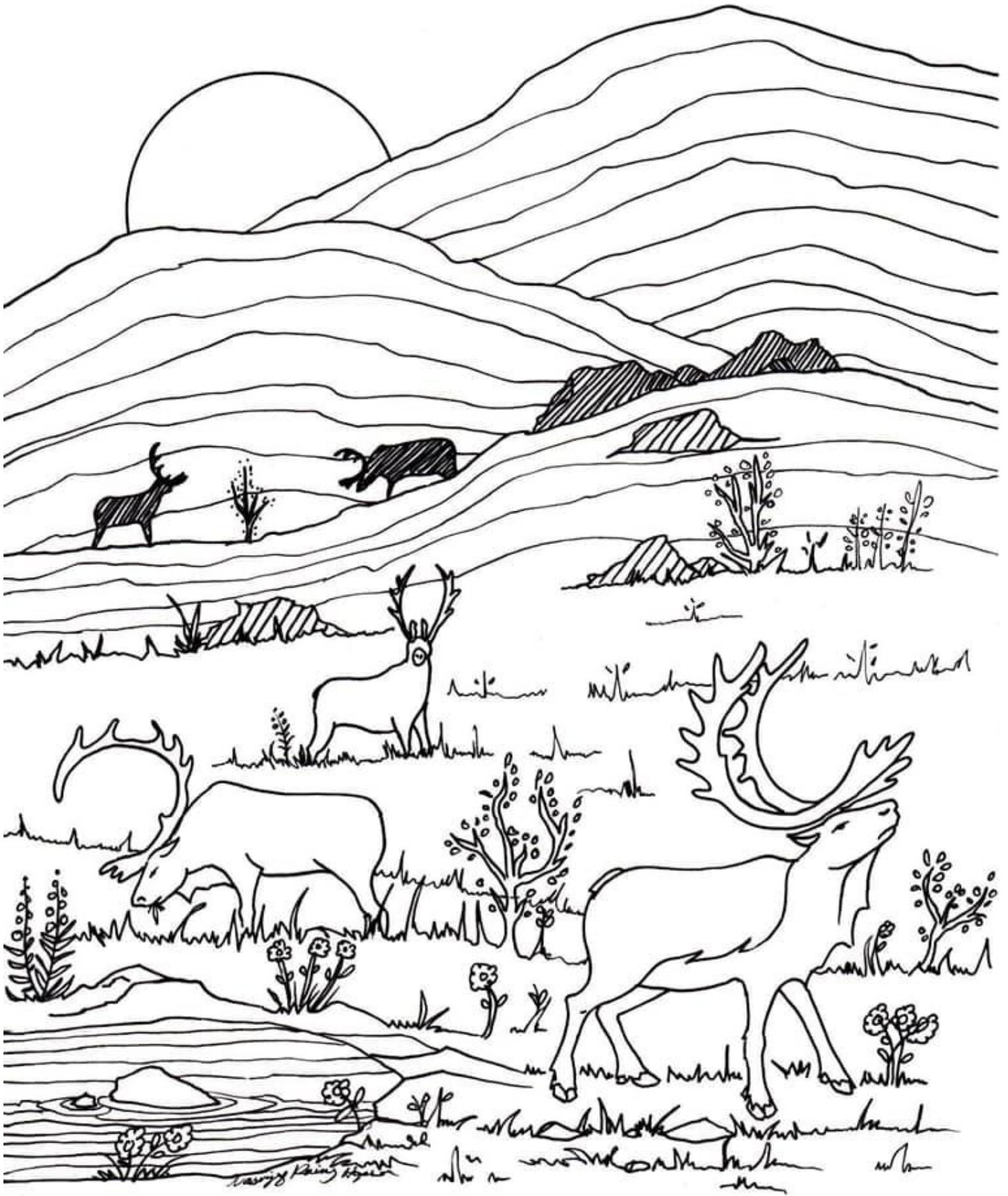
Print and colour

Colouring is a quick and easy way to have a relaxing moment. Below you will find three colouring sheets created by Indigenous artists to choose from.

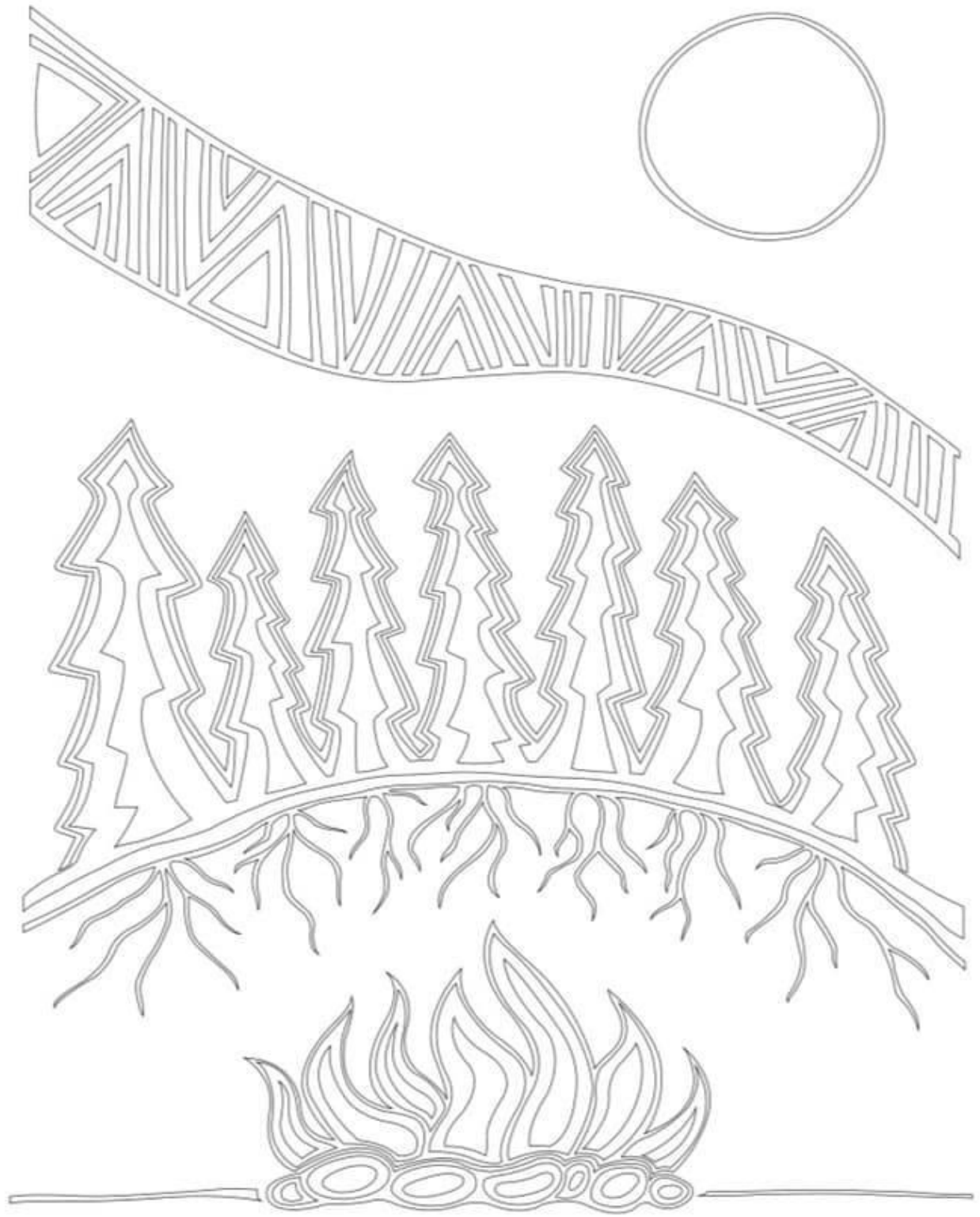




By: Mariah Alexander



By: Nasugraq Rainey Hopson



By: Patrick Hunter

Learning Activities

Grade 6-12

Respect for Women Lesson for middle and high school

*Definition of **Respect***, also called esteem, is a positive feeling or action shown towards someone or something considered important or held in high esteem or regard.

Jot down possible answers to these questions *before* you watch Elder Donna's video and then revisit them afterward. Did your answers change? What did you learn that you didn't know before?

Video created by Mi'kmaq Elder Donna Augustine on Respect for Women

<https://youtu.be/dkHofLVApc>

1. Why is red worn on May 5th every year?
2. Why do you think red is used to represent the indigenous women? (Have you ever heard of the red road?)
3. Why are women to be respected and held in high regard?
4. When the first settlers asked to see the leaders in the native communities why were they surprised when women were brought forward?
5. What special gifts did the creator give to women?
6. The drum is believed to be the heartbeat of Mother Earth. What do young men who sit at the drum for the first time, commit to, with their first drum beat?
7. Elder Donna says indigenous women should be able to walk freely on Mother Earth without fear. Do you think indigenous women should be afraid?

Follow up Activity

Did you know that 1 in 3 indigenous women experience violence in their life? Why do you think there are so many more indigenous women who go missing or are murdered than nonindigenous? Is racism a factor? Research and/or think about what you have learned in school regarding the effects of the residential schools and loss of culture in communities. Do you think the legacy of residential schools could have anything to do with violence against indigenous women? If so in what way? Write out your thoughts and what you learned. Share and discuss with a friend or family member.

For more information see https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls.pdf

For information and ideas of what you can do to help

<https://www.kairosCanada.org/missing-murdered-indigenous-women-girls/advocacy-action>

Learning Activities

Grade 6-8 Follow up activity

Draw an outline of a red dress and put MMIWG in large letters in middle. This is the symbol you will often see as people try to bring attention to this issue of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. Many people hang a red dress in their window on May 5th to commemorate all the MMIWG and families.

Two campaigns that are working hard to draw attention to this issue and hopefully make things better in the future are: **Moosehide campaign** and **Red Shawl campaign**. Research to find out what each campaign aims to do: <https://www.moosehidecampaign.ca/> <http://www.redshawl.org/index.html> Using a Vienne diagram note similarities and differences between these two campaigns. Just draw two overlapping circles like below. Where the two circles *overlap* list ways that the two campaigns *are the same*. Label circle A Moosehide and circle B Red Shawl. In their own circles note any ways that they are unique. For example, Moosehide uses a piece of moose hide as its symbol so you could jot that in circle A.



Are they more alike or different? Perhaps you could be a part of one of these campaigns at your school next year. Share what you have learned with others.

Another campaign you may want to investigate and compare is **Sisters in Spirit Campaign**

<http://itstartswithus-mmiw.com/about/>

Learning Activities

Grade 9-12 Follow up activity

Follow up activities for Grades 9- 12

The Mi'kmaq people in this area of Canada had a matriarchal society, while people of European decent come from a patriarchal society. Investigate to see what the differences are between a patriarchal and matriarchal society. Make notes on a **T** chart.

Patriarchal	Matriarchal

Think of ways this could cause problems when the two cultures met and tried to work together. Which way do you think prevailed? Why? Share what you have learned with others.

Many cases of MMIW (missing and murdered indigenous women and girls) are **not** thoroughly investigated. Why do you think this may be? Try to find out how many MMIWG there are in Canada.

The most recent MMIWG in NB was that of Candace Stevens, her body was found in a hockey bag on the Warwick Road near Renous, NB in October of 2018. Read the articles on her death here.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/candace-stevens-obituary-fredericton-death-1.4886379>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/candace-stevens-homicide-fredericton-wendy-losier-charged-1.5337782>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/wendy-gail-losier-moncton-homicide-case-1.5437894>

Food for thought.....

Do you think we will ever truly know what happened that night? Do you think police will try to find out who the accomplice was who helped the killer move the body or the person who burned the house in Fredericton? Do you think the fact that Candace Stevens was an indigenous woman played a factor in her being the victim or in how the investigation was conducted?

Respect for Women in Native Culture

In May of each year, there is a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This national day of remembrance reminds Canada that there are unsolved murders of native women throughout the land, with countless others still missing.

This day is commemorated by ceremonies and remembrance gatherings. The wearing of red clothing and the display of red items in public places happens on that day. Prior to this day, and throughout the year, red dresses are hung on trees along the highway and near native communities to serve as reminders. More education and awareness need to happen around this issue so that families and communities can find justice for their loved ones, so some may begin the healing process. Canada must never forget what has happened, or is still happening, so that the native women and girls of this country do not have to walk in fear on their own land.

In native culture, the women have always been respected and honoured. Women and men are respected equally; but in many native cultures, the matriarchal system prevails. The matriarchs and clan mothers, within individual nations and communities, are highly valued for their knowledge and wisdom. They are held in high esteem; but at the same time these women respect the men within their roles, showing that respect goes both ways. One symbol within native culture that helps to explain the importance of both roles of women and men is the symbol of the eagle. The eagle soars with two wings. The right side of the wing represents the male. They are naturally built bigger and stronger, so their role in native society has always been the protector and provider, as they are stronger physically. The opposite left wing of the eagle wing represents the women. They are the nurturers and life givers and carry a strong instinctive spiritual bond with their children, so they are considered stronger spiritually. Both wings though, are needed for balance, as both roles are honoured equally.

In native culture, little boys, often from the time they can speak, are brought up to always respect the women. This respect begins with the mother, the grandmother, their aunts and sisters, then outward to all women.

When a young man sits at a drum for the first time; they are reminded by the traditional drum keeper that the drum is female and represents the heartbeat of Mother Earth. They are told that when they hit the drum for the first time, it represents that they are making a commitment to always respect the women.

There are many ceremonial leaders in native cultures. Many of these ceremonial leaders carry sacred pipes on behalf of the people. All the pipes in North America (referred to as Turtle Island), represent the original sacred pipe that was brought by a spirit woman, "Buffalo Calf Woman". Arvol Looking Horse from Green Grass South Dakota is the 19th generation keeper of this sacred pipe. Pipe carriers are reminded that it was a spirit woman that brought the original sacred pipe to the people. Therefore, all pipe carriers that conduct ceremonies, always pray for and respect the women.

To this day, at Pow-wows or gatherings; there is always a time put aside to honour the women. The traditional woman dancers are called into the center, the men are asked to remove their hats, and everyone is asked to stand. The drumbeat starts, and the women begin their slow graceful dance. An Honour song is played by the drummers, as the emcee reminds everyone to pay honour, and to remember all the life givers of the nation; the mothers, grandmothers and all women.

When women are honoured in these ways, it is a reminder for everyone to always respect the women, especially to our mothers that gave us birth.