



MEDICINE WHEEL

Bundle



I Love Soccer because it is fun!
It makes my body feel good!
Physical Energy



GRADES 3 – 8

MEDICINE WHEEL BUNDLE

1. Understanding the Medicine Wheel Teachings -

Social Studies, Visual Arts, Language Arts

- The Medicine Wheel Teachings - Read for understanding.
- Check For Understanding - Illustrate and Summarize
- The Medicine Wheel Teaching, PHYSICAL - Bill Reid
- The Medicine Wheel Teaching, SPIRITUAL - Joane Cardinal-Schubert
- The Medicine Wheel Teaching, EMOTIONAL - George Littlechild
- The Medicine Wheel Teaching, MENTAL - Jane Ash Poitras
- Tracking Sheet Master



LEARNING STANDARDS

Learning Standards describe what students should know, be able to do, and understand by the end of each grade. Learning standards frame the important competencies/expectations and big ideas for each grade. Lessons in this bundle address the following standards:

VISUAL ARTS

- Apply the creative process to produce works of art using the elements, principles and techniques of visual arts to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings.
- Use the critical analysis process to describe, interpret and respond to works of art.

LANGUAGE ARTS

- Listen to understand and respond appropriately.
- Use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate.
- Read and demonstrate an understanding of texts.
- Write for an intended purpose.

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Understand significant characteristics of Indigenous nations in Canada.
- Develop a sense of personal identity.

SCIENCE

- Demonstrate curiosity about the natural world.
- Explore how living things interact with each other.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Use story and video to introduce the Medicine Wheel Teachings to your students.

Make sure students understand who wrote the teachings and where they are from. Indigenous peoples from different communities will have different understandings and perspectives on the teachings.

1. Download information about the medicine wheel from the Internet.
Ojibwe/Powawatomi (Anishinabe) Teaching, by Elder: Lillian Pitawanakwat, 2006 (All rights reserved 4D Interactive Inc.)
Teaching by the Medicine Wheel: An Anishinaabe Framework for Indigenous Education, by Nicole Bell, 2014.
2. Preview the **Medicine Wheel** video available at the Tribal Trade website.
3. Read **The Sacred Tree** (2003), by Phil Lane Jr. Lee Brown. This book discusses the medicine wheel in a simple, easy to understand way.



LOOKING AT ART

Each lesson in this bundle introduces students to an Indigenous artist and their work.

Use **SEEK™** to help students organize their thinking and build their observational skills. Guide them to support their ideas with evidence they see in the artwork.

Make sure everyone can see the image.

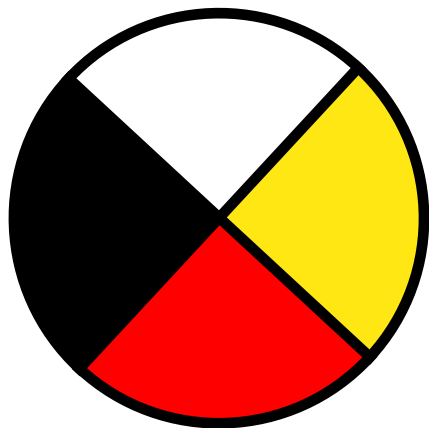
SEE – Look closely at the image for about a minute.
What do you see?

EVIDENCE – What do you see that makes you say that?

EXPLAIN – What choices did the artist make? How did those choices help communicate the message?

KNOW – What do you know about the artist's intent?
What else do you want to know?


MEDICINE WHEEL TEACHINGS



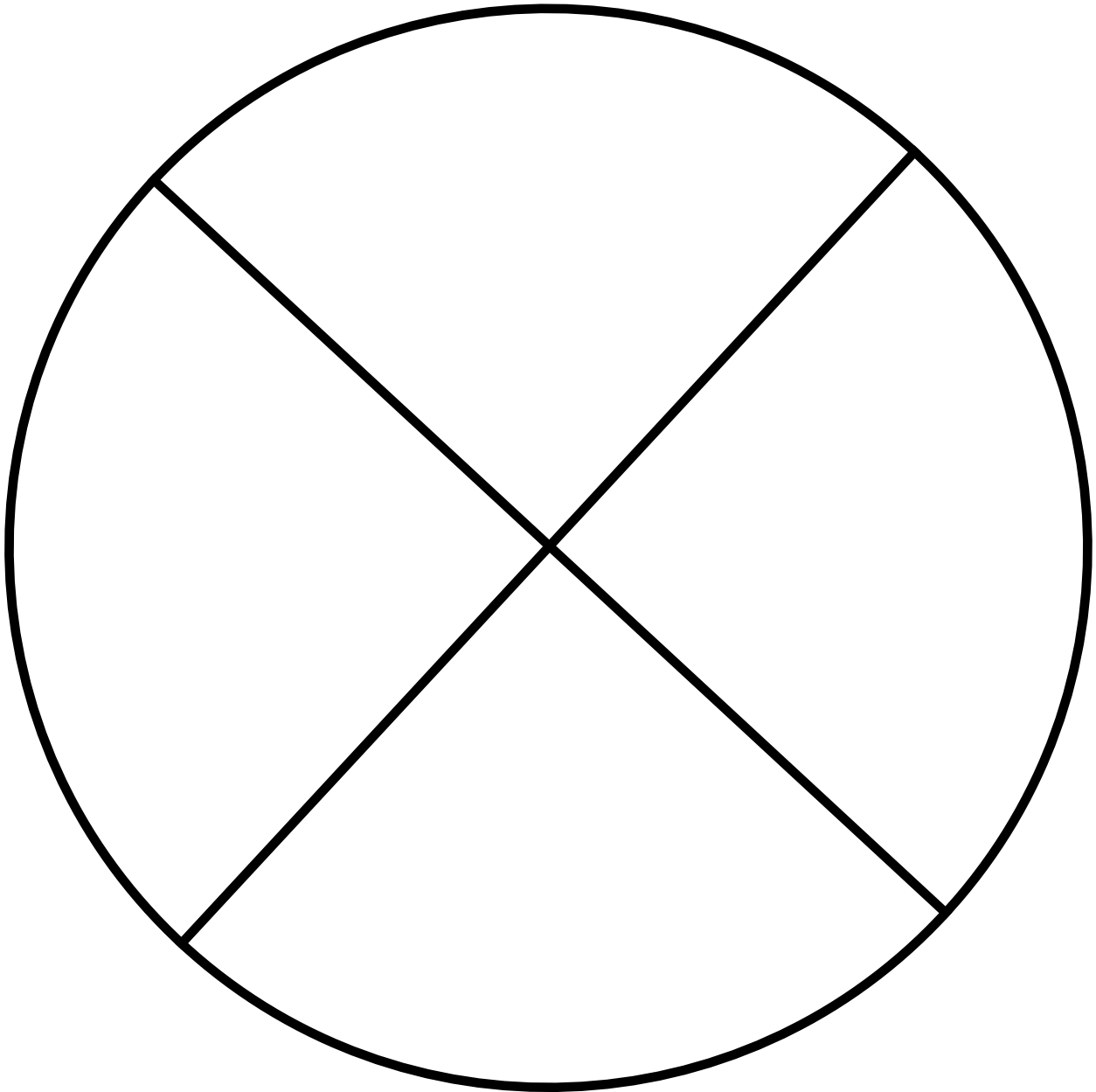
Many Indigenous communities have a special symbol called the Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel has been passed down through generations. It contains important teachings. Indigenous communities have different versions of the Medicine Wheel. The details might change, but the basic teaching is that all things are connected.

The Medicine Wheel is a circle divided into four parts. The parts each have their own colour. Each part depends on the others to make the whole circle. This shows how all aspects of life are connected. The circular shape of the Medicine Wheel represents how life flows in a circle. Indigenous people use the four parts of the wheel to teach meaningful lessons about life and understanding ourselves.

It is important to remember that different Indigenous tribes have their own version of the Medicine Wheel. One example is the Anishinabeg Medicine Wheel. In this version, the teaching stories in each quadrant include the following details.

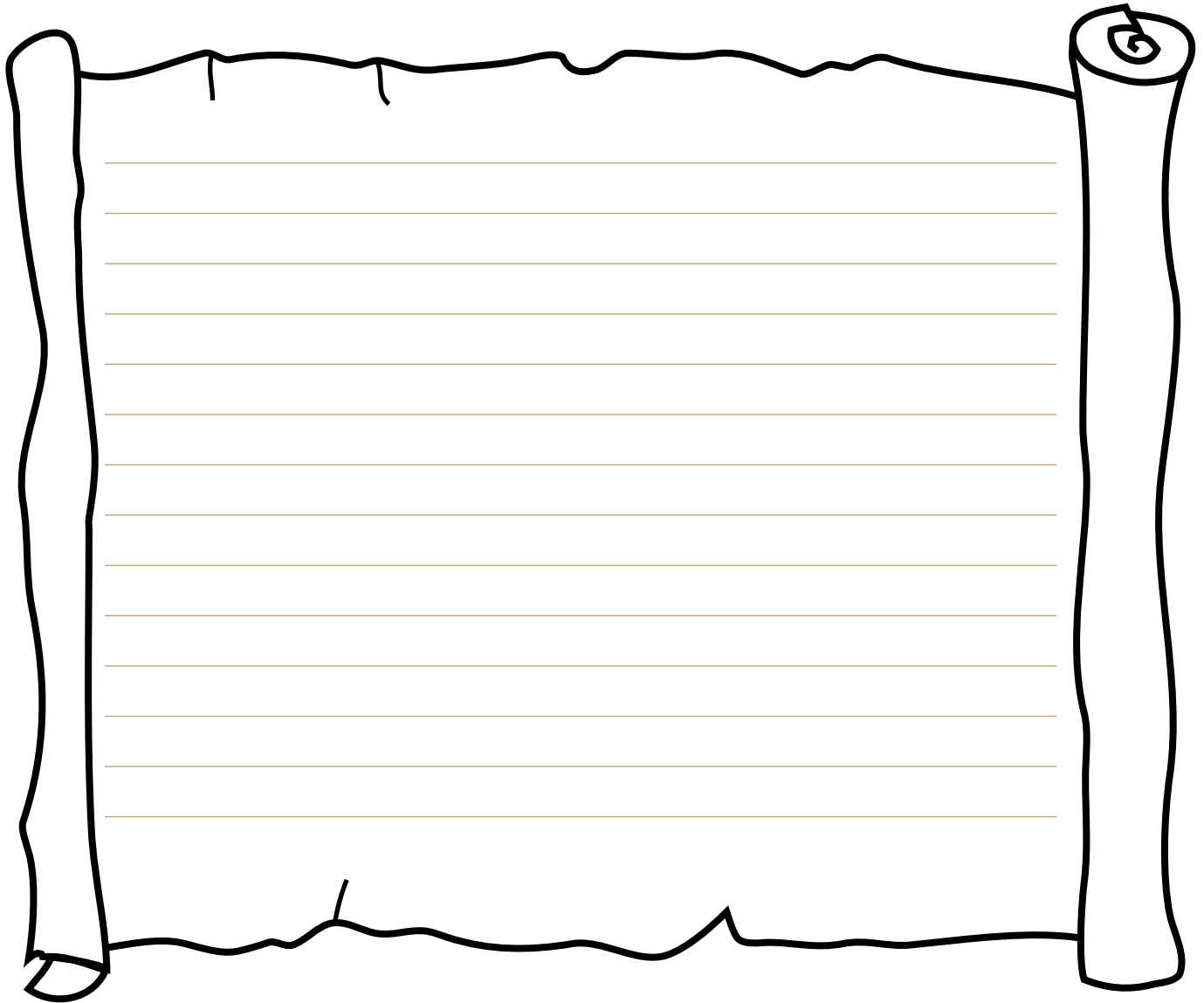
Colour	Black 	White 	Yellow 	Red 
Direction	West	North	East	South
Place in Body	Physical	Mind	Emotion	Spirit
Time of Day	Evening	Night	Morning	Afternoon
Season	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Stage of Life	Adult	Elder	Baby	Youth
Animal	Bear	Deer	Eagle	Coyote
Plant Medicine	Cedar	Sweet Grass	Tobacco	Sage

MEDICINE WHEEL



TASK 1 - Use the information on page 3 to illustrate the Medicine Wheel.

MEDICINE WHEEL

A hand-drawn scroll with a black outline and a wavy, irregular edge. The scroll is unrolled, showing a central area with horizontal lines for writing. The lines are light brown and spaced evenly. The scroll is positioned vertically, with the top edge slightly curved and the bottom edge also slightly curved. The left and right sides of the scroll are slightly wider, suggesting they are the ends of the scroll.

TASK 2 - Write 3 things you understand about the Medicine Wheel and its importance to Indigenous peoples.

PHYSICAL

MEDICINE WHEEL

Supplies

- Crayola Model Magic
- Crayola Construction Paper
- Crayola Fine Line Markers
- Crayola Glue Stick
- Crayola Colours of the World Broad Line Markers
- Crayola Marker & Watercolour Paper
- Pipe Cleaners - 2 per student



Vocabulary armature balance colour form sculpture shape

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- describe and respond to works of art;
- support their ideas with evidence found in the artwork;
- apply the creative process to create a personal artwork;
- communicate their personal understanding of the physical aspect represented in the medicine wheel;
- demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

Success Criteria

As a class identify 'look fors' that will demonstrate what students have learned and are able to do, e.g., I know I am successful when I have:

- drawn a medicine wheel and added words and images of outdoor physical activities I enjoy in the west quadrant of it;
- created a Model Magic sculpture to represent myself;
- expressed my favourite outdoor physical activity in a 3-dimensional form;
- created my own unique design.

Prepare

1. Download an image of **The Spirit of Haida Gwaii**, 1986, by Haida artist Bill Reid.
2. Read background information about **Bill Reid** and the sculpture.
3. Preview the videos **Mythical Icons** and **Gallery of Northwest Coast Art** - for an overview of Bill Reid's life and his work on the Spirit of the Haida Gwaii sculpture.
4. Print copies of the Reading Worksheet - Bill Reid, enough for each student to have one.
5. Download images from the Internet, or find images in books or magazines of children doing outdoor physical activities. **Boys Playing** **Swinging** **Soccer** **Unicycle** **Skating**

BILL REID

Bill Reid was a famous Haida artist. He was born in Victoria, British Columbia in 1920. His mother was Haida and his father Scottish-German. At first his Indigenous heritage was kept secret from him. He started to learn about his Haida roots in his teens. He visited his mother's home village when he was 23. He met his grandfather and older members of the community there. They still remembered the Haida traditions. Reid learned that his grandfather was a talented silversmith, and that his great-great uncle was a famous jewellery maker.

In 1948, Reid moved to Toronto, Ontario. Where he saw a totem pole from his grandmother's village at the Royal Ontario Museum. He studied it carefully and began to learn about Haida art. The traditional knowledge of Haida art had been lost, so he had to figure it out by himself. He studied hundreds of pieces of jewellery made by his famous great-great uncle, Charles Edenshaw. He began to uncover the foundations of Haida art.

Reid helped revive Haida art and created many large sculptures. **The Spirit of Haida Gwaii** is his best known work. It was shown on the Canadian 20 dollar bill from 2004 to 2012.

WHO IS IN THE CANOE?

- 10 non-human, mythical Haida creatures
- Raven, Wolf, Eagle, Frog, Bear Family, Beaver, Dogfish Mother, and Mouse Woman
- 3 humans - the Chief, Bear Mother, and the Ancient Reluctant Conscript

WHAT DO THEY SYMBOLIZE IN HAIDA CULTURE?

- Bear Mother - respect for the animal kingdom
- Dogfish Woman - connections between human and non-human world
- Eagle, Frog and Wolf - wisdom, prosperity and loyalty
- Raven - curious trickster
- Mouse Woman - advisor
- Chief - authority figure
- Ancient Reluctant Conscript - people following orders from a higher power

INTRODUCTION



PART 1

Introduce students to the Haida artist, Bill Reid. View and discuss the sculpture **The Spirit of Haida Gwaii** focussing on how the artist expresses the individual qualities of each passenger. Reflect on what the artist is communicating through each figure.

1. Display the image so everyone can see it.
2. Ask students to look at the work closely for about 30 seconds without speaking.
3. Invite students to share their first impressions of the sculpture.
4. Use **SEEK™** to help students organize their thinking.
5. Explore his use of myth to communicate his ideas, and view the videos **Gallery of Northwest Coast Art** and **Mythical Icons**.

PART 2

1. Review the different teachings represented by the medicine wheel.
2. Focus on the physical aspect. Ask students to think about and then discuss how they keep their physical bodies healthy.
4. Introduce the challenge.

Ask probing questions such as:

- What else?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- Could you explain that further?
- What do you mean by that?
- That's interesting, why do you say that?
- How might the artist get the idea to make it like that?

THE CHALLENGE



1. Choose words and images connected to outdoor activities you enjoy, and that keep your physical body healthy.
2. Use Model Magic to create a small sculpture of a human figure representing yourself.
3. Express your favourite outdoor physical activity through the 3-dimensional human form.
4. Demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

1



1. Begin with a circle and divide it into 4 equal sections.
2. Label each of the quadrants.
 - in the east is spiritual energy (our spirit)
 - in the south is emotional energy (our feelings)
 - in the west is physical energy (our bodies)
 - in the north is mental energy (our thinking)
3. Focus on the physical aspect of human beings.
4. Imagine an activity you enjoy doing outside with your physical body.
5. Draw the activity in the **west** quadrant of the medicine wheel.

2



1. In your sketchbook brainstorm words and images connected to the physical aspect of your life.
2. Use a variety of shapes to express the physical area of your life.
3. Reflect on what you need to do to keep your physical body healthy.
4. Choose an activity you love to do, an activity that helps keep you healthy.

3



1. Begin the human form by using 2 pipe cleaners to create an armature.
2. Fold 1 pipe cleaner in half to make the body and legs.
3. Twist the second pipe cleaner into the top of the first one to form the neck and the arms.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

4



1. Cover the pipe cleaners with Model Magic (modeling clay) to form a human body.
2. Make sure your human figure is balanced.
3. Once the pipe cleaners are covered, attach the head using a small round piece of Model Magic.
4. Smooth together all the lines and seams where pieces of Model Magic are connected.

5



1. Use a variety of markers to add skin tones to your figure.
2. Imagine what you look like when you are involved in your physical activity.
3. Choose different colours of Model Magic to make hair and clothing.
4. Add the Model Magic to your figure.
5. Continue to cover your figure in clothing that represents the activity you enjoy participating in outdoors.

6



1. Add detail to your figure using markers.
2. Change any area on your figure that you are not satisfied with by adding Model Magic.
3. Create details on your figure that have a personal connection.
4. When you are satisfied with your sculpture allow it to dry for about 3 days.
5. It will be very light once it is dry and you can glue it to a small base of cardboard, wood or stone.
6. Use a small strip of white paper to write about what makes your physical body feel healthy.

SHARE



Once all the sculptures are complete ask students to bring their artworks into a large circle. Invite students to share how they have expressed an outdoor activity they enjoy through their sculpted figure of themselves. During the circle discussion include references to balance, and form. Compare form and shape. Share ideas on how to keep our physical bodies healthy, and why it is important.



Have students make connections with the way they feel when they are physically active. Does their mood shift when they get outside and move around? What kinds of outdoor activities make them feel extra happy and energized? When do they feel the most bored and sluggish? What did they discover about themselves as they worked through this project? What more do they want to learn?

ASSESSMENT

1. Observe students as they work – discriminating, seeking more information, elaborating, experimenting.
2. Observe students as they discuss their work – speaks with a clear voice, points to areas in the artwork, provides accurate information, answers questions from the audience effectively.
3. Observe students as they listen – listens attentively, responds with meaningful questions, sends positive nonverbal cues.
4. Use a checklist to track progress.
5. Have students reflect on their own artworks in their sketchbooks. Ask students:
 - What worked well in your artwork?
 - What do you see that makes you say that?
 - What would you change or do differently next time? Why?
 - What does the **physical** teaching from the medicine wheel mean to you?

SPIRITUAL

MEDICINE WHEEL

Supplies

- Crayola Variety Brushes
- Crayola Fine Line Markers - Black
- Crayola Watercolours
- Crayola Marker & Watercolour Paper
- Crayola Glue Sticks
- Water Containers
- Paper Towels
- Table Salt
- Photograph of Self or Image to Represent Self



Vocabulary background foreground middle ground collage line matting pattern space texture

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- describe and respond to works of art;
- support their ideas with evidence found in the artwork;
- apply the creative process to create a personal artwork;
- communicate their personal understanding of the spiritual aspect represented in the medicine wheel;

Success Criteria

As a class identify 'look fors' that will demonstrate what students have learned and are able to do, e.g., I know I am successful when I have:

- brainstormed my connections to the spiritual aspect of the medicine wheel;
- created a watercolour painting using a variety of techniques;
- used collage to represent aspects of myself;
- used a variety of lines and textures to create patterns;
- created my own unique mixed media artwork.

Prepare

1. Review background information about the Indigenous artist, **Joane Cardinal-Schubert** and view both videos included in the article. And read additional information about the artist at **Galleries West**.
2. Download the image of Joane Cardinal-Schubert's artwork, **Medicine Wheel (There Is No Hercules)** from the Internet.
3. Print the Joane Cardinal-Schubert worksheet - 1 for each student.
4. Download images from the Internet, or gather and make available books about Zentangle, e.g., 'Zentangle Sourcebook: The Ultimate Resource For Mindful Drawing', by Jane Mabaix; 'Zentangle Art Therapy', by Anya Lothrop; 'Joy of Zentangle', by Marie Browning, Suzanne McNeill, and Sandy Bartholomew; and 'Zen Drawing Workbook: Peace and Positivity through Zentangle', by Suzanne McNeil.

JOANE CARDINAL-SCHUBERT

Joane Cardinal-Schubert was born in Red Deer, Alberta, in 1942. She was the middle of eight children. They lived near a lake on a property with a mink farm. Even as a young child she loved creating and experimenting with various materials.

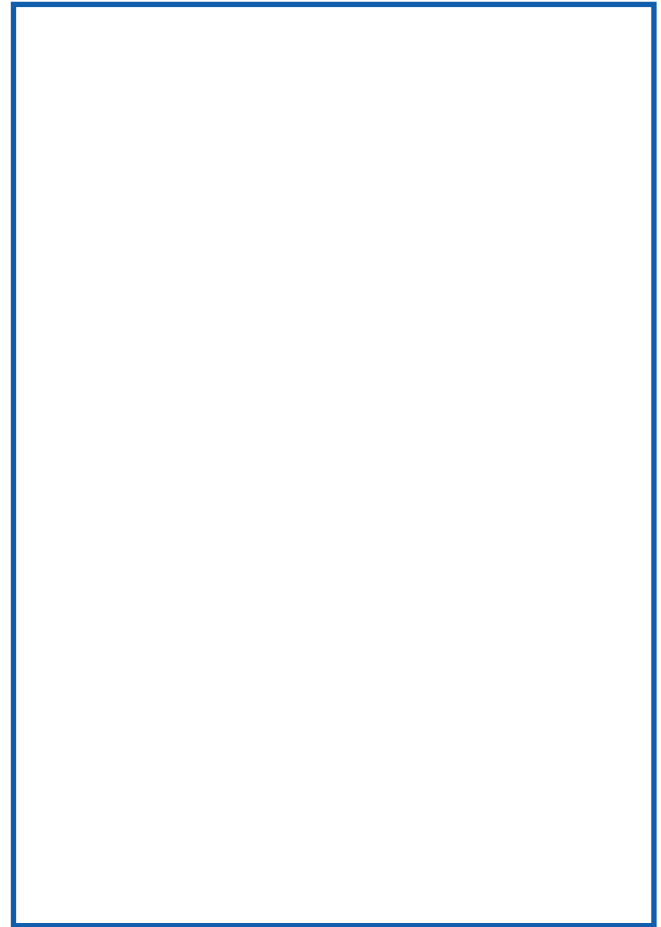
Joane Cardinal-Schubert was a dedicated artist who used her visual language to tell stories. She believed that storytelling, like art, could solve problems and help her understand things. She was always revisiting ideas and themes to make new connections. She described her stories as circles, going around and around leading to continuous rediscovery.

One of her shows, 'Canadian Heroes' in 1978 showcased local heroes. She believed Canadians tend to admire heroes from other countries. She wanted to honour Canadian heroes. Some of the heroes she included were Emily Carr, and Indigenous chiefs Big Bear, Crowfoot, and Red Crow.

Throughout her career, she honoured those who fought against injustice, sexism, and racism. The Calgary Board of Education recognized her as a hero in 2018 when they named a new high school after her.

Sadly, she died of breast cancer in 2009.

Cardinal-Schubert's painting, 'Medicine Wheel (There Is No Hercules)' is a loose canvas held up by two lodgepole pines. The canvas is stained a dark blue. A medicine wheel and pictographs fill the space.



Make a coloured sketch of the artwork, **Medicine Wheel (There Is No Hercules)**

What do you think it means?

INTRODUCTION



PART 1

Introduce students to the Indigenous artist, **Joane Cardinal-Schubert**. View and discuss the videos that show several works exploring her use of drawing, collage and the written word to communicate her ideas. Then focus on, **Medicine Wheel (There is no Hercules)**. Consider how she created space (refer to the foreground, middle ground, and background), and observe how she used colour to create space. Reflect on what it means.

1. Display the image so everyone can see it.
2. Ask students to look at the work closely for about 30 seconds without speaking.
3. Invite students to share their first impressions of the painting.
4. Use **SEEK™** to help students organize their thinking.

PART 2

1. Review the different teachings represented by the medicine wheel.
2. Focus on the spiritual aspect. Ask students to imagine what is possible in their lives, what dreams and life goals they have. Discuss favourite places within our natural world. Ask students what they enjoy creating. What life experiences make their spirit feel alive?
4. Introduce the challenge.

Ask probing questions such as:

- What else?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- Could you explain that further?
- What do you mean by that?
- That's interesting, why do you say that?
- How might the artist get the idea to make it like that?

THE CHALLENGE



1. Use watercolours to paint a space where you feel peace and connection to yourself.
2. Add collage to the painting to represent yourself expressing a time when your spirit feels alive, for example, connecting to nature, creating or dreaming of future possibilities.
3. Use lines and textures to create patterns.
4. Create your own unique mixed media artwork.
5. Demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

1



1. Work on the **east** quadrant of your medicine wheel.
2. Focus on the spiritual aspect of human beings.
 - when you close your eyes and imagine your vision for yourself, what do you see?
4. Draw a dream that you have for yourself, a goal, in the eastern quadrant of the medicine wheel.

2



1. Brainstorm words and images connected to the spiritual aspect of your life.
2. Use a variety of shapes to express the spiritual area of your life.
3. Reflect on what you enjoy creating.
4. Express how you imagine your dreams, your goals.
 - What vision do you have for your future?
 - Where do you enjoy spending your time?
 - Where is your favourite place to go to when you are outdoors?
 - What makes your spirit feel alive and happy?

3



1. Use a **small** piece of watercolour paper to experiment with different colours and techniques.
2. Begin by painting the paper with clear water.
3. Wet your brush and choose a colour for the foreground.
4. Paint the foreground colour then paint a new colour for the middle ground.
5. Allow the colours to bleed into each other.
6. Repeat for the background.
7. Add salt to a few areas of your painting and watch what happens.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

4



1. Use a **large** piece of watercolour paper to paint the background for your mixed media art.
2. When you close your eyes and imagine your dreams, your goals, a vision of possibilities for your life, what do you see?
3. Paint with colours you love, and create a foreground, middle ground, and background for your dreams.
4. Allow the colours to bleed naturally into each other.
5. Add salt to the sky, and lighten areas by dabbing them with a paper towel.

5



1. Reflect on a time when you are creating, or connecting with the natural world. What are your dreams, your goals?
3. Find a photograph of yourself or one from a magazine that represents you, and your vision for yourself. When does your spirit feel alive?
4. Cut out the image.
5. Use a variety of coloured pencils to brightly colour the cut out photo.
6. Use glue stick to glue the image in the **foreground** of your watercolour painting.

6



1. Use a black, fine line marker to draw small, repeated shapes and lines to create patterns and a variety of textures.
2. Add repeating contour lines to the human form.
3. Listen to instrumental music while you draw, take your time.
4. Mat your finished painting on a piece of contrasting paper.

SHARE



Once all the artworks are complete ask students to bring their mixed media art pieces into a large circle. Invite each student to share their thoughts, feelings and reflections about their artworks.

Ask students to share how they have expressed a life experience that makes their spirit feel alive; how they have used line and texture to create patterns; and how they have created depth and the sense of space using foreground, middle ground, and background.



Have students make connections with what Joane Cardinal-Schubert did and their own process. What did they learn about themselves and what is important to them by creating this artwork? Is there a story in their artwork? What does their artwork tell them about their life dreams? How does the creation of art affect their spirit?

ASSESSMENT

1. Observe students as they work – discriminating, seeking more information, elaborating, experimenting.
2. Observe students as they discuss their work – speaks with a clear voice, points to areas in the artwork, provides accurate information, answers questions from the audience effectively.
3. Observe students as they listen – listens attentively, responds with meaningful questions, sends positive nonverbal cues.
4. Use a checklist to track progress.
5. Have students reflect on their own artworks in their sketchbooks. Ask students:
 - What worked well in your artwork?
 - What do you see that makes you say that?
 - What would you change or do differently next time? Why?
 - What does the **spiritual** teaching from the medicine wheel mean to you?

EMOTIONAL

MEDICINE WHEEL

Supplies

- Crayola Variety Brushes
- Crayola Acrylic Paint
- Crayola Oil Pastels
- Crayola Permanent Markers - Black
- Found Objects
- Crayola School Glue
- Water Containers
- Paper Towels
- Scrap Fabric Pieces
- Canvas Board or Foam Core Board - 30.5 cm x 40.6 cm (12" x 16") 1 - per student



Vocabulary balance collage colour emphasis mixed media overlap syllabics

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- describe and respond to works of art;
- support their ideas with evidence found in the artwork;
- apply the creative process to create a personal artwork;
- communicate their personal understanding of the emotional aspect represented in the medicine wheel;
- demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

Success Criteria

As a class identify 'look fors' that will demonstrate what students have learned and are able to do, e.g., I know I am successful when I have:

- blended 2 colours of acrylic paint together;
- communicated my personal understanding of the emotional aspect represented in the medicine wheel;
- written about several positive ways I express my feelings;
- drawn images that communicate positive ways I share my feelings;
- integrated images, words and background using collaged shapes;
- created emphasis in an important part of my work;
- created my own unique design.

Prepare

1. Download images from the Internet of **George Littlechild's** artwork, or find images in books such as George Littlechild: The Spirit Giggles Within, 2012. George Littlechild's artworks tell stories and give voice to the life stories of the First Peoples his artworks make us think and question.
2. Preview the **video** 'George Littlechild at Alcheringa gallery - May 2014'.
3. Download information about the **Cree Language**, the many dialects and **Cree Syllabics**.
4. Read the article **A Question of Legacy**: Cree Writing and the Origin of Syllabics by Walter Strong, 2020.
5. Prior to this lesson teach about the Cree Language, exploring the different dialects, and examining the Mushkegowuk Cree Syllabics Chart.

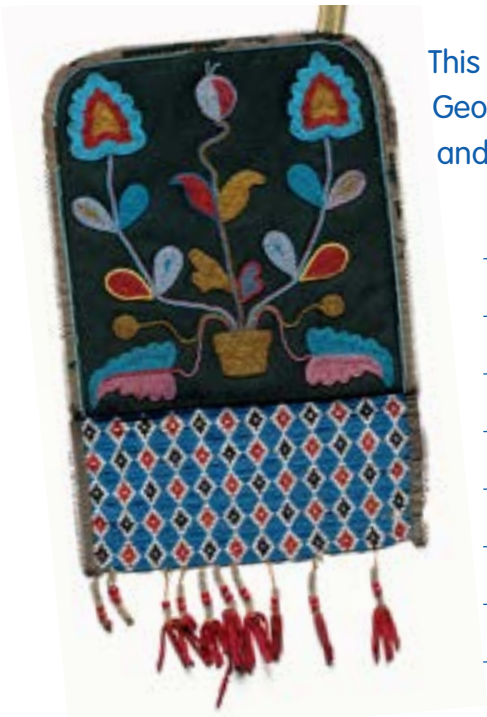
GEORGE LITTLECHILD

George Littlechild is a Plains Cree artist. He was born in Edmonton, Alberta in 1958. His mother died when he was very young. So, he went to live with Dutch-Canadian foster parents when he was 4. He loved drawing and his foster mother encouraged him. At around 9 years old he started taking art lessons. His art teacher was his first role model and taught him how to draw portraits.

While growing up Littlechild did not know his mother was Plains Cree or that his father was white. He only knew he was 'Indian'. He used his art to deal with the racism he faced. When he was 17 he found out about his parents. This made him curious about his family history and birth family. It took him 11 years until he finally found and met some of his relatives, including his sister. His motto was to 'never give up'.

Littlechild is known for his use of bold colour. He believes colours are powerful and have healing properties. The colours he chooses are influenced by his Plains Cree culture. Littlechild believes that artists can raise awareness and be a voice for change. His mixed media collages show the "pride, strength and beauty of First Nations people and cultures."

George Littlechild is famous in Canada and around the world. He is seen as one of the foremost Indigenous artists working in Canada today.



This Cree or Métis People bag is typical of the beading created by George Littlechild's ancestors. What connections can you see between it and Littlechild's work?

INTRODUCTION



PART 1

Introduce students to the Cree artist **George Littlechild**. View the **video** and discuss several of his paintings focussing on his use of colour and the feelings the works express.

1. Display the image so everyone can see it.
2. Ask students to look at the work closely for about 30 seconds without speaking.
3. Invite students to share their first impressions of the painting.
4. Use **SEEK™** to help students organize their thinking.

PART 2

1. Review the different teachings represented by the medicine wheel.
2. Focus on the **emotional** aspect. Ask students to reflect on how they express their feelings in a positive way.
4. Introduce the challenge.

Ask probing questions such as:

- What else?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- Could you explain that further?
- What do you mean by that?
- That's interesting, why do you say that?
- How might the artist get the idea to make it like that?

THE CHALLENGE



1. Create a mixed media artwork to communicate your personal understanding of the emotional aspect represented in the medicine wheel.
2. Blend two colours together using acrylic paints.
3. Write about a variety of positive ways you express your feelings.
4. Draw images that communicate positive ways you share your feelings.
5. Integrate images, words and background using collaged shapes.
6. Emphasize an important part of your artwork.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

1



1. Work on the **south** quadrant of your medicine wheel.
2. Close your eyes and focus on the activities you do to express how you feel. What images come to your mind?
3. Write words and draw images about your feelings in the southern quadrant of the medicine wheel.
4. Include life experiences that allow you to express your feelings in a positive way.

2



1. In your sketchbook brainstorm words and images connected to the emotional aspect of your life.
2. Use a variety of shapes to express the emotional area of your life.
3. Reflect on how you express your feelings in a positive way.
- What life experiences and relationships give you happiness?
4. Use watercolour pencils to draw/paint a variety of colours.
5. Brainstorm the different emotions connected to each colour.

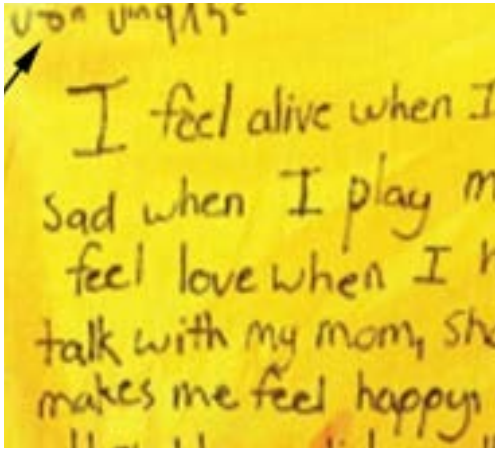
3



1. Use a canvas board, or a piece of foam core board to make your artwork on.
2. Choose two acrylic paint colours that give you positive feelings.
- Colours that can be blended together to create another colour work well.
3. Paint your background with the two colours.
4. Blend the colours together where they meet.
5. Allow time for your background to dry before moving on to step four.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

4



1. Use a Syllabics Chart connected to a specific Indigenous community to translate your name into syllabics.
2. Write your name in syllabics on your painting using black permanent marker.
3. Write a rough draft about your feelings.
 - What life experiences give you positive feelings?
 - How do you express your feelings when you are sad, content, joyful, or confused?
 - Who supports you and how you feel about yourself?
4. Edit the rough draft and write the good copy of your story on your painting.

5



1. Choose an image from your earlier brainstorming activity, or the image you included in the southern quadrant of the medicine wheel.
2. Use oil pastels to draw the image that best expresses your emotional aspects.
3. Choose a shape to represent your feelings.
4. Use fabric scraps to cut out multiple copies of the shape.
5. Collage the shapes to your artwork.
6. Balance the shapes you have chosen in a way that creates meaning.

6



1. Choose a small, natural object that connects to your feelings and represents you.
2. Glue the found object onto your artwork in a place you would like to emphasize, e.g., your self-portrait.

SHARE



Once all the artworks are complete ask students to bring their mixed media artworks into a large circle. Invite each student to share how they express their feelings in positive ways. During the circle discussion include references to colour and the emotions connected to the colours chosen. Ask students to share how they have created emphasis and balance in their artworks. Ask students to reflect on the objects they chose to add emphasis in their artworks, and what the natural objects mean to them.



Ask students to connect how they felt while doing this project and other times they created artworks. Have them identify specific things they did that triggered a particular feeling. Have them reflect on how they handled their emotions. Ask them to think about how the artwork they created relates to their life.

ASSESSMENT

1. Observe students as they work – thoughtful focus, discriminating, seeking more information, elaborating, experimenting.
2. Observe students as they discuss their artworks – speaks with a clear voice, points to areas in the composition, provides accurate information, answers questions from the audience effectively.
3. Observe students as they listen – listens attentively, responds with meaningful questions, sends positive nonverbal cues.
4. Use a checklist to track progress.
5. Have students reflect on their own artworks in their sketchbooks. Ask students:
 - What worked well in your artwork?
 - What do you see that makes you say that?
 - What would you change or do differently next time? Why?
 - What does the **emotional** teaching from the medicine wheel mean to you?

MENTAL

MEDICINE WHEEL

Supplies

- Crayola Variety Brushes
- Crayola Fine Line Markers - Black
- Crayola Watercolours
- Crayola Marker & Watercolour Paper
- Crayola Watercolour Pencils
- Crayola Glue Sticks
- Crayola Construction Paper Crayons
- Water Containers
- Paper Towels

Vocabulary balance contrast cool colours warm colours emphasis shape texture variety

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- describe and respond to works of art;
- support their ideas with evidence found in the artwork;
- apply the creative process to create a personal artwork;
- communicate their personal understanding of the mental aspect represented in the medicine wheel;
- demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

Prepare

1. Read about the Cree artist, **Jane Ash Poitras**. She has created many mixed media artworks. Jane Ash Poitras' artworks tell stories, teach, and inspire us to think, question, and wonder.
2. View the video **Jane Ash Poitras Conversation** where she discusses four major paintings purchased by the ROM (Royal Ontario Museum). - Images from the ROM exhibition are shown, followed by images and paintings from the Kinsman Robinson Galleries, 2015 exhibition, 'Jane Ash Poitras: New Paintings'.
3. Download the image '**Buffalo Seed**' by Jane Ash Poitras from the Internet.
4. Download images from the Internet, or find images in books or magazines of the 4 elements: **Fire Sun**, **Earth Plants**, **Water Ocean**, and **Air Clouds**.



Success Criteria

As a class identify 'look fors' that will demonstrate what students have learned and are able to do, e.g., I know I am successful when I have:

- created a watercolour background with 4 distinct, symbolic colours;
- communicated my personal understanding of the mental aspect represented in the medicine wheel;
- written a question for each of the 4 elements ;
- drawn images that represent my 4 questions;
- balanced the placement of the images and words;
- connected each of the 4 sections of the artwork
- created my own unique design.

JANE ASH POITRAS

Jane Ash Poitras is a famous Cree/Dene artist. She was born in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta in 1951. Her parents died when she was very young, and she was raised by a foster family in Edmonton. Even though she really wanted to be an artist she was told to study science. She became a microbiologist. Later she studied art and became famous in Canada and around the world for her powerful artworks.

Her work is influenced by western science and Indigenous culture. She has close ties to the Elders from many Indigenous communities and travels across Canada to be part of their ceremonies. She is always learning from them, and shares her knowledge through her artwork.

In 2010 The Royal Ontario Museum purchased the mixed media artwork, **Buffalo Seed**. It is a fine example of how she shares traditional knowledge.

BUFFALO SEED, 2004

SUNFLOWERS - Traditional Indigenous Knowledge

- sunflowers are indigenous in North America
- buffalo liked sunflowers
- buffalo would pick them up and throw them over their backs
- the sunflower seeds and ticks would fall on the ground
- birds would come and pick out the seeds and ticks
- buffalo would eat the sunflowers, stalks and all
- by paying close attention, Indigenous peoples learned how to use plants for medicinal purposes



DID YOU KNOW??

SUNFLOWERS:

- provide important nutrients
- help protect against heart disease
- help protect against some cancers
- boost memory and brain function

INTRODUCTION



PART 1

Introduce students to **Jane Ash Poitras** (an artist who was born Cree in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta). View and discuss her mixed media artwork, **Buffalo Seed**, focusing on the meaning of the images she uses, and discussing how Indigenous peoples depended on and learned from the buffalo.

1. Display the image so everyone can see it.
2. Ask students to look at the work closely for about 30 seconds without speaking.
3. Invite students to share their first impressions of the painting.
4. Use **SEEK™** to help students organize their thinking.
5. Explore her use of drawing, photography and writing/words to communicate her ideas.
6. Once they have had a chance to view and interpret the image, share the video of her discussing the work **Jane Ash Poitras Conversation**

Ask probing questions such as:

- What else?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- Could you explain that further?
- What do you mean by that?
- That's interesting, why do you say that?
- How might the artist get the idea to make it like that?

PART 2

1. Review the different teachings represented by the medicine wheel.
2. Focus on the **mental** aspect. Ask students to reflect on how they learn. What life experiences inspire them to wonder?
4. Introduce the challenge.

THE CHALLENGE



1. Communicate your personal understanding of the mental aspect represented by the medicine wheel.
2. Create a background with 4 different, but integrated sections using watercolour paints.
3. Draw and paint images in each of the 4 sections that communicate your questions about the 4 elements (fire, air, earth, water) represented by the medicine wheel.
4. Balance the images in your artwork, contrasting them with the background.
5. Integrate and balance 4 written questions (one for each element) with the images and background of your artwork.
6. Demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

1



1. Work on the **north** quadrant of your medicine wheel.
2. Close your eyes and focus on the different learning experiences in your life. What images come to your mind? What questions do you wonder about?
3. Write words and draw images about your mind, your thinking, in the northern quadrant of the medicine wheel.
4. Include life experiences that help you learn and inspire your curiosity.

2



1. In your sketchbook brainstorm words and images connected to the mental aspect of your life.
2. Reflect on how you learn, and the questions you wonder about.
3. Reflect on each of the 4 elements (fire, air, earth, and water). What does each element represent?
4. Brainstorm wonderings about each of the elements.
5. Draw an image to represent each question, each wondering.

3



1. Use watercolours to paint a background for your work.
2. Begin by dividing the paper into 4 sections.
3. Choose colours to represent each of the 4 elements.
4. Cover your blank paper with water, then begin to add colours to each section, e.g. Fire – yellow, orange, red, Earth – brown, green.
5. Add salt to an area to change the way the colours bleed together.
6. Make sure you use a lot of water with your artwork.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

4



1. Use watercolour pencils to draw an image to represent each of the 4 questions, wonderings you had when reflecting on the 4 elements.
2. Use a paintbrush to paint **clear water** into each image you drew.
3. Create your drawings using a variety of colours that contrast against the background painting.
4. Make sure the 4 images are balanced on the whole paper.

5



1. Use crayons to clarify your images.
2. Add form to your shapes and emphasize different areas of each image.

6



1. Use a black, fine line marker to identify each element, earth, fire, air, water.
2. Write a question, a wondering you are curious about for each of the elements.
3. Make sure you have written your wonderings in a way that connects each of the four sections in your artwork.
4. Create balance with both your images and words.

SHARE



Once everything is complete ask students to bring their mixed media artworks into a large circle. Invite each student to share one of their wonderings, questions connected to an element (earth, water, fire, air). Ask students to share a life experience that inspired them to learn. During the circle discussion include references to colour (warm and cool), and the meaning connected to the colours. Ask students to share how they have created balance and used contrast in their artworks.



Have students connect their personal experiences of feeling curious. What were they doing? Where were they? When are they most curious? How do they feel when they explore ideas they don't know much about? How often do they say to themselves, "I wonder . . ."? Ask students to notice how many questions they ask versus how many they answer when discussing ideas with others. Challenge them to ask at least 3 questions before giving their own opinion.

ASSESSMENT

1. Observe students as they work – discriminating, seeking more information, elaborating, experimenting.
2. Observe students as they discuss their work – speaks with a clear voice, points to areas in the artwork, provides accurate information, answers questions from the audience effectively.
3. Observe students as they listen – listens attentively, responds with meaningful questions, sends positive nonverbal cues.
4. Use a checklist to track progress.
5. Have students reflect on their own artworks in their sketchbooks. Ask students:
 - What life experiences inspired you to wonder about the things in your picture?
 - What worked well in your artwork?
 - What do you see that makes you say that?
 - What would you change or do differently next time? Why?
 - What does the **mental** teaching from the medicine wheel mean to you?

