Celebrating Canada’s Indigenous Peoples Through Song and Dance

Music Alive Program
Student Booklet

Content and Music by Sherryl Sewepagaham and Olivia Tailfeathers
Activities by Christie Ulicny
**Did you know?**

First Nations people were the first people to live in Canada. There are 617 First Nations communities in Canada.

Many of these communities have different teachings and cultural practices.

One idea that is shared between First Nations communities is a deep respect for the earth. Playing music and singing songs is one way to show our respect for the earth.

This booklet shares the knowledge and traditions of two talented teachers and artists. Learn about them below!

**ABOUT THE WRITERS**

**Sherryl Sewepagaham**

Hi, my name is Sherryl. I am an artist, music teacher, and music therapy student. My family are Cree-Dene from Northern Alberta. I have been writing traditional songs for a long time. I was nominated for a Juno award. I just finished recording a CD of songs in my Cree language.

On the next page, learn the Music Alive song that I wrote for you!

**Olivia Tailfeathers**

Hello, my name is Olivia. I have been teaching on the Blood reserve in Southern Alberta for 30 years. I have loved to sing from a young age. I sang for rodeo events, school festivals, church choir and for the University of Montana choir where I studied Education. Living in two worlds I heard the songs of her grandparents and families of the Blackfeet Tribes. This inspired me to create songs with Blackfoot words.
Did you know?

Students across Canada are learning and singing the Music Alive song too!!

Maybe they are singing it right now!

Listen here: http://goo.gl/nS26sP
Indigenous Peoples & Song

For First Nations people, music was a way to connect with the earth.

Some people say that a drum beat is the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

Listen and Draw

• Stand still and listen to the sounds you hear

• Make a list of these sounds

• Where do these sounds come from? (machines, peoples
  the environment)

• Can you think of sounds you hear in nature? How can these
  sounds be used to make music?

• Draw a picture that represents your favourite nature
  sounds.
Learn Traditional Sign Language

Traditional sign language helps us to feel and understand the words in songs.

Check out the video: http://radio.nac-cna.ca/artsalive/music_alive/Ksahkommii_video.mp4 and learn sign language that goes with the song KsahKommii.

Can you sing along while practicing the sign language?

Storytelling and Song

Think of, or find a song that tells a story.

What is the story in the song?

Write out the story in your own words.

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Lyrics for KsahKommii

Nii naatoowan isstoop amay (I am saying to...)
Iss tsoowaka took ksahkoom may (listen to the earth)
  Ay ya-ya ay-ya
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo

  (Chorus line) Ay ya-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  Ay ya-ya ay-ya ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  A ya-ya ay-ya ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo

Nii naatoowan isstoop amay (I am saying to...)
Ay naytsik anoom ksahkoom may (respect the earth)
  Ay ya-ya ay-ya
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  (repeat chorus line)

Nii naatoowan isstoop amay (I am saying to...)
liy tsii nik anoom ksahkoom may (touch the earth)
  Ay ya-ya ay-ya
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  (repeat chorus line)

Nii naatoowan isstoop amay (I am saying to...)
Aboomimiss ksahkoom may (love the earth)
  Ay ya-ya ay-ya
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  Ay-ya ay-ya hi-yo
  (repeat chorus line)
Did you know?

For First Nations people, singing games are an important and fun way to keep families and communities together.

Many traditional songs have no words. Vocables or chant syllables are sung to help people concentrate on the activity or game.

PASS THE RHYTHM GAME

- Find a partner in your class
- Find a space in the room
- Stand facing one another
- One partner gets to create a rhythm by clapping, snapping, stomping or patting their legs. The other partner follows the pattern copying the movements.
- Try to create rhythms to a count of 8
- Try to change the beat to a count of 6 and see how that changes the feeling of the rhythm

Switch so your partner can try creating the rhythm.

Too Easy??

Try singing a syllable while you create your rhythm (like ah or oooh)
The Red River Jig

The Métis are people who are both European and Aboriginal.

In Métis culture, there is a popular dance called the Red River Jig. The dance started over 100 years ago. The song that the jig is danced to is also called The Red River Jig.

Listen to the Red River Jig here:
http://goo.gl/0Z36G

The Métis Flag is the oldest flag in Canada.
The symbol on it represents the two cultures joining.

Want to Learn More?

Read the history of the Red River Jig here: http://goo.gl/1KnURB

Read about the Red River Cart, a symbol of Métis identity here: