

Lesson 2 of 3 Cedar Series: Aboriginal people and connections to Environment. Traditions of the Coast Salish. Lesson modified from http://www.glenbow.org/media/coast_full_package.pdf

Learning Intention:

- I can understand and define the term “tradition”.
- I can understand the traditional way of life of the Coast Salish
- I can look critically at artifacts.

Learning Outcomes:

Achievement Indicators:

Generate specific questions in response to Aboriginal Environment/Traditions Cedar story focusing on the use and importance of Cedar.

Write

Materials: Cedar kit from LRC, lesson plan, paper, markers, Legend of the Cedar story, worksheet.

Assessment: Teachers may use worksheets as formative assessments. This work will not be included in the student's official grade average but rather used as a means to gauge how well the student understands the material being covered.

Lesson 2:

1. Review mind maps of the students finding about Coast Salish **community** characteristics.
2. What are the **traditions** of the Coast Salish?

The First Nations among the Northwest Coast considered cedar as sacred. Can you guess why this tree is considered sacred? The Cedar tree provides all the essentials for daily life. The FN central coast has one of the most important dances that are centered on the Red Cedar.

First Nations carvers like the wood because it is soft, the grain is straight, it's light, and has a natural built in fungicide which makes this tree perfect for carving. There are two different types of cedar; can you guess what they are? Red and yellow cedar which are both aromatic woods. Red cedar is the most popular choice because it's warm color and rich inviting scent. Both cedars are long lived with the oldest being around a thousand years old. Has anyone been inside the BIG House in Campbell River? One of the pieces of cedar wood beams is 900 years old. For the Coast Salish, red cedar is the traditional choice of wood and is known as the “tree of life”. Traditionally, the First Nations make everything from the various parts of this tree. For that reason it is considered sacred. Can you think back to the previous lesson when you looked for evidence of the community by looking at the images of the artifacts? Please put your hands up and tell me some of the items that were made from this sacred tree? Canoes, paddles, bailers, houses, clothes, and structures, hats, capes. The bark of the cedar tree was also used for mats, baskets to carry many foodstuffs such as berries, dried clams or roots.

3. Refer to the community mind map, ask what traditions are? The Coast Salish had many traditions. Display the Cedar kit, hand out contents of kit and ask:

What do you see?

How would you use this?

What do you think it's made of?

Why is this object important to the Coastal First Nations way of life?

4. **As a class, discuss the connections between community and traditions. How are traditions**

shaped by a community's people, environment and values? How are communities known by their traditions? (FN Art known around the world) Read from Cedar (below) ask students to close their eyes and visualize the story their job is to build a picture of the story in their head then draw it once the story has been read:

***The Legend of The Cedar Tree* as told by Jim Fox**

A long time ago when the Aboriginals people were new upon the earth, they thought that life would be much better if there was never any night. They beseeched the Creator that it might be day all the time and that there would be no darkness.

The Creator heard their voices and made the night cease and it was day all the time. Soon, the forest was thick with heavy growth. It became difficult to walk and to find the path. The people toiled in the gardens many long hours trying to keep the weeds pulled from among the corn and other food plants. It got hot, very hot, and continued that way day after long day. The people began to find it difficult to sleep and became short tempered and argued among themselves.

Not many days had passed before the people realized they had made a mistake and, once again, they beseeched the Creator. "Please," they said, "we have made a mistake in asking that it be day all the time. Now we think that it should be night all the time." The Creator paused at this new request and thought that perhaps the people may be right even though all things were created in twos... representing to us day and night, life and death, good and evil, times of plenty and those times of famine. The Creator loved the people and decided to make it night all the time as they had asked.

The day ceased and night fell upon the earth. Soon, the crops stopped growing and it became very cold. The people spent much of their time gathering wood for the fires. They could not see to hunt meat and with no crops growing it was not long before the people were cold, weak, and very hungry. Many of the people died.

Those that remained still living gathered once again to beseech the Creator. "Help us Creator," they cried! "We have made a terrible mistake. You had made the day and the night perfect, and as it should be, from the beginning. We ask that you forgive us and make the day and night as it was before."

Once again the Creator listened to the request of the people. The day and the night became, as the people had asked, as it had been in the beginning. Each day was divided between light and darkness. The weather became more pleasant, and the crops began to grow again. Game was plentiful and the hunting was good. The people had plenty to eat and there was not much sickness. The people treated each other with compassion and respect. It was good to be alive. The people thanked the Creator for their life and for the food they had to eat.

The Creator accepted the gratitude of the people and was glad to see them smiling again. However, during the time of the long days of night, many of the people had died, and the Creator was sorry that they had perished because of the night. The Creator placed their spirits in a newly created tree. This tree was named *a-tsi-na tlu-gv* {ah-see-na loo-guh} cedar tree.

When you smell the aroma of the cedar tree or gaze upon it standing in the forest, remember that if you are Tsalagi {Cherokee}, you are looking upon your ancestor.

Tradition holds that the wood of the cedar tree holds powerful protective spirits for the Cherokee. Many carry a small piece of cedar wood in their medicine bags worn around the neck. It is also placed above the entrances to the house to protect against the entry of evil spirits. A traditional drum would be made from cedar wood.

Does the author believe this? Well, let's just say that there is a piece of cedar in my medicine pouch and I wear it always. The Creator did not make the people because of loneliness, but because the Creator wanted to show generosity and love to the people. Accept the blessings and the gifts given and always give thanks for them.



Visualizing - Making Pictures in our Heads

Name: _____

Date: _____

When I visualize this part of the story, the picture in my mind looks like this:

This part of the story, and my visualization, makes me think about
