

The Anishinabe Way of Life



Hook - As the Calendar Turns

Ask two students to act as recorders at an easel or chalkboard. Have one write the headings 'Spring' and 'Summer' on the board, and the other write 'Fall' and 'Winter.' Have students think about their four-season lifestyles: list common activities that fit under the each seasons. For example, 'shoveling snow' should be listed under Winter, 'visiting the cottage' under Summer, 'harvesting crops' under Fall. Then ask the students to think about what they eat during each season: list various plants and animals that are best by season. For example, asparagus and rhubarb in Spring; berries, lettuce, mushrooms in Summer; oats, corn, squash, honey in the Fall; fish can be caught in Winter.

Explain that this chart tells a great deal about changes in their their lifestyle throughout the seasons. Now they are going to learn about the lifestyle of the Anishinabe people across the four seasons.

Classroom or Outdoor Activity: To Everything There Is a Season

1. In preparation for this activity
 - Copy and cut out a class set of *To Everything There is a Season* clue cards.
 - Create a set of four signs, one for each season, using the Algonquin and English names of the seasons.
 - Assign a season to each corner of the classroom or playground and label accordingly with signs.
2. Explain that the Anishinabe people, like many others throughout history – and some still today – were somewhat nomadic. That is, they usually moved with each season or within an annual warm weather/cold weather cycle to take advantage of different food sources and other natural resources such as fresh water, shelter, and transportation routes. Explain that in this activity they are going to learn about the traditional seasonal activities engaged in by the Anishinabe people.
3. Teach students the Algonquin names for the four seasons:
 - Winter: Peshokijigad
 - Spring: Sigwan
 - Summer: Pìcha-kìjigad
 - Fall: Tagwàgig / Ta-gwah-gig
4. Give each student a *To Everything There is a Season* clue card. Explain that each card holds clues to a seasonal activity conducted by the Anishinabe people. Ask them to read their card carefully then choose the season that matches this activity. They should then join that season's group.
5. Once everyone is in a group, each group member should share the info on their clue card with rest of the group. Is everyone in the right season?
6. Each group should then orally share their information with the other groups.

Age range: 7 to 9 years

Time: three 60 to 75-minute sessions

Resources:

- art supplies and props as required
- 1 set *To Everything There is a Season* clue cards (1 card/student)
- class sets of *The Anishinabe Way of Life* teachings, and *The Travelling Song (Heart Beat)* and *Mègwetch Song (Thank You)* song sheets.

Learning Outcome:

Students will investigate the traditions and lifestyle of the Anishinabe people through the seasons, and the Anishinabe philosophy of life.

Anishinabe is the name chosen by the First Nation people; it means "the people" or "the good beings".

Algonquin is a name given the First Nation people by the French.

Anishinabe consists of three First Nations bands: Algonquin, Cree and Ojibwe. Each Nation shares a similar language base, with many differences (similar to how the English, French and Spanish share Latin as their base).

Before leaves grow on trees, sweet sap is collected to make maple syrup and maple sugar.

Once snow is gone, fiddleheads (tender, young, curled shoots of fern) are picked and eaten.

After snow melts, bright red wintergreen berries are collected and eaten.

When the ice opens up on rivers and lakes, the birch bark canoe is used for travel.

As the weather gets warmer, wigwams, drums, clothing and baskets are repaired and built.

When the first yellow dandelions grow in fields, the tender leaves are picked and eaten.



In warm weather, travel on foot or in birch bark canoe to collect rocks for making stone tools.

During the warm growing season, eat wild carrots, leeks and mushrooms.

Under the hot sun, many kinds of berries, cherries and nuts ripen and are delicious to eat.

The river water has warmed enough to fish from shore or from a birch bark canoe.

Animal tracks in the soft earth make this a good time to hunt animals with bow and arrow.

When sun is high and hot, collect soft spruce gum to waterproof birch bark canoes and containers.

In preparation for winter migration, pemmican is made by mixing berries, dried meat and animal fat.

At end of growing season, wild rice is harvested from meadows and honey is gathered from beehives.

Winter foods such as smoked meat and fish, and dried fruit are prepared and stored for later use.

While packing up in preparation for winter migration, say goodbye to summer friends.

Gather medicinal plants before the heavy frost kills all green growth.

Break camp and travel to winter hunting grounds before the winter freeze.



During long cold days, take shelter around the fire at centre of wigwam or tipi; wrap yourself in animal furs.

Animals are hibernating and cannot hear, so it is safe to tell stories about them.

To go hunting wear heavy hides to keep warm; put on snowshoes and pull a toboggan.

Hunt rabbits, birds, deer and other animals using snares, bow and arrow, or spear.

Bundle up in mukluks, parkas and mitts, to play games in the brilliant snow.

Before the snow gets too deep, gather dry trees and grasses to keep fires burning during cold weather.

Answers: To Everything There Is a Season

Note: When taking up these answers, be sure to emphasize that many activities were conducted during more than one season. For example, medicinal plants were collected all year round, and games were played year round as well.

Spring

- Before leaves grow on trees, sweet sap is collected to make maple syrup and maple sugar.
- Once snow is gone, fiddleheads (tender, young, curled shoots of fern) are picked and eaten.
- After snow melts, bright red wintergreen berries are collected and eaten.
- When the ice opens up on rivers and lakes, the birch bark canoe is used for travel.
- As the weather gets warmer, wigwams, drums, clothing and baskets are repaired and built.
- When the first yellow dandelions grow in fields, the tender leaves are picked and eaten.

Summer

- In warm weather, travel on foot or in birch bark canoe to collect rocks for making stone tools.
- During the warm growing season, eat wild carrots, leaks and mushrooms.
- Under the hot sun, many kinds of berries, cherries and nuts ripen and are delicious to eat.
- The river water has warmed enough to fish from shore or from a birch bark canoe.
- Animal tracks in the soft earth make this a good time to hunt animals with bow and arrow.
- When sun is high and hot, collect soft spruce gum to waterproof birch bark canoes and containers.

Fall

- In preparation for winter migration, pemmican is made by mixing berries, dried meat and animal fat.
- At end of growing season, wild rice is harvested from meadows and honey is gathered from beehives.
- Winter foods such as smoked meat, fish and dried fruit are prepared and stored for later use.
- While packing up in preparation for winter migration, say goodbye to summer friends.
- Gather medicinal plants before the heavy frost kills all green growth.
- Break camp and travel to winter hunting grounds before the winter freeze.

Winter

- During long cold days, take shelter around the fire at centre of wigwam or tipi; wrap yourself in animal furs!
- Animals are hibernating and cannot hear, so it is safe to tell stories about them.
- To go hunting wear heavy hides to keep warm; put on snowshoes and pull a toboggan.
- Hunt rabbits, birds, deer and other animals using snares, bow and arrow, or spear.
- Bundle up in mukluks, parkas and mitts, to play games in the brilliant snow.
- Before the snow gets too deep, gather dry trees and grasses to keep fires burning during cold weather.

Classroom or Outdoor Activity: The Anishinabe Way of Life

1. Gather in a quiet shaded area of a playground or woodland.
2. Distribute handout: *The Anishinabe Way of Life*. Read and discuss.
3. Divide students into groups and assign each group one of the teachings. Ask each group to discuss then work and create a large drawing or collage illustrating their teaching. Groups can also choose to enact their teaching using mime, spoken theatre or dance.
4. Sing *The Travelling Song (Heart Beat)* and *Mègwetch Song (Thank You)*. Melody downloads are available at: www.thealgonquinway.ca; click on E-BOOKS and find *Algonquin Language Song Book*.

Discussion

- How were the Anishinabe Way of Life teachings passed down through generations of Algonquin people?
- Do the Algonquin people still live by these traditional teachings?
- Why is it important or valuable to continue living by these teachings?
- What cultural and religious teachings guide your life?

Extension

Host a presentation for fellow schoolmates and or parents featuring the songs, images and teachings of the The Anishinabe Way of Life.

The Anishinabe Way of Life



These statements describe how Anishinabe people live. They are central teachings to the Anishinabe culture. These teachings could also be called the Anishinabe philosophy of life.

Choose one teaching and create a drawing or collage illustrating its meaning, or enact one of the teachings using mime, spoken theatre or dance.

Treat Earth and all living things with respect.

Earth is our Mother; care for her. The Anishinabe see nature and all living things as important and equal.



Help turtles cross the road, hike through woods leaving only footprints, give thanks for all plants and animals, protect our air and water; turn off lights, carpool, recycle.

Remain close to the Great Spirit.

Believe in the Great Spirit – the Creator. The Anishinabe follow the wisdom of the Great Spirit throughout their lives.



Visit an elderly relative, participate in a smudging ceremony, mediate or pray in a quiet space, attend a religious/spirited ceremony, visit the graves of ancestors.

Show great respect for other human beings.

Honour all your relations. The Anishinabe apply this teaching not only to how one treats others, but also oneself.



Talk and listen to others in a respectful way, avoid racism or discrimination, reach out to the poor, treat all people equally, respect personal space.

Work together for the benefit of all humans.

Do what needs to be done for the good of all. The Anishinabe understand the gifts that come from helping others.



Protect our land, air and water; conserve natural resources, plant a tree, protect the rights of all people, plant a community garden, make music or art.

Give assistance and kindness wherever it is needed.

Be good to all things. The Anishinabe believe we should be open to compassion, gentleness and caring for others.



Comfort victims of accidents, fire or flood; volunteer in the community, give to charity, support those in need; walk a pet, feed birds, water a plant, hug a tree.

Do what you know is right.

Do no harm. The Anishinabe believe we should take a little time, and listen to our inner selves.



Share what you have, wait your turn, use your manners, speak the truth, never litter, protect the environment, always give thanks, listen to your heart.

Keep your mind and body well.

Rise and fall with the sun. The Anishinabe believe we should follow the rhythms of nature.



Eat healthy fresh foods, stay in school, keep fit, keep a journal, spend time in the outdoors, be in tune with the cycles of the moon, use sunscreen.

Invest in things that don't directly benefit you.

Practice random acts of kindness. The Anishinabe believe if it doesn't harm you, and is good for others and the world, do it.



Collect litter, visit a shut-in, plant a tree, consider the needs of others, vote, donate used books and clothing to charity, teach someone to read.

Be honest, always, not only when it is easy. The Anishinabe believe one should always be honest with others and – most importantly – oneself.



Speak the truth, share your emotions, don't be afraid to cry or laugh; treat other people well, beware of smugness.

Take full responsibility for your actions. We are and will be judged by how we live. The Anishinabe believe it is our responsibility to walk the True Path on our Earthwalk.



Be proud of all you do, look for advice from elders, make good choices, look for direction, share your wisdom with others, leave only footprints.

The Travelling Song (Heart Beat)

Transcription by: L. Davis



Way hey - a, hey - a hey - o - Way hey - a, hey - a hey - o



Way hey - a, hey - a hey - o Way hey - a, hey - a hi - o

Mègwetch Song (Thank You)

Transcription by: L. Davis



Flute

(Chorus) Oh way ya hey ya hey ya ho Oh way ya hey ya hey ya ho Oh

6

way ya hey ya hey ya ho - - - Chi Meeg-wetch, Mi - sho - mi-suk Chi Meeg-wetch -

12

Ko-ko-mi-suk Chi Meeg-wetch - din way muk a nuk Oh way ya hey ya hey ya ho

Sing four times through.