

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



Photo credit: MARMAR Photography, Women's Fancy Dance, Kenisha Roan.

POWWOW! Ochîwin the Origins!

Curated by Patrick + Marrisa Mitsuing

Guide developed by Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery and the Curators

Project Donors: Alberta Museums Association, Marguerite Lerouge Watson and Family, Waskasoo Museum Foundation. RMDAG is supported with operating funds from the City of Red Deer and Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Exhibition Purpose:

This exhibition was produced by the Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery with guest curators Patrick and Marrisa Mitsuing. There are eleven artists who created the Regalia for each of the seven dance styles. Videos were produced for each dance and one for the history of Powwow. This exhibit was created for in-house and as a travelling exhibition.

Educational Guide Purpose:

This educational guide was developed as a resource for teachers and museum educators as a supplement to the exhibition. The information in this guide is based on the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education on Treaty Education as well as consulting Patrick and Marrisa Mitsuing on Indigenous content.

Curators: Patrick Mitsuing is a World Champion Powwow Dancer, Artist and Motivational Speaker. Marrisa Moccasin is a Champion Powwow Dancer and Artist. Together they have gathered and recorded the stories, the artisans and carefully crafted the regalia for this exhibit.



Patrick and Marrisa Mitsuing



Marrisa (Moccasin) Mitsuing

Patrick Mitsuing – is originally from Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nation (Loon Lake, Sask.) and now lives in Sylvan Lake, AB. He is the curator of the exhibit and a world class dancer. Patrick and Marrisa are owners and operators of Powwow Times.

Marrisa (Moccasin) Mitsuing – is Cree from the Saulteaux First Nations in Northern Saskatchewan. She now lives in Sylvan Lake, AB. She created the moccasins, aprons and beadwork for the Men's Fancy dance regalia.



Emery-rose Assiniboine – is from Dakota Nation of Manitoba and Neekaneet Cree Nation of Southern Saskatchewan. She is an artist, seamstress, and mother. She is founder of EAssiniboine Designs which specializes in regalia and beadwork. She has been creating beadwork since she was 12 years old and she completed her first fully beaded women's traditional top when she was 21. She studied at First Nations University. This artist has made ribbon skirts, moss bags, traditional dresses, fancy shawl sets, jingle dresses, men's grass, men's chicken and men's fancy apron sets. She made all the cloth work regalia.



Morning Dove Kytwayhat lives in Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nations (Loon Lake, Saskatchewan). She is a wife, mother, preschool teacher from, and she was raised with traditional teachings from her maternal and paternal grandparents. She worked on the beadwork accessories on the Men's Chicken Regalia. Morning Dove puts good energy into all her beadwork.



Nita McAdam – is from Big River First Nations in Northern Saskatchewan. Beading and sewing helps Nita deal with modern day stress and connects her to traditional ways. She loves the Plains Cree style and wishes to pass her lineage onto her children. She created the dress, moccasins and all the beading on the Women's Traditional Regalia.



Eric Mentuck – is from Waywayseecappo First Nations in Manitoba. Andrew Mecas taught Eric the time consuming craft of bustle making, which requires patience, detail, consistency and dedication. He is an outdoor education teacher in Waywayseecappo and is owner and operator of 'Bustle Dome'. He created the Men's Fancy Bustle, the women's fans, and hair featherwork.



Curtis Miller Joe- lives in Sechelt. B.C. and he is a member of the Coast Salish Nation. He began carving with his cousin in 1988 in the traditional Kwagiulth style. He is a world class Powwow dancer and works as a family counselor with at-risk youth. Curtis works in carving, painting, drum, and dance. He displays a fierce pride informed by a deeply spiritual value system. He created the accessories such as the men's breastplates, belts, roach spinners and hand held accessories.



Yahsti Perkinskiller – is Waccamaw, Dakota. He is a porcupine hunter and quill gatherer and learned traditional ways from his father. At age 10 he learned to tie his own bustle and by 15 he beaded his own regalia. In 2014, he learned to make Wapehsa (headdress) from legendary Wapehsa maker Richard Street and will hopefully pass along this skill to his children. He created all head roaches for the exhibit.



Alexandrea Pasquayak – is Santee Dakota, from Denver, Colorado but she currently lives in Alberta. She began beading at 12 years old from her aunt Ursula Youngbear and she shares her gift of beading to many communities. She has done small and large orders for numerous dance regalia in Canada and the U.S. Beading is a source of self-care for her. She created the leggings, accessories and cape beadwork for the Ladies Fancy regalia.



Kendra Roan – is from Pigeon Lake, Alberta. She is a powwow dancer herself and finds inspiration from her family. They all create some form of art from singing, dancing, beading or painting. She created the quilled breast plate for the Women's Traditional regalia.



Coralie Nepoose - is from Samson Cree Nation in Alberta. She is Plains Cree and the daughter of Charity and Levi Nepoose and has been a fancy dancer since the age of 11. She beads all her own beadwork and for her two daughters. She created the Men's Grass dance beadwork.



Marrisa Moccasin – is from a small community on Treaty 6 Territory and she is a second generation Indian Residential School survivor. Marrisa's interest in art and culture blossomed with the birth of her first child Leland. This led her on a healing journey to become a powwow dancer, which led her to an infatuation of regalia making. She is inspired from the natural surroundings of her kokum's (grandmother's) backyard. Her passion is connecting communities to Indigenous History through dance and traditional beadwork. Marrisa resides in Sylvan Lake, Alberta with her husband Patrick and their four children. She created the Men's Fancy beadwork and Women's Jingle beadwork and Men's Traditional beadwork.



Marlon Weekusk – is from Onion Lake Cree Nation, Saskatchewan. He is a Plains Cree grass dancer and photographer/owner of Marmar Photography. The images captured by Marmar are a representation of how he views aspects of cultural practice and its preservation through art and imagery.

Vocabulary:

First Contact: First meeting between Indigenous and Europeans.

Ceded Territory: To yield or formally surrender territory to another.

Indian Act (1876): A principle statute by the government to administer Indian status and management of reserve land and communal monies. Powwows were banned under the Indian Act from 1876 -1951, when the Indian Act was amended. If a First Nations person was caught dancing in a powwow without permission from the Indian agent they could be arrested.

Intertribal: Cultures were once independent from each other and over time have exchanged customs and traditions creating intertribal powwows. Today, at a powwow if intertribal is called, everyone is welcome to join in.



Inter-Tribal Dance: Marmar photography

Knowledge Keepers: Elders or Indigenous people who carry knowledge and teachings to share.

Medicine Wheel: The medicine wheel is a sacred symbol of healing used for generations for the North American Indigenous people. The circle represents the Four Directions, as well as Mother Earth, Father Sky and Spirit Tree which symbolize the cycles of life and health. It can take the form of an artifact, a painting, or a land formation.

Powwow: A powwow is an Indigenous celebration of life. Contemporary powwows are filled with spectators, dancers, singers, drummers, food stands and artisans.

Resurgence of Powwows (1951): The government lifted the ban for powwow ceremonies. 1960's saw a resurgence of powwows as Indigenous groups came together to celebrate in a cultural exchange and to create the modern powwow.

Regalia: The distinctive dress and ornamentation that is worn for powwow dances. Regalia features intricate bead work, ribbons, sacred Eagle feathers, jingle cones and more dependent on the dance.

Smudging: Medicine such as Sweet grass, tobacco or sage is burned. You smudge your body, your mind, your soul, your eyes, your ears, your words to cleanse and prepare you for receiving teachings with purity.

Time Immemorial: Time so long past as to be indefinite in history.

Treaty 6 & 7: “We are all treaty people”. A treaty is a binding agreement between two sovereign states which outlines each party’s rights, benefits and obligations. Treaty 6 boundaries extend from central Alberta and Saskatchewan and it was signed in 1876 by Cree, Nakota, Dene, Assiniboine, Saulteaux, Ojibwe, European settlers, and the Dominion of Canada on behalf of the Queen. Treaty 7 was signed in 1877 in Blackfoot territory in Southern Alberta between the Blackfoot confederacy, European Settlers and the Dominion of Canada on behalf of the Queen. National reconciliation involves building respectful relationships at the community level.

Cree words:

Nehiyawak = Cree

Nimîhto = Cree for dance

Mistikwaskihk = a powwow drum

Kitokipaaskaan = Blackfoot for prairie chicken dance

Wapesha = Dakota for headdress

Pwâtisimowin = Sioux grass dance

Sagway = charging warrior war cry

Megis (shell) = Bead/ animate

POWWOW History:

Historically, powwows were adapted by various Indigenous groups across North America over the 20th century. When warriors returned from battle, they would share the stories of brave and courageous acts through dance, keeping in time with the heartbeat of mother earth through the drum. This brought honour to themselves, the family and the tribe. It was an opportunity to protect what was theirs. It was originally just for men. Women wanted to participate and kept asking. Women, children and the elderly would gather around the circle as community protectors, they wore blankets wrapped around them and showed their fine beadwork. Powwows evolved into a social gathering with protocols on how to treat each other, how to treat our elders.

Knowledge Keeper: Tommy Christian, Assiniboine

What happens during a Powwow?

Modern powwows can be traditional or competitive; both have ceremonial aspects. It is a diversity of nations across the country and tribes coming together, all respected. Each tribe shares their information and protocols, they never tell another tribe how to do things. An Elder has a Pipe Ceremony, then an opening prayer. The drum song is next, then the Grand Entry for all the dancers to parade in their regalia. The Honour song celebrates that powwows are still celebrated, then, there is the Honouring of Leaders and hosts. Competitive powwows have dance categories for men, women and children. Dancers are judged by their footwork and regalia; cash prizes are awarded. Modern powwows have drummers, traditional food, and artisan vendors. Today powwows are for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to come together in peace and celebrate and enduring culture.

In Battle: Indigenous people felt it was against nature to take another's life, so instead they snuck up on the enemy in a low serpentine manor and hit them with the coup stick, this would humiliate the enemy. Warriors wore war paint for identity. When the enemy explained how he got the bump on his head, he would say "it was from the red face with black lines under his eyes". The coup stick is a round rock or knife at the end of the stick. They used it to count 'coup', with marks or beads added to the stick for all their acts of bravery.

Grand Entry: Long ago powwows didn't have a grand entry, they just started dancing. Now that Powwows are competitive, they are organized events and dancers have numbers. They start the ceremony with a prayer.

Eagle Spirit: Eagle flies so high you can't see it anymore.

Eagle Staff: is a bent stick, a spear with eagle feathers. The bend in the stick represents peace, and the eagle feathers represent veterans. When an eagle feather is presented to the staff (bent stick), this protocol represents a family member who did a brave act.

(Powwow Times blogs: <https://powwowtimes.ca/blog/>)

Powwow Roles:

Master of Ceremonies: The voice of the powwow to keep everyone informed. They keep the schedule of events and the drum rotation. They fill dead air with interviews, contests or jokes to engage the audience.

Drum Boss: The host drum or drum boss is responsible for singing the songs at the start and end of the powwow, the grand entry and the victory song, plus any other special songs during the ceremony.

Head Dancers: They consist of Head man, Head woman, Head teen, Head little boy/little girl, Head Golden Age dancers. The head dancers lead the Grand Entry parade that opens the powwow.

Head Dance judges/ Tabulators: They judge the dances and tabulate the scores.

Arena Director: Also referred to as the 'whip man', they are in charge during the powwow. They are responsible for the dancers, what the drummer sing, and recruiting judges, organizing the ceremony and making sure visitors respect the arena.

Powwow Committee: A group of individuals that do all the planning leading up to the event including sponsorship, promotions, recruiting head staff and vendors, and secure a location.

Royal Court: Powwow Princess and Mighty Warrior. The Princess pageant is a special event that takes place during a powwow. A dancer has to earn her way to be crowned as a princess.



Respected Emcee – Howard Walker, Marmar Photography

Powwow Protocols:

Protocols are rooted in Indigenous knowledge and they are a cultural framework that has been practiced from time immemorial. They are abstract teachings and experiential teachings on responsibility, respect, humility and discipline to teach self-respect, self-esteem and living a pure lifestyle. Indigenous have a strong belief in a higher power.

Protocols are a beautiful experience on how to treat the elderly women and children. Children grow up in ceremony to know culture, identity and connection. One day, It will be their turn to carry on the cultural way of life. Children who are exposed to culture bring back Indigenous pride.

If you are looking to gain teachings from a knowledge keeper or elder, then you use these protocols.

1. Establish dialogue between an Elder or knowledge keeper as a sign of respect to obtain cultural knowledge.
2. Bring something to receive something. Offer tobacco - a sacred resource, used in peace pipes - the strongest form of prayer to the creator. Offer cloth or prints to represent the 4 colours of the medicine wheel. Small gifts and gestures are also welcome.
3. Be sincere - protocols are an inclusive and ethical practice.
4. Acknowledgement - be guided by Indigenous principles: **Respect, Responsibility and Reciprocity.**
5. Protocols are about presence and reverence; the meaning behind traditions.
6. Each tribe has different protocols, but you cannot ask an Elder without using protocol.

Teasing: Indigenous people tease each other. Elders watch to see if you can handle being teased. If you can't you are seen as being weak. You do not have the character and strength to handle teasing.

10 Best Powwows across Canada: <https://powwowtimes.ca/top-10-best-canadian-powwow/>

10. Kamloopa Powwow – Kamloops, B.C.
9. Tsuu T'ina Powwow – near Calgary, AB.
8. O'Chiese Powwow – Northwest of Rocky Mountain House, AB.
7. Kahkewistahaw Powwow – south of Yorkton, Saskatchewan.
6. Onion Lake Powwow- Onion Lake, Saskatchewan.
5. Grand River Powwow- near Toronto, Ontario
4. Dakota Dunes Powwow – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
3. FSIN Powwow – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
2. Manito Ahbee Powwow – Winnipeg, Manitoba
1. N.I.C.E Powwow (Nation Indigenous Cultural Expo) – Edmonton, Alberta

Top 5 of the best Indigenous Drum groups (Grammy Nominated)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. Northern Cree (Maskwacis) | 3. Bullhorn | 5. Stony Park (Morley) |
| 2. Young Spirit (Saddle Lake) | 4. Black Otter | |

Indigenous Storytelling

Story telling in Indigenous cultures can take two forms – origin stories and personal stories. Origin stories, also called creation stories, myths or legends, are spiritual in nature and remain unchanged over time. Personal stories include observations, accounts of places, and experiences which can change and may be altered to meet the needs of the community as it changes.

‘Origin stories carry knowledge from our ancestors into the present day.’ (quote from the Canadian Museum of History)

Styles of Dance

Ochîwin Is an Indigenous word meaning 'The Origin' or telling a story of where something originated. Each dance style has an origin story. The distinctive dress and ornamentation is called **Regalia**.



Krista Goodwill + Kaleigh Starblanket

Marmar Photography

Women’s Traditional Dance: This dance originated from the Sioux people (Pwâtisimowin). The women would stand on the outside of the ceremony circle dancing to support the men. Traditionally they were not allowed to dance within the circle like the men, they danced on the edge. They wore a long dress that touched the ground with long fringe down the sides of their dresses to keep them connected to Mother Earth. They danced with a slow sway to the fringe with a bit of fancy footwork – this represents strength. They are the protectors of the circles and they would keep an eye out for danger while they watched to make sure everything is in order within the community. A powwow is a victory dance after the war or a buffalo hunt for returning warriors.

In the early 1950’s with the resurgence of powwows, they started digging up drums to bring the ceremony items back. Women started making outfits with traditional old style fancy fringes, breastplates, headbands, with purses and shiny ornaments like mirrors for protection.

Knowledge Keeper: Sharon Baptiste



Clyde Tootootsie Jr.

Marmar Photography

Men's Chicken Dance: This dance originated from the Blackfoot Confederacy. It represents a warrior killing the Prairie Chicken during their mating dance. The prairie chicken spirit came to the warrior in a dream asking why he killed him during their mating ceremony. The warrior didn't know it was a ceremony, now they need to finish the ceremony by doing their dance or the spirit will seek revenge.

The original dance had dancers dance on the spot with the Blackfoot toe tap and the shoulder and elbow movement like wings. In the contemporary dance, the dancers move around a lot. The drummers hit the rim of the wood for a lower tone. Old style dancers pick up the drum beat and dance faster. The bustles were originally eagle feathers and a round bustle is smaller than a traditional bustle. The bustle comes from the Crow people. They wear tights and a porcupine head roach. They wear pheasant tail feathers that represent the antennae's/ ears of the prairie chicken. This dance is a show off dance. When the youth starts to dance, the community comes together. Families come together to practice it.

Kitokipaaskaan = Prairie chicken dance in Blackfoot language.

Knowledge Keeper: Kyle Blood



Osa Roan,

Marmar Photography

Ladies Jingle Dance: This is a healing dance originated from the Ojibwe/Anishinabe people in Whitefish Bay, Ontario. This dance came to a man in a dream. His granddaughter, Maggie White, was ill and he prayed to find a way to heal her. In his dream, there were many ladies dancing in dresses and the sound from the dresses was like rain. He noticed there were 365 jingles on the dresses (for 365 days of the year). In the dream it was said that if he helped create these dresses (medicine dresses) and had the ladies dance, his daughter would be healed. He created these dresses and had the ladies from his family dance and over time his daughter began to heal.

Old style jingle dance was stationary dancing with one movement. The contemporary style has fancy foot work. They dance the side step as they are supposed to stay in a line, no passing each other as they can't break the circle of healing during the dance. In the past small cones were made out of milk cans by the family and they used to be super loud.

Knowledge Keeper: Shelda Thom



Men's Traditional

Marmar photography

Men's Traditional Dance: These are the warriors that go into battle. When they dance they tell their story of successful hunts or battles. You can see them charging the enemy or 'sneak-up' on their foes as they re-enact it in the dance. The 'duck and dive' move represents people being attacked by arrows. Their face will be painted as if they are ready for battle and they have bustles on their backs made of Eagle feathers and they carry weapons. Regalia – there is a spirit in the beads, porcupine and feathers – all are connected. Feathers are for healing, Bustle is from the thunderbird being – sounds like thunder in the summer.

Knowledge Keeper: Cecil Nepoose



Kenisha Roan,

Marmar Photography

Ladies Fancy Dance: One of the modern dances is the Fancy Shawl. It comes from the women's rights movements in North America. The ladies wanted to dance in the center of the ceremony just like the men. They defied the men's laws and started to come into the center to dance and prove they could dance as good as the men. They wore traditional outfits but danced to a faster beat while they opened their arms and used their beautiful shawls like the wings of a butterfly or Eagle.

Knowledge Keeper: Irene Oakes



Darwin Goodwill

Marmar Photography

Men's Grass Dance: This dance originated from the Omaha People. This dance is easier than others as men don't wear bustles on their backs. They represent the scouts that hid in the grass to check out where the enemy was or to track buffalo. They would sway with the movements of the grass and literally blend in with nature to hide from the enemy. Grass dancers are scouts. This dance was brought up to Canada by Sitting Bull's band after the battle of the little Big Horn.

Knowledge Keeper: Leroy Whitstone



Jarron Gadwa

Marmar Photography

Men's Fancy Dance: This is the men's fancy war dance, originated in Oklahoma. It comes from the horse people. The dancers wear 2 bustles on their back and have a rocker on top of their roach that rocks back and forth to the drum beat. A head roach shows a sign of aggression, just like a porcupine throws up its quills, as if saying 'don't mess with me'.

Bustles represent the battlefield shaped in a circle pattern. The feathers were eagle, hawk, buzzard or crow as those birds feast on the enemy. Feathers are given to those who did great deeds in battle, but feathers are not worn in battle. They carry a dance whip as well that they dance with. They move fast and hop on the ground. The dance was picked up by Pawnee Bill and Buffalo Bill for Wild West shows. The Wild West shows danced like the horse but wore clothing of the war dances; this frightened the Europeans; so they added bright colours to their Regalia. Everyone had different styles, it has evolved. It is a very fast paced dance and the most modern.

Knowledge Keeper: Michael Roberts

Quotes from artists:

Patrick Mitsuing: (on competitive dancing) "I dance against other dancers, but mostly I dance against the drum!"

Shelda Thom: (on Jingle Dance) "If you want to dance jingle, go dance. If you feel it in your heart; go dance!"

Michael Roberts: (on Men's fancy war dance) "When we look our best, people feel good."

Sharon Baptiste: (on Women's traditional dance) "Dress up real nice because spirit loves that!"

Kyle Blood: (on Men's Prairie Chicken dance) "When a youth starts to dance, the community comes together to make sure they are supported."

Irene Oaks: (Women's Fancy Dance) "You have to give all of yourself as you walk into the arena. Always go in with good thoughts. Praise others."

Cecile Nepoose: (Men's Traditional Dance) "The powwow spirit is in the connection to all the elements we carry, the feathers, the bells, the beads, the porcupine, they all have spirit."

Marlon Weeksuk: (Marmar Photography) "The idea of being able to do my part in preservation of culture and memories is priceless for future generations."

Origin story of the powwow:

(Knowledge keeper: Cecile Nepoose)

Cree version: In the early 1880's, before powwows, an old man and his wife had a little boy who passed away. They went to mourn on a hill every morning and evening. When they fell asleep the spirit Thunderbird from the east, turned into a man and came into his dreams. He took the old man on a walk through the hills and they heard a drum on the hill and people singing good songs. They went to see the drummers, nothing was there but tall grass moving slowly and a drum painted blue and yellow. The Thunderbird man wanted to show another portion of the ceremony –a big rock with a fire under it. There was something inside the rock and 4 dancers wearing grass, they heard the sound of the drum and started dancing. On the other side of the rock were 4 old men representing the dancers in the four directions, who picked up the puppy in the rock, danced 4 times, then ate the puppy. That is the origin of powwow, to transition the puppy ceremony to powwow and bless the 'old man powwow spirit' to take away the hurt feelings. When the wife woke up she told her husband about the strange dream and it was the same story as her husbands. They took the story back to their people and the powwow was created.

Origin story of Men's Chicken Dance: (Knowledge keeper: Kyle Blood)

A hunter heard a low thumping sound, got curious and followed it. He saw prairie chickens doing a strange ritual, but the hunter was hungry so he shot and killed a male bird and startled the rest of them into the tall grass. He brought the prairie chicken back to his family to eat. He had his nightly smoke, fell asleep and dreamed of the spirit of the prairie chicken. He asked 'why did you kill me while doing the sacred dance of the prairie chicken?' The hunter did not know it was a sacred dance. The prairie chicken understood that he sacrificed his life so the family could eat. The prairie chicken told the Blackfoot to honor the life of the prairie chicken. The hunter was to teach all men this, if he didn't honor the prairie chicken, the chicken would take his life. The prairie chicken society was created and this is the dance they do. The prairie chicken is very powerful to the Blackfoot people.

Origin story of Men's Fancy Dance: (Knowledge Keeper: Michael Roberts)

Two tribes, Comanches' from SW and Ponca's from NW Nebraska were pushed down south to Oklahoma. The two tribes met on the battlefield. Comanche's had horses from conquistadors, (an asset) and they completely annihilated the Ponca's in battle, due to the horse. The two groups wanted to make a truce. Ponca's gave bows and arrows to the Comanche out of respect for the gift. Comanche gave horses to the Ponca. The horse was very important for battle and gathering food. The dance imitates the horse. The horses knew the songs were being danced for them.

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Crowfoots Horse Jumps over the Moon, by Fred MacDonald,
1996, acrylic on board. 1998.27.5

Collection of the Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery

First Nations Resources

Guide developed by Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery and the Curators

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Curriculum Connections:

Alberta Social Studies:

K: I am Unique, I Belong: What brings people together in a group – celebrations.

Gr. 1/ 2: How have Indigenous cultural groups contributed to the origins and evolution of our communities over time?

Gr. 2: What are the origins of Indigenous communities? How is the presence of Indigenous people in the community today?

Gr. 3: How is identity reflected in traditions and stories in Indigenous communities? In what ways do the Indigenous show concern for their natural environment? How are decisions made in their communities and who is responsible for making decisions in Indigenous cultures?

Gr. 4/5: Which First Nations people inhabited this region? What are the stories of Indigenous telling us about their beliefs regarding the relationship between people and the land?

Gr. 5: How are the natural environment and geography of our region determining factors of the diversity among First Nations groups?

Gr. 6: Iroquois confederacy – What is the significance of the symbol of the wampum belt?

Gr. 7: What impact did immigration have on Indigenous communities in Canada? What were the underlying reasons for the negotiation of the numbered treaties?

Saskatchewan Treaty Education Outcomes and Indicators:

Gr. K HCK: Discuss how First Nations respect and honour living things through stories, traditions and ceremonies. (Oral stories)

Gr. 1 HC1: Describe various uses of buffalo, elk, moose and caribou, now and in the past. Compare how people past and present live on the land. (Regalia materials)

Gr. 2 HC2: Explore the traditional leadership practices of First Nations (matriarchal, consensus approach and spiritual). (Protocols and role of women in leadership)

Gr. 3 TR3: Describe the lifestyle changes of First Nations, prior to and after placement on reserves. (Indian Act – the banning of Powwows).

Gr. 4 TR4: Discuss the impact of relationships when promises are kept or broken. Discuss the effect of unfulfilled treaty promises and those treaty promises fulfilled.

Gr. 5 SI5: Investigate and report on the significance of symbols that depict the peaceful and harmonious relations between two sovereign nations (pipe ceremony, feasts, festivals, powwows, handshake or doves).

Gr. 6 SI6: Describe how the loss of language impacts cultural identity (Eg. importance of ceremony, song, dance, and storytelling).

Gr. 7 SI7 Examine the role of ceremony, traditions and story in transferring knowledge from generation to generation. HC7: Examine the effects of the Indian Act on the lives of First Nations.

Gr. 8 SI8: Investigate how First Nations people were forced to learn languages and cultures other than their own.

Gr. 9 TPP9: Analyze the challenges Indigenous people face when negotiating treaties.

Gr. 10 SI10: Identify spirit and intent of the terms of treaty.

Gr. 11 SI11: Research how the Indian Act and its implementation differ in practice from First Nation governance structures.

Gr. 12 TPP12: Examine the importance of decolonization as a process that supports the understanding that 'We are all Treaty People.'

Indigenous Guiding Principles:

Seven Grandfather Teachings: (also known as the Seven Sacred Teachings)

These are the teachings given by the elders.



Humility - A **wolf** represents humility as he acknowledges that all beings are equal. You must put others before yourself. A wolf doesn't eat before his pack, showing selflessness. Humility helps us recognize that there is a higher power than man, the Creator. *Humility is to be humble not arrogant.*



Honesty - The **sabe (Big foot)** teaches us honesty by walking through life being truthful to who we are and not trying to be somebody else; being true to your spirit. To be truly honest is to keep promises you made to others and yourself. *Honesty is speaking and acting truthfully, and therefore remaining morally upright.*



Wisdom - The **beaver** represents wisdom because he uses his gifts that Creator gave him to sustain himself and help his family. The beaver's gift is his teeth, if he doesn't use them, they will grow and be useless. Accepting and using our gifts help benefit the community. *Wisdom is the ability to make decisions based on personal knowledge and experience.*



Courage - The **bear** represents courage as the mother bear courageously protects her cubs. She puts fear aside to keep her family safe. This is how we should approach life, not let fear hold us back. *Courage is the ability to face danger, fear, or changes with confidence and bravery.*



Respect - The **buffalo** represents respect because it shares the land with all creatures, big and small. It gave up its life to provide shelter, clothing, food, and nothing is wasted. By sharing what you don't need or use, this shows respect for all creatures. *Respect is the condition of being honoured.*



Love - The **eagle** represents love because to receive love is to know the Creator and to love yourself first. The eagle has the strength to carry all the teachings and flies the highest and has true sight bringing pure vision to the seeker. *Love must be unconditional.*



Truth - The **turtle** teaches us truth as he was there in the beginning and carries all the teachings to ensure they will never be lost or forgotten. On the back of the turtle there are 13 moons each representing the truth of one cycle of the Earth's rotations around the sun. *Truth is to know and understand all the teachings and to be faithful to them.*

<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/cultures-of-belonging/seven-grandfathers-teachings/>

Colour meanings of the Medicine Wheel:

One is never done learning. It would take a 1000 life times to learn the teachings of the medicine wheel. Each colour represents a direction and a season:

Yellow = East/Spring, Red= South/Summer,

Black = West/Fall, White = North/ Winter



Long Hair and Braids:

What is the importance of long hair in the Indigenous culture?

Long hair is sacred. It's been studied that long hair is the extension of the nervous system which heightens sensory and intuition. It creates a connection to the earth. When hair grows long from the head, it can reach down to the earth and create connection with Mother Earth. This connection reminds us to respect all things.

Why do Indigenous boys and men have long hair?

This helps men with hunting, going into battle and detecting danger.

During the world wars, the army noticed in training that the Indigenous people showed exceptional scouting skills and had incredible intuition, but after shaving their heads, they lost these skills. Later they allowed Indigenous people to keep their long hair in the army.

Braids symbolize characteristics: 3 parts have 3 different meanings for both men and women.

First strand symbolizes female: all things female, including 4 legged, insects, swimming creatures, flying creatures, critters, plants, humans, etc.

Second strand symbolizes male: all things male, including 4 legged, insects, swimming creatures, flying creatures, critters, plants, humans, etc.

Third strand symbolizes love: love for all things, the land, love for others, and love for oneself.

Did you know? Medicine (such as sweet grass, sage and tobacco) is braided for these same reasons.

We weave these 3 locks of hair together to create balance. There is a spiritual connection to hair as well. Hair carries your emotions, your memories and your energy. When a loved one passes, men cut off the braid. This symbolizes the time spent with the person and the memories they had, can be let go for the spirit to travel to the other side in a good way.

When a mother braids her husbands and son's hair it creates a bond and the mother's job is to transfer good energy for the day while making the braid.

Tipi Teachings: The raising of the TIPI is a CEREMONY.

These tipi teachings came from Elder Jacob Sanderson, Cree Nation, shared with us by Russell and Chalene Burns with the Red Deer Native Friendship Center.

As Nehiyawak, Cree people, our name is significant. It comes from the sacred number 4 which represents:

4 Gifts of Life: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical

4 Directions: North, South, East and West

4 Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter

4 Stages of Life: Baby, Child, Adult, Elder

4 Forms of Life: flyers, walkers, crawlers, swimmers

4 Gifts: Moon, Sun, Earth, Water

It is important to seek balance in the 4 gifts of life, part of the medicine wheel.

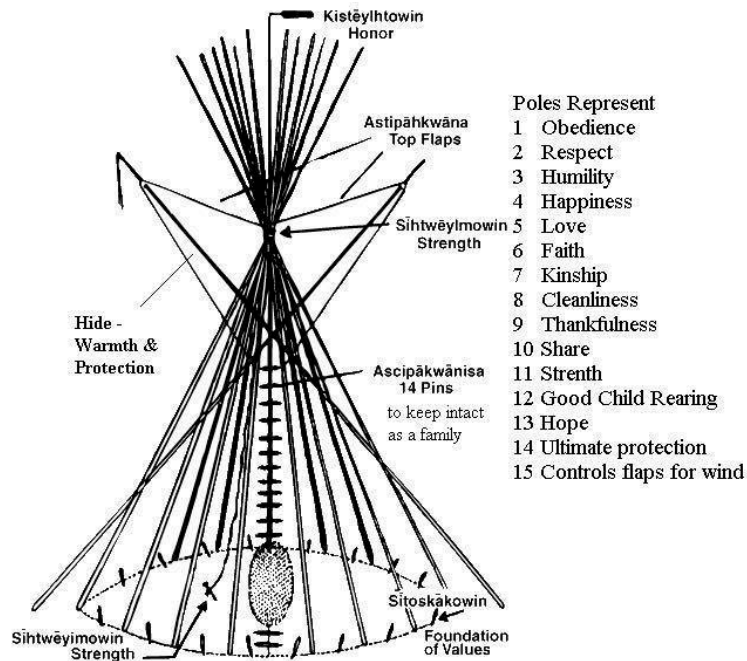
“The sky is round, and I have heard the earth is round like a ball, and so are the stars. The wind in its greatest power whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were. The life of a human is a circle from childhood to childhood. And so it is in everything, where power moves. Our tipis were round like the nests of the birds, and these were always set in a circle, the nation’s hoop”.

Black Elk

Doorway – for ceremonial purposes, the Cree face the doorway east because that is the beginning of creation. It does not have to face east all the time.

Tipi structure and tipi poles – The Cree people use 15 poles. (13 poles and 2 flap poles). For every pole there is a teaching or a value also known as natural law. Some nations use 16 poles.

Tripod – bind 3 poles to make a tripod to start, this fortifies the structure. The 3 poles represent: **obedience, respect and humility**. We all need the strength and support of our families and communities, but we all have different journeys to get there. The tops of the poles point to the Creator. No matter what journey you are on, we all go towards the Great Spirit. Where the poles come together at the top, is like a birds nest and the flaps of the tipi are like a bird holding its wings up.



www.stf.ca.sk/teaching_res/

Pole meanings:

Obedience: Obedience means accepting guidance and wisdom from outside of ourselves. We learn by listening to traditional stories, by listening to our parents and guardians, our fellow people and our teachers. We learn by their behaviours so we know what is right and wrong.

Respect: Respect is giving honour to our Elders and fellow people, to strangers that visit our community and to all of life. We must honour the basic rights of all others.

Humility: We are not above or below others in the circle of life. We feel humbled when we understand our relationship with Creation. Understanding that we are small compared to the majesty of creation, helps us respect and value life.

Happiness: the fourth pole completes the doorway and teaches us happiness. We must show some enthusiasm to encourage others. Our good actions will make our ancestors happy in the next world. This is how we share happiness.

Love: If we are to live in harmony we must accept one another as we are, and accept others who are not in our circle. Love means to be good and kind to one another and to ourselves.

Faith: We must learn to believe and trust others, to believe in a power greater than ourselves, whom we worship and who gives us strength to be worthy. To sustain our spirituality we need to walk it every day, not just sometimes, always through your life.

Kinship: Our family is important to us. This includes our mosôms (grandpas), kôhkoms (grandmas), parents, children, brothers, sisters, nôsisim (grandchildren) who love us and give us roots that tie us to the lifeblood of the earth. It includes extended family: aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws. They are our part of our community.

Cleanliness: Cleanliness is hygiene and spiritual cleanliness. Clean thoughts come from a clean mind and this comes from our spirituality. With a clean mind and a sense of peace within we learn not to inflict ills on others. Good health habits also reflect a clean mind.

Thankfulness: We learn to give thanks; to be thankful for the Creator's bounty, which we are privileged to share with others. We need to learn to be thankful for all the kind things others do for us.

Sharing: We learn to be part of a family and community by helping with provisions of food and other basic needs. Through sharing responsibilities we learn the value of working together and enjoying the fruit of our labor.

Strength: This is for spiritual strength not physical strength. We must learn to be patient in times of trouble and not to complain but to endure and show understanding. We must accept difficulties and tragedies so that we may give others strength to accept their own difficulties and tragedies.

Good Child Rearing: Children are gifts from the Creator. We are responsible for their wellbeing, spiritually, emotionally, physically and intellectually, since they are blessed with the gift of representing the continuing circle of life. Every adult in a child's life has a responsibility to that child. With that responsibility, adults have the right to discipline that child. Kispewawso means when a parent defends a child from discipline, this is considered wrong and does no justice for the child.

Hope: We must look forward to moving toward good things. We need to have a sense that the seeds we are planting will bear fruit for our children, families and communities.

Ultimate Protection: This is the ultimate responsibility to achieve the balance and wellbeing of the body, mind, emotions and spirit for the individual, the family, the community and the nation.

Control Flap: These teach that we are all connected by relationships and that we depend on each other. Having respect for and understanding this connection creates and controls harmony and balance in the circle of life. When we don't know how to secure the flaps, it gets all smoky inside the tipi, and then you can't see. This is a metaphor for life – if we can't live in balance, we can't see clearly where we're going.

Connecting the Poles: The rope is a sacred bond. For every pole that goes up, the rope goes around it to bind the pole in place which binds all the teachings together until they are all connected.

Tipi Designs: The designs that are painted on tipis connect us with Spirit Beings in the world around us. They are part of our Sacred Bundles. The right to use any of the designs is a privilege and must be formally transferred in a ceremony. Not all tipis are painted.

BEADWORK: (Traditional vs. Contemporary)

Beadwork is a traditional craft practiced by many First Nations peoples. Before the Europeans arrived, decorative beadwork was made from stones, bones, shells and porcupine quills. It was very laborious work so the introduction of glass or metal beads in the fur trade made beading easier and this influenced more intricate designs. Beadwork is pedagogy (the method of teaching) as women bead together in community and share knowledge and skill.

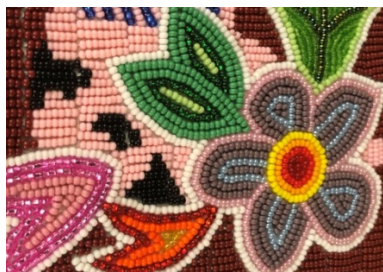
Today beading has become a fine art form. Competitive powwow regalia became a renaissance art for bead artists who created ambitious projects with smaller and smaller beads.

Contemporary artists are reclaiming beadwork as an art form in their practice. Contemporary artist Nadia Myre's "work weaves together complex histories of Aboriginal identity, nationhood, memory and handicraft, using beadwork techniques to craft exquisite and laborious works".(1) Plains Cree artist Ruth Cuthand is well known as an Indigenous artist who began beading molecular images of pathogens that wiped out Indigenous populations. "*It is a means of remembering and feeling well*", (2) says Ruth Cuthand on beading. Her beadwork on diseases called "Trading" (Ruth Cuthand, 2018) is on permanent display at the Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton, AB.

(1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadia_Myre

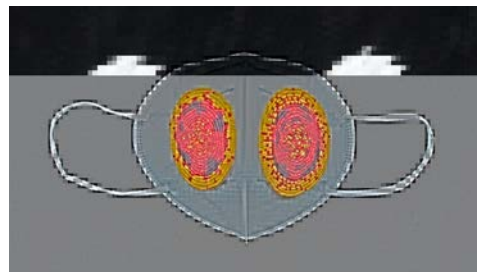
(2) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/ruth-cuthand-artist-beading-coronavirus-1.5600024>

Traditional Beadwork



Beadwork on Woman's Traditional by Nita McAdam

Contemporary Beadwork



Ruth Cuthand, Surviving: COVID-19, 2020, Glass beads, mask, thread, backing, 12" x 12". Collection of the artist.

Beading Materials:

“Beading is extremely time-consuming, especially with more ambitious pieces,” she says. “It cannot be rushed. You sit in one spot for hours. Your back gets sore and your shoulders get tense and my fingers sometimes cramp. It’s also very hard on the eyes. I fuss a lot with lights. The needle cuts on fingers are the worst.” quotes Sherry Farrell-Racette.

Base – buckskin (deer hide), moose hide and elk hide or cloth articles (cotton, velvet and woolen cloth).

Beads – beads come in a variety of sizes and finishes, such as matte or flat and glass cut beads. Common in our region are Cree or Métis floral designs that consist of various shades of one or two colours. For example, a flower may have two shades of red or pink. Leaves have various shades of green giving the finished piece a 3-D or embroidered appearance. There are no rules, but similar tones works best. Blackfoot bead designs use geometric shapes.

Beading – stitching beads onto a surface (base) using a needle and thread, in a repetitive way, is often a meditative process.

Stitching – Every second bead is stitched down into the base. The smaller the beads the more stitches are made. This tethers the beads to the base.

Thread – old style beading used sinew for the thread. Today beaders’ use mercerized cotton thread (usually size 50) that is waxed with beeswax. Waxed thread has longevity of 125 years and helps avoid knots and tangles in thread.

Bead sizes – most common bead size is #10- #16.. The larger the bead size, the smaller the bead. Very small beads are size #24. Pony beads are large beads. It is important to use the same size of bead in your work. For example if you use size 13 beads for a flower petal, then the second flower petal should also have size 13 beads.

Needles – fine bone needles were the early material before metal needles. Usually the needle size matches the bead size. If a needle size is larger than the bead size, multiple beads are threaded by hand onto the sinew or thread before inserting thread through the needle to attach.

Elements of design – Métis and Ojibwe designs start with X and cross motifs which suggest the 4 cardinal directions and spiritual concepts. Designs are pictorial metaphors of a larger, sacred universe. Asymmetrical designs suggest male-female balance and harmony. Asymmetry and alternating elements suggest Anishinaabe/Métis spiritual concepts – they reconcile opposites as the cosmos creates balance and harmony.

Beaded articles:

Clothing includes: jackets, vests coats buckskin shirts, hats moccasins, trousers, full and half leggings, mittens, gauntlets.

Utilitarian objects include: pad saddles, saddle blankets, tuppis (dog blankets) cruppers, head stalls, shot pouches, bandolier bags, tobacco bags, octopus bags, pipe bags, knife scabbards, and fire bags.

Household objects include: tea cosies, wall pockets, shelf valences, pocket watch holders, needle cases, lamp pads, baby carrying moss bags and footstool upholstery.

Bead Styles:

Lane or Lazy Stitch – This style of stitch is used for large patterns, or large areas of one colour. The artist works in short lengths of beads (rows of six to eight beads) in tight neat lines.

Loom beading – When beading without a backing fabric, a type of loom was used to form long strips of beads for belts, or hair decorations.

Brick stitch – This style is used to create a flat mat of beads in any type of pattern or design imagined. Used for earrings.

Overlaid stitch – This type of beadwork is common to attach patterns of beads to fabric or leather. The beads line the thread in the exact order that when laid across the fabric, they form the pattern.

Design symbols:

Symbols and colours used in each design mean different things to different tribes. Each person's last name carries a design, like a logo or family crest.

- Geometric designs = Sioux, Dakota, Nakoda, Lakoda nations; Morley area Alberta
- Wild flowers, Alberta Rose and leaf shapes = Cree designs
- Strawberries = represents traditional foods, a treat.
- Each person's last name carries a design, like a logo or family crest.
- Mirrors in regalia = are shiny and represents a protector.
- U shapes = represent horseshoes.
- Triangle shapes = represents tipis.

- Butterflies = youthful spirit that symbolizes transformation from youth to adulthood. Butterfly is associated with innocence and playfulness of childhood, and it teaches us as adults to nurture our inner child.
- Horses = represents mobility, strength and power. Indigenous have a personal relationship with the horse.
- Eagle Feather = always speak the truth. The one who holds the feather is speaking the truth.

Further Readings:

- **Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples**

The commission was formed August 226, 1991 and the report came out in 1996. The full report can be read on the Library and Archives website:

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>

Videos for youth: Contemporary Indigenous dances

- **DJ Shub – Indomitable Fort Northern Cree Singers video**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTJvpfkRRdA>
- **Meet a Tribe Called Red's Secret Weapon video**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-fhiJXPhcc>
- **First Stories – His Guidance (Okiskinotahewewin) – story on drumming**
https://www.nfb.ca/film/first_stories_his_guidance_okiskinotahewewin/
- **PowWow Times – general PowWow videos**
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUvnGMNI0KQC5HNZXDnp9eA>

Videos for Gr. K -2:

- **Cottonball: How to Powwow/ CBC kids**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lePleLBi6hl>

Books for Gr. K – 2: Strong Nations.com

- **Teeias Goes To A Powwow by Jennie Eaglespeaker**
- **Powwow's Coming by Linda Boyden**
- **Jingle Dancer by Cynthia L. Smith**

Books for Gr. 3 – 7: Strong Nations.com

- **Long Powwow Nights by Pamela Aleekuk and David Bouchard**
- **Powwow Summer by Marcie Rendon**

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadia_Myre
- Characteristics of Métis Beadwork by Lawrence J. Barkwell
- <https://www.powwows.com/native-american-beadwork-a-rich-history-of-cultural-techniques/>
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