

Reconciliation in the Watershed

Children's Reflection for World Water Day

This resource is part of KAIROS Canada's Reconciliation in the Watershed program. It can be used in full or in parts as an element of a worship service, classroom lesson, or even at home.

Gathering

Materials

- Blue cloth (or other visual items)
- Copy of *The Water Walker* or biography of Josephine Mandamin (see **Resources**)
- A slide or print-outs with the lyrics of the Nibi (Water) Song (optional) (see **Resources**)
- Cut-out of water drops for each child
- Markers/crayons

If you are able, gather children by a nearby body of water. If not, spread out a blue cloth or other visual items on the floor and ask the children to sit around the cloth and pretend they are by the water's edge. Optionally, have a glass or copper cup with water and some traditional tobacco (or "semaa" in Anishnaabe).

Introduction

Start the conversation by asking the following questions to the group:

What is your favourite activity to do in water?

Wait for responses.

What are some other ways that we use water in our everyday lives?

Wait for responses.

What other plants and animals use water?

Wait for responses.

All living things need water. Our bodies are 70% water! Some animals, like the koala bear, get water from their food, but we drink our water and it comes from the same lakes and rivers that we swim in or fish in or go canoeing in. To make sure we can

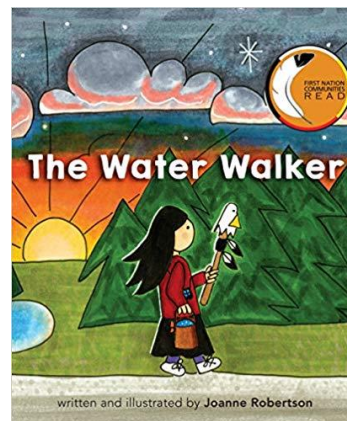
drink healthy water, we have to make sure the lakes and rivers stay clean and healthy.

Do you know some ways that water can become dirty?

Wait for responses.

I'm going to tell you the story about a Grandmother who saw how people were making the water dirty and wasting it. She decided to do something about it.

Listening



*Tell the story of Grandmother Josephine Mandamin, Mother Earth Water Walker or read *The Water Walker* by Joanne Robertson (Second Story Press, Toronto, 2017). The book is available at most public libraries in Canada and available*

from major book retailers.

Once you've read the story, ask the following questions:

What is the longest walk you've ever done? Do you think you could walk around a whole lake?

Wait for responses.

Grandmother Josephine did a lot of walking. She walked all the way around Lake Superior - 2,783km! It took her over a month to do it! On one of her walks she took 4.5 million footsteps.

There are so many ways that we can honour and protect the water. What does Grandmother

Josephine do each day to honour the water? How many of you have ever said grace before eating a meal?

Wait for responses.

Saying grace is our way of saying thanks to God for the food we eat and for the hands that prepared that food – because that food is so important to our lives. Have you ever given thanks to water?

Wait for responses.

Responding

Just like Grandmother Josephine we too can give thanks to the water every day for sustaining our lives and the lives of all living things.

*Teach the children the **Nibi (Water) Song by Doreen Day*** and sing it together. See the link under the Resources section to learn the tune for the song and its history.*

Ne-be Gee Zah- gay- e- goo
Gee Me-gwetch -wayn ne- me – goo
Gee Zah Wayn ne- me- goo

Water, we love you.
We thank you.
We respect you.

**The Nibi Song was written by Doreen Day at the request of her grandson, Mashkoonce. They give permission for everyone to share and sing this song to the water every day.*

Offering

Give each child a water drop and invite them to write one action they will take to protect water. Alternatively, have them tell you what actions they will take and write it down for them. Collect the water drops in an offering basket and offer them up to God and the community as a response. In a classroom setting, water drops can be displayed on a wall or taken home to share with family.

Prayer

Creator God,

We thank you for the most amazing gift of water

For the oceans that roar and the rivers that run free,

For the life water gives to all creatures and me

For the rain that helps make our food grow

And the joy it brings when we swim or play in the snow

We do not always treat the water with care

We waste it, pollute it, sell it to the millionaire

Remind us of your precious gift when we drink water today

And help us to protect it each and every day.

Amen.

Resources

- Biography of Josephine Mandamin: <http://indigenouising.org/josephine-mandamin/>
- Nibi (Water) Song Background and Video: http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com/?attachment_id=2244
- Learn about your local Watershed: <https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/content/watersheds>
- Other Children's Books:
 - Cloudwalker* by Roy Henry Vickers and Robert Budd (Harbour Publishing, 2014)
 - The Elders Are Watching* by Roy Henry Vickers and David Bouchard (Raincoast Books, 2003)
 - Paddle-to-the-Sea* by Holling Clancey (Holling, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969)

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