



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Creation Stories: Creating Strong Families Through Our Stories

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Please read this Acknowledgement before the start of this lesson to respect the knowledge that is being shared and the Land of the People where the knowledge originates.*

We acknowledge that the land on which this project originated is the traditional territory of Mi'kmaq Peoples.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Upon successful completion of this lesson plan, students will be able to:*

1. relate principles of Indigenous knowledge to personal, family, and community wellness;
2. be socially responsible and contribute to one's own family and community through the sharing of stories;
3. formulate approaches for engaging Indigenous community partners in establishing a 'Creation Stories' project.

### LIST OF ACTIVITIES

1. Creation Stories Project: A Step-by-Step Guide

### MATERIALS

- Case Study: Creation Stories - Creating Strong Families Through Our Stories
- Final Handbook created by Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre: Creation Stories-Creating Strong Families Through Our Stories



## Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being

### Origin

Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre, Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network  
Charlottetown  
Prince Edward Island

### Learning Level / Grade

## Families / Parents

Also: Early Childhood Education, Post-Secondary, Professional Development/Continuing Education



1200 mins

### Related Subjects

Family and Parenting, Teacher Training

## DESCRIPTION

*Creation Stories* is a community-based research project that focuses on personal interviews with Elders and Knowledge Keepers who share their life experience stories to help expectant and new parents/guardians pass on positive teachings to their children. Parents/guardians can create their own stories to add to these teachings.

This lesson plan is based on an actual project that took place in Prince Edward Island, the goal of which was the creation of a handbook that provides insights and inspiration for new and expectant parents/guardians to ". . . ground yourself in your creation story, to take control of your story, so you can reframe your life, beliefs, and practices to create the best story for your family" (p. vii, *Creation Stories: Creating Strong Families through Our Stories*).

This lesson plan outlines an approach to this community-based research project and can be delivered as a multi-session program. This project can be led by organization members and/or educators, or by university and/or college students to use as a community-based research project for academic credit. For example, the 'Creation Stories' project can be facilitated through a Friendship Centre, an Early Childhood Education Centre, or Pre-natal/Midwifery organizations.

## HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

*This lesson plan has been developed with an Indigenous lens that is holistic in nature, a way of being and knowing that acknowledges our relationships with 'all our relations', including plants and animals, other human beings, the water, land, wind, sun, moon, stars, and more - everything seen and unseen. With 'all our relations' in mind, this lesson plan has been developed with a focus on:*

- Language and Culture
- Participatory and experiential learning activities
- Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders
- Relationship with family, ancestors
- Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit
- Nurturing healthy relationships in school and community
- Ethics in the classroom: care, truthfulness and trust, respect, integrity
- Healthy relationship with self and identity
- Relationship with the land
- Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)
- Connections are made with everyday life

## TEACHERS' GUIDE

### Background/Foundational Information

- Storytelling is a foundational component of Indigenous life and culture. Traditional stories play an important role in providing direction and insight into the daily lives of individuals and groups by making connections to a broader community and a wider vision.

Two key components of a successful project are ensuring cultural appropriateness and respecting Indigenous cultures and beliefs (Bucharski, Brockman, and Lambert, 1999). Prior to establishing a Lead Team and initiating your interviews (outlined in the Step-by-Step Guide below), please take time to research the protocols specific to your community/nation for engaging Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members in your project.

The 'Creation Stories' project in this case study was conducted through the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre with involvement of First Light St. John's Friendship Centre, Under One Sky Friendship Centre, Holland College, and Wekatesk Aboriginal Headstart among others. It received funding and support from the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network Atlantic Research Centre (UAKN Atlantic).

Anyone interested in organizing this project for their students, youth, community members is encouraged first to read these two background documents (in the 'Materials' section attached in the Activity, the 'Step-by-Step Guide'):

1. Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre's *Creation Stories* - A Case Study - this is an overview of the process followed by the team that led to the production of the second attachment.

2. *Creation Stories: Creating Strong Families Through Our Stories* - this is the 'handbook' created as a result of the project with the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre.

## ACTIVITIES

## 1 - Creation Stories Project: A Step-by-Step Guide

**Purpose**

The purpose of this activity is to guide the development of a 'Creation Stories: Creating Strong Families Through Our Stories' community-based research project in one's own community.

**Time:** 1200 mins

**Activity Instructions**

The following is a step-by-step guide outlining the process of developing and implementing this community-based research project.

**Step 1 - Establishing a Lead Team**

This is an excellent group project for bringing a community together. Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and families share their stories; Elders and Knowledge Keepers can provide guidance and support; and educators/business people/students/ community members can come together to assist the Lead Team in developing the project.

- i) Lead Team members (preferably between 2 - 3 people) are from within your organization or educational institution (e.g., Friendship Centre, Early Childhood Education Centre, etc.) who will recruit others for the roles listed below (see Step 3).
- ii) As the Lead Team for this project, scan your community and organization to assess what skills are available before looking elsewhere for assistance. Costs can be minimal and even linked to honouraria.

**Step 2 - Background Information for the Lead Team**

Before beginning your community 'Creation Stories' project, please read the Case Study and then the Handbook (Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, 2019) provided with this lesson plan (see 'Materials' section below).

- After reading the case study and the handbook (to help envision what your project could look like), the Lead Team establishes a project plan specifically for their community and ensures that all protocols, permissions, and any other requirements are adhered to.
- This project is based on: a) the collection of personal stories gathered through one-on-one interviews with community Elders and Knowledge Keepers, followed by; b) individual families being encouraged to create their own stories with their guidance.
- In order to properly engage your community in a safe and transparent manner, the community must maintain ownership of their stories and the final product. To ensure this, the First Nations 'Principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession' are followed (for more details, see <https://fnigc.ca/ocap>).
  - *Ownership and Possession:* First Nations have ownership and possession over their personal stories and how their information is used.
  - *Control and Access:* First Nations control the data collection of personal stories that are shared through an interview process. Community members have access and control over their own stories, which means: the contributors can edit, add, or delete any part of their interview; permission must be gained to use their words in a printed booklet; and the final product is owned by the community.

**Step 3 - Assign Roles**

Once your Lead Team has decided on the format of your own community project and has a sound understanding of the path to be taken, assign the roles identified below (as needed based on your project's path):

Interviewer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Transcriber(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher(s) of the Traditional Territory: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Analysis: \_\_\_\_\_

Booklet Assembly: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4 - Decide on Interview Questions and Conduct Interviews**

- i) Develop open-ended questions so the interview becomes a conversation - let it go wherever it needs to. See the suggested prompting questions below. Feel free to use these, adapt them, or develop your own.
- ii) Determine who you want to interview and follow cultural protocols to invite people to participate. These can be Elders and Knowledge Keepers as well as community members and families.
- iii) Interviews should be conducted by persons who the community feels comfortable with and who has the type of personality that can draw the best out of people. Being interviewed is an unfamiliar experience for many, so you want to create an environment that is comfortable and open.
- iv) Interviews need to be conducted in a quiet place because they will be recorded. Interviewers can use smartphones or choose from the wide range of recording devices available - whatever best suits your community's situation.
- v) Once an interview is completed, it is important to upload and save the audio file to a computer immediately to prevent losing the interview. For recording and saving audio files, it is best to have the help of someone who is comfortable with technology.

***Suggested Prompting Questions (see the handbook in the 'Materials' section to see how these questions are linked to the Elders' voices and what they shared in the publication)***

**Examples of open-ended questions for Elders and Knowledge Keepers (i.e. principal storytellers for this project):**

- What does family mean to your story?
- "Love is grounded in knowing the Creator and knowing you are an important part of life" (UAKN). What stories do you have to pass on love to the next generation? How do you share goodness with those you love?
- "Honesty: As you grow and learn to love, you learn to be honest with yourself and your Creator" (UAKN). How do you stay honest with yourself when you do not have much support? Our stories can be hard to share. How can you share your story in a way that is honest and empowering?
- History will always be a part of our story. How do you balance your history with your stories?
- What is the role of language in your life?
- How do you use your life experience to connect and help others in your life?

**Examples of open-ended questions for individuals and families creating their own story:**

- Has anyone ever asked you about your story?
- Are you comfortable telling your story?
- What is your story?
- How can you use your story to better understand yourself?
- How will you use your story to have a positive influence with your family?
- How can connecting with the Elders' stories help connect your story to your culture?
- How does your traditional language support connections in your life?
- How do you use your life experience to connect and help others in your life?

**Step 5 - Transcription of Recorded Interviews**

If a community member has experience with transcribing, then please consider hiring that person(s) to help build community capacity. If there is no one available with experience, suggestions are to contact local or regional university students who have this background, or look into companies such as <https://www.transcribeme.com> where you upload an audio file and it is returned as a word document.

**Step 6 - Research the Traditional Territory**

This role requires researching the traditional territory of your community (including stories, poetry, art, and songs) to create a context of who your people are and how they came to be there.

### Step 7 - Interview Analysis

If a community member has experience with interview analysis, then please consider hiring that person(s) to help build community capacity. If there is no one available with experience, suggestions are to contact local or regional university students who have this background.

### Step 8 - Handbook Assembly

The Lead Team is responsible for the final assembly of the community's stories into a booklet to hand out to those involved with the project and the community in general (i.e. giving back to the community). Publishing, distribution, and sharing methods are up to the Team and the community to decide (see First Nations OCAP guidelines above). The handbook created by the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre (in the 'Materials' section below) provides an example of the layout and design for you to look at to get ideas of how you would like to design your own handbook.

**This activity is designed to connect with learners with these learning styles...**

- Spiritual (e.g., Relational) Learners
- Physical (e.g., Tactile, Experiential, Visual) Learners
- Intellectual (e.g., Rational, Logical) Learners
- Emotional (e.g., Feeling, Intuitive) Learners

**... in the following ways:**

Spiritual - Focus is on achieving a clear mind and spirit.

Emotional - Since the stories are personal life experiences, emotions are connected throughout the storytelling process.

Physical - This project is based on personal one-on-one interviews, which requires physical activity for meeting with one another and sharing time together.

Intellectual - Two-Eyed Seeing is the ability to blend traditional and western perspectives in harmony. "How can you use Two-Eyed Seeing in your story?"

### Materials

*Click the 'Link' to open and view videos.*

*To open and print files, please go to the 'files' folder accompanying this downloaded lesson plan.*

Resource Title	Type
<b>Case Study: Creation Stories - Creating Strong Families Through Our Stories</b>	File (Creation Stories-A Case Study.pdf) 
This is the case study upon which this lesson plan has been developed. The project was conducted through the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre in Charlottetown, PEI.	
<b>Final Handbook created by Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre: Creation Stories-Creating Strong Families Through Our Stories</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> 
This is the final output of the project with Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre. You can design your own handbook.	

## TEACHING NOTES

## ASSESSMENT

*This section contains information for assessing progress in students' learning. While Indigenous approaches to assessment may be highlighted, conventional assessment methods may also be discussed.*

The Creation Stories project engages individuals' stories hence, each person can approach their own ways of knowing and being in the process of creating their own story. If this is a student project in a secondary or post-secondary setting, the instructor can assess students' work by a variety of methods, such as journaling, sharing circles, reflecting on one's approach to their work, team work and collaborative skill-building, and more.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Click the 'Link' to open and view videos.*

*To open and print files, please go to the 'files' folder accompanying this downloaded lesson plan.*

Resource Title	Type
<b>Creation Stories: Creating Strong Families Through Our Stories</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> 
This is the website of the Urgan Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) Atlantic with a webpage for the 'Creation Stories' project.	
<b>Appendix 1 - Collecting Information</b>	File (Creation Stories Appendix 1-Collecting Information.pdf) 
This is the first of two appendices with the original Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre's step-by-step guide for collecting information for a 'Creation Stories' project. This lesson plan was based on these two appendices.	
<b>Appendix 2 - Processing and Presenting the Information</b>	File (Creation Stories Appendix 2-Processing and Presenting Information.pdf) 
This is the second of two appendices with the original Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre's step-by-step guide for processing and presenting the information for a 'Creation Stories' project. This lesson plan was based on these two appendices.	

## HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

*This lesson plan has been developed with an Indigenous lens that is holistic in nature, a way of being and knowing that acknowledges our relationships with 'all our relations', including plants and animals, other human beings, the water, land, wind, sun, moon, stars, and more - everything seen and unseen. With 'all our relations' in mind, this lesson plan has been developed with a focus on:*

<b>Relationship with the land</b>
This project is premised on the stories of Elders' and Knowledge Keepers' life experience gleaned through personal interviews, which can be conducted outside on-the-land.
<b>Participatory and experiential learning activities</b>
<b>Language and Culture</b>
English is the language used in this lesson plan and supporting documents however, communities have the option to translate and deliver the content in their Indigenous language depending on their capacity to do so.
<b>Relationship with family, ancestors</b>
This project is grounded in intergenerational learning with Elders and Knowledge Keepers as they share their stories with parents/guardians, who then pass the teachings to their families and also create their own stories to share.
<b>Connections are made with everyday life</b>

<p>Individuals' personal stories focus on their own experiences in everyday life. Through sharing stories, others are supported in their everyday life as well.</p>
<p><b>Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders</b></p>
<p>Were Elders or Knowledge Holders involved in the development of this Lesson Plan? Yes Can Elders or Knowledge Holders be invited to help teach part of this lesson plan? Yes</p>
<p><b>Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders</b></p>
<p><b>Ethics in the classroom: care, truthfulness and trust, respect, integrity</b></p>
<p>Respect and Integrity: As you grow and learn humility, in turn you develop respect and integrity. Truthfulness and Trust: As you grow and learn, you begin to see what is true in your life and what is true in love, honesty, humility, and respect, from which trust evolves. Care: Through sharing personal stories, care is given to oneself and to each other.</p>
<p><b>Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit</b></p>
<p><b>Healthy relationship with self and identity</b></p>
<p>Individuals consider how connecting their stories to the Elders' and Knowledge Keepers' stories can support a better understanding of who they are, where they are from, and their values and beliefs, i.e. identity. From this vantage, they are encouraged to create their own stories, which reinforces self-concepts of identity.</p>
<p><b>Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)</b></p>
<p>Each section in the Creation Stories Handbook (attached) opens with a quote from a community member, Elder, or Knowledge Keeper, followed by a prompting question or statement to spark reflection and introspection.</p>

## OTHER DETAILS

This project is aimed at expectant parents or parents/guardians of pre-school children; the suggested development and delivery is through local resource centres, organizations, Friendship Centres, etc.

### Meets curriculum expectations or outcomes for:

Prince Edward Island

This project is aimed at expectant parents or parents/guardians of pre-school children; the suggested development and delivery is through local resource centres, organizations, Friendship Centres, etc.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## QUESTIONS/MORE DETAILS

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