



Date: _____

Consent from the Land with Spruce Boughs

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.:

This lesson comes from the Yellowknives Dene First Nations Peoples of Chief Drygeese Territory, Treaty 11. The Yellowknives Dene live on the traditional territory of Dettah and Ndilꞌ located near Yellowknife NT. The Dene have lived on the land that surrounds Great Slave Lake where they harvest medicines and hunt to provide for their communities. This history of the Dene shows their migration routes during different seasons where they would fish on the land in the summer and migrate north to hunt for caribou in the tundra. The Dene in this region have lived on and with their land since time immemorial and remain on their traditional land where they continue to pass down their traditional knowledge to generations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Understand and appreciate the Dene practice of consent with the land when harvesting spruce boughs;
2. See how spruce boughs are used in wall tents out on the land.

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

1. Harvesting Spruce Boughs

MATERIALS

- Photograph 1 - weaving spruce boughs in a wall tent
- Photograph 2 - spruce boughs on the floor of a wall tent
- Supplies: tobacco or gift for giving thanks; tools for harvesting spruce boughs
- Short Video - giving thanks with tobacco



Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being

Origin

Yellowknives Dene First Nation; Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning Mackenzie King Island Northwest Territories

Learning Level / Grade

Youth (up to age 30)

Also: Families / Parents, 3, 6, 9, 12, 1, 4, 7, 10, Early Childhood Education, Kindergarten, 2, 5, 8, 11, Post-Secondary, Professional Development/Continuing Education



210 mins

Related Subjects

History, Traditional Medicines, On-the-Land

DESCRIPTION

This lesson plan focuses on how the Dene practice consent with the land when harvesting spruce boughs for their wall tents. This lesson was taught to students at a Dechinta land-based semester on Mackenzie King Island by a well-respected community Elder when students were learning how to set up the campsite.

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
- Connections are made with everyday life
- 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)

TEACHERS' GUIDE

Background/Foundational Information

- The lesson plan must be taught on the land in an area where spruce trees grow. The educator must acknowledge where this lesson plan originates as the teachings of harvesting spruce boughs will vary among nations and communities. During the lesson, the educator will have to give the oral lesson of consent while they are on the land harvesting the spruce boughs. This lesson is best taught by showing rather than just sharing orally in a lecture style.

ACTIVITIES

1 - Harvesting Spruce Boughs

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is the foundation of the lesson plan. The activity will allow students to experience what consent looks and feels like from the land, which will contribute to the learning outcomes of this lesson.

Time: 60 mins

Activity Instructions

This activity takes place on the land in an area where spruce trees grow. The activity will show the way that the Dene receive consent from the land when harvesting spruce boughs.

Students will be sent to pick spruce boughs from spruce trees on their own first. They will be asked to think about ways that a tree will give them consent to harvest their branches. After a few moments of self-learning, the educator will step in to give the lesson. This lesson can be inquiry-based where you ask the students what they think consent looks like, or it can be a lesson given by the educator on the Dene tradition.

A short video (in the 'Materials' section below) shows someone giving thanks to the land and trees from which spruce boughs will be harvested.

The educator will physically show the students how to harvest by pulling on a branch. If the branch breaks off, the educator will ask the students if this means the tree is consenting to take the bough. The answer is yes. The educator will move on to another branch, if this branch does not simply break upon pulling it, the educator will ask the students what this means. The Dene teaching is that if the branch does not come off when pulling on it, it is the tree's way of saying no. The person harvesting must take this as a form of consent and leave the branch on the tree.

The reason for harvesting spruce boughs for the Dene is to put on the ground in a wall tent to to put on the ground in a wall tent before setting up sleeping arrangements. The spruce boughs provide a layer of protection from the cold ground and to keep you warm. When setting up a camp or wall tent out on the land with limited resources, spruce boughs are essential for warmth and comfort. To set up the spruce boughs, you slowly weave the branches together one by one. See the photos attached in the 'Materials' section below.

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:

This activity connects with all of these ways of learning:

Spiritual learners: connecting with the land so receive consent from the spruce boughs. This lesson goes beyond just physical teachings because it gives the students a sense of relationship with the land on a spiritual level where we show respect just as we do between humans.

Physical learners: this activity gives the learner the opportunity to get out on the land and physically harvest spruce boughs from a spruce tree. The learner will be using their hands to pull on a spruce bough to see how the tree responds to their request.

Emotional learners: This activity must include the learners' feelings as they pull on a spruce bough in order to harvest it. The learners will connect emotionally with the spruce tree as they harvest while also connecting emotionally with the land to acknowledge boundaries.

Intellectual learners: This activity includes thinking rationally and logically while harvesting. The learner will have to question how this activity and lesson is related to consent. The learner will also have to think rationally while determining the way the land is giving consent or not giving consent.

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
Photograph 1 - weaving spruce boughs in a wall tent	File (SPRUCE BOUGHS 1.jpeg) 
photograph illustrating how the spruce boughs are laid out and woven together.	
Photograph 2 - spruce boughs on the floor of a wall tent	File (SPRUCE BOUGHS 2.jpeg) 
Photograph showing a wall tent with spruce boughs on the floor.	
Supplies: tobacco or gift for giving thanks; tools for harvesting spruce boughs	Supplies 
Short Video - giving thanks with tobacco	File (Giving thanks to the land and trees-Tobacco.MOV) 

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.

HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

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Relationship with the land
Participatory and experiential learning activities
Language and Culture
Relationship with family, ancestors
Connections are made with everyday life
Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders
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
Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders
Ethics in the classroom: care, truthfulness and trust, respect, integrity
Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit
Healthy relationship with self and identity
Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)
<p>Have students write or draw other ways that humans can receive consent from the land, plants, water, animals, etc. See if the students are aware of any local practices similar to this. Other examples of consent from the land can be picking berries and the land showing you what and when berries are ready to be picked, i.e. the changing colors and how easily they fall off the branch.</p> <p>This lesson is a great way to begin to talk about consent with the land and what it has to offer. Some Dene traditions include also paying the land before harvesting, in most traditions they use tobacco to pay the land before they harvest or use anything. It is important to speak of consent, especially within Indigenous culture since Indigenous peoples respect and protect the land.</p>

OTHER DETAILS

RELATED LESSON PLANS

- Making Spruce Gum Tea
- Land-Based Education: Personal Reflection

CONTRIBUTORS

Name	Role/Job Title	Place
Kyla LeSage	Land-Based Coordinator at Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning	Vuntut Gwitchin, Old Crow, Yukon
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QUESTIONS/MORE DETAILS

For Questions contact: [Dechinta \(admin@dechinta.ca\)](mailto:admin@dechinta.ca) for more information.