

## International Day of the World's Indigenous People August 9

### Global Themes

- Images and Perception

### Overview and Purpose

This lesson is designed to teach children about International Day of the World's Indigenous People, and the specific right of children highlighted by this UN Day; their right to practice their own culture, language and religion. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right (CRC Article 30).

### Background Information for Teachers

United Nations Cyberschoolbus

[cyberschoolbus.un.org/indigenous/index.asp](http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/indigenous/index.asp)

Aboriginal Canada Portal

[aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en-frames/ao04607.html](http://aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en-frames/ao04607.html)

### Grades

K – 3

### Materials

Book entitled *What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?* by Richard Van Camp

Black construction paper, coloured chalk, crayons, or pencil crayons

[Snow Words reference for teachers princeton.edu/~browning/snow.html](http://snowwordsreferenceforteachers.princeton.edu/~browning/snow.html)

### Activity One

- Introduce CRC Article 30; the right for children to practice their own culture, language and religion. Ask students to brainstorm what culture means. Discuss why culture is important. Explain that this lesson is a chance to celebrate this right.
- Introduce August 9th as International Day of the World's Indigenous People; a UN Day celebrated around the world. This day is important because it ties closely to CRC Article 30. Article 30 mentions that minority and indigenous groups needs special protection of this right. Help the students to define indigenous people and then ask the students why these groups might need special protection of their rights.
- Explain that this day also has special significance in Canada because Canada is a multicultural nation that celebrates diversity within its indigenous people.
- Introduce the story by explaining that the author and illustrator of *What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know about Horses?* are from two different First Nations groups in

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Canada. Ask the students to pay special attention to what they can learn about indigenous groups.

- Read aloud from the book *What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?* by Richard Van Camp.
- Ask the students what they learned about the Dogrib Nation. Where do they live? What is the weather like, etc? Discuss how dogs are very important to the Dogrib people; the word for dog is tlee. Horses are very important to the Cree people; the word for horse in Cree is mista'im.

### Activity Two

- Turn to the last page of the book, and ask the students, "What's the most beautiful thing you know about you?"
- Ask the students to consider their gifts and talents. These may or may not be related to their culture, language, or religion.
- Ask the students to draw "what's the most beautiful thing you know about you" in a vibrant and colourful way (similar to the illustrations in the book).

**Optional:** *If there is time, the students may want to ask their friends, family and teachers this question to help them brainstorm some ideas, and reinforce some of the students' positive attributes.*

### Discussion

How does the environment in which the indigenous people live support how they live?

Compare and contrast the different indigenous populations in Canada.

Compare and contrast one indigenous population in Canada to another country's indigenous population.

How are indigenous people represented in the media and books? Is this an accurate representation of indigenous people today?

### Extensions

Bring indigenous culture into classroom practice. Use a sacred circle or storytelling circle as a way to support student participation so all voices are heard. Draw inspiration from Aboriginal communities where consensus, respect and inclusiveness are important. Organize a talking circle where all participants sit at the same level, share eye contact and have equal opportunity to speak about a children's rights issue. Consider demonstrating equal opportunity to speak by passing a talking stick among the participants. Invite elders from your students' parents' and grandparents' generations to attend and share stories from their childhoods to provide

comparison to children's realities today. Explore whether there have been noticeable changes in the wants and needs of children over the years. As an example, you could have students and their parents/grandparents explore children's right to play. Ask how 'play' looks different for children today compared to in the past.

### **Storytelling Circle**

Storytelling is an important tradition in many cultures around the world. Everyone has the right to a name and nationality. Why not celebrate this right by exploring the stories behind participants' names? Ask: Does your name have special meaning? Who gave it to you? Is it short for another name? Form a storytelling circle and listen to each others' stories. Pass a talking stick to respect each storyteller.

### **Additional Resources**

*Shared Learnings: Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K – 10*, produced by Ministry of Education  
British Columbia

*Knots on a Counting Rope* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault  
ISBN 0-8050-54790-0