

Introduction to the Water Arc



Indigenous Storywork – Opening Stories

Indigenous peoples learn how to be in the world through stories that are shared across generations. Listen to the stories about water to consider how we are meant to live in good relation with the world.

- ◇ [Ojibway Creation Story](#)
- ◇ [Survivors of the Flood \(Lummi Nation\)](#)
- ◇ [Freshwater Stories \(Frank Ettawageshik, LTBB Odawa\)](#)

As you engage in water activities, refer back to these stories or other stories and songs you know about water. How can stories and songs help guide water activities with your families?

Indigenous Science - Overview

Indigenous peoples have deep relationships with water. Many nations have creation and migrations stories stemming from floods, and practice water ceremonies with varied teachings. Water holds important roles of cleansing and purification for humans and more-than-human relatives. The water activities will help you to use scientific inquiry based in observations of the world around you, particularly your focus on water in its varied forms. You will be prompted to look closely, reflect using all of your senses, and wonder about big ideas as a family.

Arc Gifts and Teachings

Human bodies are made up of mostly water; water is life because we are water! These water activities emphasize ways can learn from and with water as a relative and teacher. Using Indigenous observation, you will consider the roles water holds in the world and how those roles impact humans and more-than-human relatives. You will consider the life of water and how water travels continuously throughout ecosystems. Observing water will help you determine water's wellbeing or risk factors and deepen your relationship with water and come to understand the responsibilities you hold.

Our Gift – Our Indigenous Pedagogy

These activities are intended to deepen your knowledge and relationship with water, and prompt you to consider your roles and responsibilities in helping to be sure water has a healthy future for generations to come. You will consider the gifts water offers human and more-than-human relatives and what gifts we can offer in return, this process of gifting or reciprocity helps to understand and sustain relational balance. Prompts included in the water activities are intentionally open ended or inquiry based. Big wondering questions make for better learning opportunities than known-answer questions. Questions you don't know the answer to are great learning opportunities! Discuss different possibilities, talk with friends and family, draw conclusions from your observations, and look to other resources to learn more.

The water activities are meant to support family learning and enhanced relationships with water as relative. Spending time with water and reflecting on perceptions of our water relative will build water/human/more-than human relations through reciprocal exchanges. It is our belief that focusing on our reciprocal roles and responsibilities to water we can deepen our mutual respect as members of balanced ecosystem communities

Indigenous Observing with Lands and Waters and Activities by Season

These activities all work to enhance Indigenous peoples relationships with water, and to consider water's relationships with humans and more-than-human relations. You will engage perspective taking to consider your perceptions of water in varied states and how water perceives human and more than human relations. With each activity, consider water in different seasons, places and times. Ask children what water in the places you visit may have been like 100 years ago or what it will be like 100 years in the future? What do you notice about water in varied forms of liquid, gas, or solid states (e.g. lakes, rivers, oceans, streams, puddles, droplets, fog, mist, ice, etc.)? Or how do you perceive your relation with water outdoors and in your home? Observing deeply and talking with family and friends about your understandings *and* your wonderings work to deepen Indigenous knowledges.

Relationships with Other Arcs

Water activities are intricately interwoven with other ISTEAM arcs, and activities across arcs are developed to be in conversation with each other. In thinking about water as relative to more-than-human beings, you may consider looking to bird activities and reflect on ways birds and water live together in a good way. Take your plant cards with you while focusing on water activities, you can build closer relationships with plant relatives as you consider the relations between plants and water. You may also consider how water's well-being is an essential aspect to securing Indigenous food sovereignty. As you watch Jeanette's videos, consider how water participates in her teachings around growing, harvesting, preserving, and consuming healthy foods. Some activities direct you to related activities in other arcs, and you will certainly make more connections as you engage.

Visioning our Future.

Water activities will ask you to consider ways to secure water's wellbeing for generations to come. Talk as a family about how living in a good way today is informed by Indigenous teachings and lessons from previous generations, in order to be sure future generations can thrive. We focus on the need to secure positive Indigenous futures and also discuss ways that relationships with water whelp us ork to connect with extended kin, particularly between and within Indigenous and Black communities. Water activities ask you to consider social movements around water sovereignty (#NoDAPL, #WaterIsLife, #ShutDownLine5, Flint Water Crisis) and to examine these issues across extended kin communities.