



Stories of Climate Change Education

Toronto District School Board - Climate Literacy & Leadership Program 2025

The Seven Grandfather Teachings: Strengthening the relationships we have with others, animals and the natural world

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Grade 6



The Seven Grandfathers, Garrett Nahdee, 2021

Learning Outcomes:

Students will...

- Focus on, discuss and explore the meanings and experiences reflected in each of the Seven Grandfathers Teachings
- Understand how these teachings form the foundation of Anishinaabe people's way of life and together these teachings are gifts that help communities respect the Creator, the Earth and each other
- Reflect on personal meanings, connections, and perspectives inherent within each of the Seven Teachings. Explore similarities, differences and areas of overlap with other guiding principles (worldviews) for living a good life
- Identify interconnectedness with and responsibility to their community and the earth that considers and respects the perspectives offered in the Seven Grandfather Teachings

Climate Concepts:

- **Reciprocity and Harmony:** The Anishinaabe principle of Mino-Bimaadiziwin (the Good Life) emphasizes living in harmony and reciprocity with nature and each other. The seven teachings specific to the Anishinaabe are: love, respect, wisdom, humility, bravery, honesty, and truth. These principles result in communities caring for one another, believing that they are related to all that exists and that to help or hurt another being is to help or hurt oneself.
- **Interdependence:** All living things are connected, every organism, system, and place depends on others. Anishinaabe ways of knowing and being shape a holistic and cyclical understanding of the universe. Teachings such as the Seven Sacred Teachings strengthen relationships with one another as well as with the land, winds, waters, and all living beings.

Source: Alberta Education. (2013). *Our way is a valid way* [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://education.alberta.ca/media/563981/our-way-is-a-valid-way.pdf>

Learning Activities:

Character Assembly: I introduced The Seven Grandfather Teachings with each of the representative animal were at a school-wide Character Assembly. We discussed how each animal offers the Anishinaabe people a special gift and understanding of how people should live their lives on Mother Earth. With input from the grade 6 students, we connected the teaching of humility and the wolf to the TDSB character trait of "cooperation".

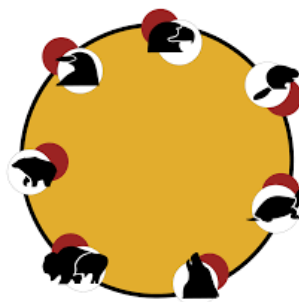
Learning about and connecting with the Seven Grandfather Teachings:

To introduce these values in class, we started with a discussion about Respect—what it means, how it's shown, and why it's essential in how we treat the land, each other, and ourselves. Students shared thoughtful ideas and made connections to their own lives.

Learning from Indigenous peoples and stories: We listened and read stories by Indigenous authors and used input from Elder Dr. Bob Phillips (Great Bear) on the teachings, which helped bring the Seven Grandfather Teachings to life through authentic voices and experiences.

Making meaning through stories: Building on this foundation, I introduced Book Creator as a digital platform for students to create and share their own stories. The goal was for each student to choose one of the Seven Grandfather Teachings and create a story that is inspired by and reflects its meaning in a way that's personal and relevant to them. This project not only reinforced their understanding of the teachings, but also encouraged creativity, empathy, and critical thinking as they considered how these values show up in their everyday life.

Reflection: The students were deeply engaged as they created a range of books for our class library. Each student had the opportunity to critically reflect on the guiding principles of both the Anishinaabe and their own culture and how these values shaped their identities. Exploring the perspectives within the Seven Grandfather Teachings encouraged students to consider their responsibilities to both their communities and the Earth, and to think about how they could embody these teachings through their everyday actions.



Lessons Learned:

- Learning about the Seven Grandfather Teachings motivated students to reflect on how these values can be applied in everyday life.
- Through group discussions, they recognized how each teaching influences our actions toward one another and the planet, which in turn inspired the themes and direction of their stories.

Resources:

- Lesson Inspiration: [Comic Book Storytelling Using 7 Grandfather Teachings](#) by Jaime Fortin (Chapleau Cree First Nation) and Pinnguaq
- [Grandfather Teachings - Video Series with Elder Hazel Dixon](#) through Royal Saskatchewan Museum & Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
- [Les Sept Enseignements Sacrés](#) - Legislative Assembly of Ontario installation of Seven Grandfather Teachers carving created by Indigenous Artist Garrett Nahdee. The site offers information (Fr/En) about the Seven Grandfather Teachings, the artist and the carving.
- Kode's Quest(ion): A Story of Respect by Katherena Vermette
- **Additional French Resources**
[La Websérie Animée Les Sept Enseignements Sacrés](#)
(Also available in [Anishinaabe](#))