

Stories that Build Community and Teach Culture In the Classroom

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I Know Here by Laurel Croza

Beginning with place.

- Builds on the understanding of the importance of place
- Connects to locale experiences
- Connects to the land and environment
- Creates awareness about self knowledge

Gray Wolf's Search by Bruce Swanson

Reflecting on self and moving beyond to those who love and care for us.

- Builds on the understanding that we are all equals
- Builds on the importance of goal setting
- Builds on creation of a respectful learning environment
- Exploration of ancestors and their power to support
- Can lead into the practice of using classroom talking circles

We Are All Related by GT Cunningham Elementary School with George Littlechild

*Although this book is out of print most school districts have copies.

Now that we have explored those around us, let's begin to research our own ancestral roots and share that with our classmates and school.

- Builds community
- Builds on self-identity
- Builds bridges between individuals and cultures in identifying similarities
- Incorporates art form
- Incorporates technology i.e. computers and digital photography

The Saanich Year by Earl Claxton (google the title) or Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back by Joseph Bruchac or Moonstick by Eve Bunting

Every community has seasonal activities/events that are relevant to their area.

- Builds on awareness of whole community
- Concept of time and how this relates to special events
- Connection to communities through seasonal events
- Builds on awareness of cultural practices of others

I'm in Charge of Celebrations by Byrd Baylor

Everyone celebrates something. Why do we celebrate the things that we do; as families, as individuals, as communities, as a nation, as a global nation.

- Investigates individual need to celebrate
- Exploration of cultural celebrations
- Investigates the importance of celebrations

Solomon's Tree by Andrea Spalding

When we celebrate there are generally things/tools that we need in order to fulfill the celebration.

- Introduction to cultural protocols
- Introduction to cultural artifacts
- Explores use of artifacts for celebration
- Builds connection to the Earth

Secret of the Dance by Judge Alfred Scow and Andrea Spalding

Cultural celebrations are important to keep community and families strong. Now that we have explored their importance, what would it be like to take it all away?

- Further exploration of celebration and cultural practice
- Family values are explored
- Introduction to the banning of Potlatches
- Introduction to art design

Lessons From Mother Earth by Elaine McLeod and Colleen Wood

It's time to explore the importance of our natural resources and what they provide us with, regionally, nationally and globally. Why is it important that we take care of Mother Earth?

- Builds awareness of the importance of natural resources
- Links to healthy foods
- Links to discussion on territorial rights to resources
- Opportunity to explore indigenous plants and trees and their uses
- Our responsibility to our planet

Shi-shi-etko and/or Shin Shi's Canoe by Nicola I. Campbell

The strong connection to survival for First Nations is deeply rooted in family, community and the earth's resources. What happens to a people when all that is treasured is taken away?

- Explores the value of being connected to others
- Explores the value of being connected to Mother Earth
- Builds on the value and respect of family values
- Introduction to Residential School

What are some titles that you could use that reflect your local community?