

LESSON FIVE

AIR



Objective/Goal:

Help children become aware of our dependence on air to live and how important clean air is to Grandmother Earth and all who live and grow upon her.

Setting the stage for learning

Play soothing music as children are gathered for Circle Time. Tell a story about air and wind. Consider adding materials to areas such as: wind chimes, child safe fans, dancing ribbons, artwork to hang from the ceiling.

Storytelling

A wind story from the Northeast region will be used as an example for this lesson. Source: Bruchac, Joseph & Caduto, Michael. "Gluscabi and the Wind Eagle" Native American Stories. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1991. Used with permission from Keepers of the Earth by Michael J. Caduto. (c) 1988. Fulcrum Publishing, Inc., Golden, Colorado. All rights reserved.

"Gluscabi and the Wind Eagle"

Long ago, Gluscabi lived with his grandmother, Woodchuck, in a small lodge beside the big water. One day Gluscabi was walking around when he looked out and saw some ducks in the bay.

"I think it is time to go hunt some ducks," he said. So he took his bow and arrows and got into his canoe. He began to paddle out into the bay and as he paddled he sang:

*Ki yo wah ji neh
yo ho hey ho
Ki yo wah ji neh
Ki yo wah ji neh.*

But a wind came up and it turned his canoe and blew him back to shore. Once again Gluscabi began to paddle out and this time he sang his song a little harder:

*KI YO WAH JI NEH
YO HO HEY HO
KI YO WAH JI NEH
KI YO WAH JI NEH.*

But again the wind came and blew him back to shore. Four times he tried to paddle out into the bay and four times he failed. He was not happy. He went back to the lodge of his grandmother and walked right in, even though there was a stick leaning across the door, which meant that the person inside was doing some work and did not want to be disturbed.

"Grandmother," Gluscabi said, "What makes the wind blow?"

Grandmother Woodchuck looked up from her work. "Gluscabi," she said, "Why do you want to know?"

Then Gluscabi answered her just as every child in the world does when they are asked such a question.

"Because," he said.

Grandmother Woodchuck looked at him. "Ah, Gluscabi," she said. "Whenever you ask such questions I feel there is going to be trouble. And perhaps I should not tell you. But I know that you are so stubborn you will never stop asking until I answer you. So I shall tell you. Far from here, on top of the tallest mountain, a great bird stands. This bird is named Wuchowsen, and when he flaps his wings he makes the wind blow."

"Eh-hey, Grandmother," said Gluscabi, "I see. Now how would one find that place where the Wind Eagle stands?"

Again Grandmother Woodchuck looked at Gluscabi. "Ah, Gluscabi," she said, "Once again I feel that perhaps I should not tell you. But I know that you are very stubborn and would never stop asking. So I shall tell you. If you walk always facing the wind you will come to the place where Wuchowsen stands."

"Thank you, Grandmother," said Gluscabi. He stepped out of the lodge and faced into the wind and began to walk.

He walked across the fields and through the woods and the wind blew hard. He walked through the valleys and into the hills and the wind blew harder still. He came to the foothills and began to climb and the wind still blew harder. Now the foothills were becoming mountains and the wind was very strong. Soon there were no longer any trees and the wind was very, very strong. The wind was so strong that it blew off Gluscabi's moccasins. But he was very stubborn and he kept on walking, leaning into the wind. Now the wind was so strong that it blew off his shirt, but he kept on walking. Now the wind was so strong that it blew off all his clothes and he was naked, but he still kept walking. Now the wind was so strong that it blew off his hair, but Gluscabi still kept walking, facing the wind. The wind was so strong that it blew off his eyebrows, but still he continued to walk. Now the wind was so strong that he could hardly stand. He had to pull himself along by grabbing hold of the boulders. But there, on the peak ahead of him, he could see a great bird slowly flapping its wings. It was Wuchowsen, the wind Eagle.

Gluscabi took a deep breath, "GRANDFATHER!" he shouted.

The Wind Eagle stopped flapping his wings and looked around. "Who calls me Grandfather?" he said.

Gluscabi stood up. "It's me, Grandfather. I just came up here to tell you that you do a very good job making the wind blow."

The Wind Eagle puffed out his chest with pride. "You mean like this?" he said and flapped his wings even harder. The wind which he made was so strong that it lifted Gluscabi right off his feet, and he would have been blown right off the mountain had he not reached out

and grabbed a boulder again.

“GRANDFATHER!” Gluscabi shouted again.

The Wind Eagle stopped flapping his wings. “Yesss?” he said.

Gluscabi stood up and came closer to Wuchowsen. “You do a very good job of making the wind blow, Grandfather, this is so. But it seems to me that you could do an even better job if you were on that peak over there.”

The Wind Eagle looked toward the other peak. “That may be so,” he said, “but how would I get from here to there?”

Gluscabi smiled. “Grandfather,” he said, “I will carry you. Wait here.” Then Gluscabi ran back down the mountain until he came to a big basswood tree. He stripped off the outer bark and from the inner bark he braided a strong carrying strap which he took back up the mountain to the Wind Eagle. “Here, Grandfather,” he said. “Let me wrap this around you so I can lift you more easily.” Then he wrapped the carrying strap so tightly around Wuchowsen that his wings were pulled in to his sides and he could hardly breathe. “Now, Grandfather,” Gluscabi said, picking the Wind Eagle up, “I will take you to a better place.” He began to walk toward the other peak, but as he walked, he came to a place where there was a large crevice, and as he stepped over it he let go of the carrying strap and the Wind Eagle slid down into the crevice, upside down, and was stuck.

“Now,” Gluscabi said, “It is time to hunt some ducks.”

He walked back down the mountain and there was no wind at all. He walked till he came to the tree line and still no wind blew. He walked down to the foothills and down to the hills and the valleys and still there was no wind. He walked through the forests and through the fields, and the wind did not blow at all. He walked and walked until he came back to the lodge by the water, and by now all his hair had gown back. He put on some fine new clothing and a new pair of moccasins and took his bows and arrows and went down to the bay and climbed into his boat to hunt ducks. He paddled out into the water and sang his canoeing song:

*Ki yo wah ji neh
Yo ho hey ho
Ki yo wah ji neh
Ki yo wah ji neh.*

But the air was very hot and still and he began to sweat. The air was so still and hot that it was hard to breathe. Soon the water began to grow dirty and smell bad and there was so much foam on the water he could hardly paddle. He was not pleased at all and he returned

to the shore and went straight to his grandmother's lodge and walked in.

"Grandmother," he said, "What is wrong? The air is hot and still and it is making me sweat and it is hard to breathe. The water is dirty and covered with foam. I cannot hunt ducks at all like this."

Grandmother Woodchuck looked up at Gluscabi. "Gluscabi," she said, "What have you done now?"

And Gluscabi answered just as every child in the world answers when asked that question, "Oh, mother," he said.

"Gluscabi," said Grandmother Woodchuck again, "Tell me what you have done."

Then Gluscabi told her about going to visit the Wind Eagle and what he had done to stop the wind.

"Oh, Gluscabi," said Grandmother Woodchuck, "will you never learn? Tabaldak, the Owner, set the Wind Eagle on that mountain to make the wind because we need the wind. The wind keeps the air cool and clean. The wind brings the clouds which gives us rain to wash the Earth. The wind moves the waters and keeps them fresh and sweet. Without the wind, life will not be good for us, for our children or our children's children."

Gluscabi nodded his head. "Kaamoji, Grandmother," he said. "I understand."

Then he went outside. He faced in the direction from which the wind had once come and began to walk. He walked through the fields and through the forests and the wind did not blow and he felt very hot. He walked through the valleys and up the hills and there was no wind and it was hard for him to breathe. He came to the foothills and began to climb and he was very hot and sweaty indeed. At last he came to the mountain where the Wind Eagle once stood and he went and looked down into the crevice. There was Wuchowsen, the Wind Eagle, wedged upside down.

"Uncle?" Gluscabi called.

The Wind Eagle looked up as best he could. "Who calls me Uncle?" he said.

"It is Gluscabi, Uncle. "I'm up here. But what are you doing down there?"

"Oh, Gluscabi," said the Wind Eagle, "a very ugly naked man with no hair told me that he would take me to the other peak so that I could do a better job of making the wind blow. He tied my wings and picked me up, but as he stepped over this crevice he dropped me

in and I am stuck. And I am not comfortable here at all.”

“Ah, Grandfath . . . er, Uncle, I will get you out.”

Then Gluscabi climbed down into the crevice. He pulled the Wind Eagle free and placed him back on his mountain and untied his wings.

“Uncle,” Gluscabi said, “It is good that the wind should blow sometimes and other times it is good that it should be still. “

The Wind Eagle looked at Gluscabi and then nodded his head. “Grandson,” he said, “I hear what you say.”

So it is that sometimes there is wind and sometimes it is still to this very day. And so the story goes.

Lesson Five: Air



Plans and Procedures

Circle Time Questions

- Why did Gluscabi want to go out in his boat?
- What did grandmother say makes the wind blow?
- Why did Gluscabi go to find the Wind Eagle?
- What happened after Gluscabi tricked the Wind Eagle?
- How did Gluscabi feel when he went back home to hunt ducks?
- What happened after there was no more wind?
- Why is wind helpful?
- What are some ways that wind might be harmful?
- What does wind sound like?
- What does wind feel like?
- What does wind look like?

Mother Earth and Creation Mural

Children will add to the creation mural using items collected on a nature walk. Sticks, grass, dirt, seeds, flowers, sand, etc. can be glued onto the mural as desired by the children.

Nature Walk

Give each child a small bag and take them outside for a short neighborhood walk. Ask the children to figure out which way the wind is blowing from. Ask the children to look around and identify some of the things that are being moved by the wind. Make a list of the items for future circle time discussions. If possible, take some small samples of the natural items that the wind is blowing, such as dirt, seed, sticks, flowers, grass, or weeds. These items will be used in the creation mural. This walk would also be an ideal time to take kites along for the children to witness how the wind can carry things up into the air.

Music and Movement

Wind is moving air. Explaining wind to young children is difficult. You can tell you child that wind is air. We can't see air, but it is all around us – above us, behind us, over us. Tell child that even though we can't see air, we can see what the air does and how the air feels. Give each child a set of dancing ribbons (or tie ribbons on their wrists) and take them outdoors. Bring along a tape player with music loud enough for all the children to dance to.

Vocabulary

| | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|
| White | - | ska |
| Wind | - | tate |
| Pollution | - | anablu (dirty) |
| Five | - | zaptan |
| Breathe | - | niya |
| Eagle | - | wanbli |



NOTES FOR LESSON PLANNING:

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