

LESSON SEVEN

ANIMALS



Objective/Goal:

To instill in children an understanding of the interconnectedness of all of our relatives - human, animal, plants, trees.

Setting the stage for learning

Play soothing music as the children are gathered for Circle Time. Tell an animal story from your region. Assess areas for items to add for extended play. Possible materials include animal encyclopedias, puppets, stuffed and plastic animals, tapes with animal sounds.

Storytelling

An animal story from the Alaskan region will be used as an example for this lesson. Source: Bruchac, Joseph & Caduto, Michael. "Salmon Boy" Native American Animal Stories. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1992. Used with permission from Keepers of the Earth by Michael J. Caduto. (c) 1988. Fulcrum Publishing, Inc., Golden, Colorado. All rights reserved.

"Salmon Boy"

Long ago, among the Haida people, there was a boy who showed no respect for the salmon. Though the salmon meant life for the people, he was not respectful of the one his people called Swimmer. His parents told him to show gratitude and behave properly, but he did not listen. When fishing he would step on the bodies of the salmon that were caught and after eating he carelessly threw the bones of the fish into the bushes. Others warned him that the spirits of the salmon were not pleased by such behavior, but he did not listen.

One day, his mother served him a meal of salmon. He looked at it with disgust. "This is moldy," he said, though the meat was good. He threw it upon the ground. Then he went down the river to swim with the other children. However, as he was swimming, a current caught him and pulled him away from the others. It swept him into the deepest water and he could not swim strongly enough to escape from it. He sank into the river and drowned.

There, deep in the river, the Salmon People took him with them. They were returning back to the ocean without their bodies. They had left their bodies behind for the humans and the animal people to use as food. The boy went with them, for he now belonged to the salmon.

When they reached their home in the ocean, they looked just like human beings. Their village there in the ocean looked much like his own home and he could hear the sound of children playing in the stream which flowed behind the village. Now the Salmon People began to teach him. He was hungry and they told him to go to the stream and catch one of their children, who were salmon swimming in the stream. However, he was told, he must be respectful and after eating return all of the bones and everything he did not intend to eat into the water. Then, he was told, their child would be able to come back to life. But if the bones were not returned to the water, that salmon child could not come back.

He did as he was told, but one day after he had eaten, when it came time for the children to come up to the village from the stream, he heard one of them crying. He went to see what was wrong. The child was limping because one of its feet was gone. Then the boy realized he had not thrown all of the fins back into the stream. He quickly found the one fin he had missed, threw it in and the child was healed.

After he had spent the winter with the Salmon People, it again was spring and time for them to return to the rivers. The boy swam with them, for he belonged to the Salmon People now. When they swam past his village, his own mother caught him in her net. When she pulled him from the water, even though he was in the shape of a salmon, she saw the cop-

per necklace he was wearing. It was the same necklace she had given her son. She carried Salmon Boy carefully back home. She spoke to him and held him and gradually he began to shed his salmon skin. First his head emerged. Then, after eight days, he shed all of the skin and was a human again.

Salmon Boy taught the people all of the things he had learned. He was a healer now and helped them when they were sick.

“I cannot stay with you long,” he said, “You must remember what I teach you.”

He remained with the people until the time came when the old salmon who had gone upstream and not been caught by the humans or the animal people came drifting back down toward the sea. As Salmon Boy stood by the water, he saw a huge old salmon floating down toward him. It was so worn by its journey that he could see through its sides. He recognized it as his own soul and he thrust his spear into it. As soon as he did so, he died.

Then the people of the village did as he had told them to do. They placed his body into the river. It circled four times and then sank; going back to his home in the ocean, back to the Salmon People.

Lesson Seven: Animals

Plans and Procedures

Circle Time Questions

- What is Salmon?
- What other kinds of fish are there?
- Why did Salmon Boy have to leave his family to live with the salmon?
- What did Salmon Boy teach his people?
- What kinds of animals live in your state?
- What kinds of animals live in different parts of the world?
- What kinds of animals do people use for food?
- What kinds of animals do people keep for pets?
- What do animals need to live and grow?
- Where do animals live?
- Where do fish live?
- What is your favorite kind of animal and why?
- Why should we treat animals with respect?

Mother Earth and Creation Mural

Using paper plates help each child make a mask representing an animal of his/her choice. The children can decorate their masks with markers, crayons, yarn, fake fur, etc. The teachers can cut eye and mouth holes and add ties to the sides of the paper plates. The children will take a few minutes to explain their animal and talk about what type of food it eats, where it lives, etc. Help the children add their animal masks to the mural as part of the creation of animals.

Nature Walk

Take the children to a place of natural wonder such as a park. Ask the children to sit in a circle time group and lead a discussion about the natural elements that have been studied during the school year. How is creation, mother earth, fire, water, air, plants and animals all connected. What do people, plants, and animals all need to survive? Review previous discoveries and answer any new questions that may arise. Children may also be able to take a field trip to a pet store to see the different kinds of animals.

Music and Movement

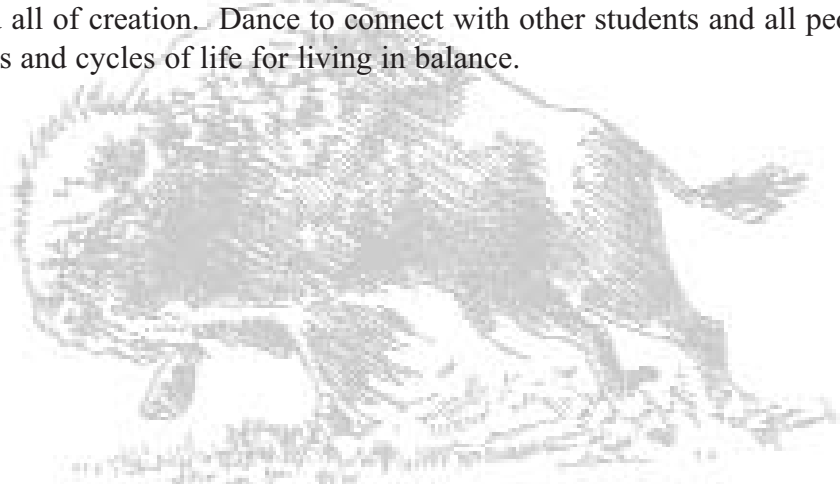
Visualize the round dance as a symbol of unity that has no beginning or end, or as the circle and cycles of nature along with the circle of giving/receiving, and its importance to living in balance and the interconnectedness among people all around the world.

Most Indian dances are performed in a circle or spiral (two of the essential shapes found among plants). Dance helps us to celebrate the unity and interconnectedness of all creation. Plants are the unifying force of life, the link between the sun's energy and all of life on earth. Many dances also incorporate elements of the four directions or four winds.

Perform a round dance to celebrate the unity of all things and to give thanks for all the gifts we receive from Grandmother Earth and all of creation. Dance to connect with other students and all people in general and to honor the circles and cycles of life for living in balance.

Vocabulary

Orange	-	zisa
Thankful	-	wopila
Fish	-	Hogan
Eight	-	saglogan
Grow	-	icaga
Dog	-	sunka



NOTES FOR LESSON PLANNING: