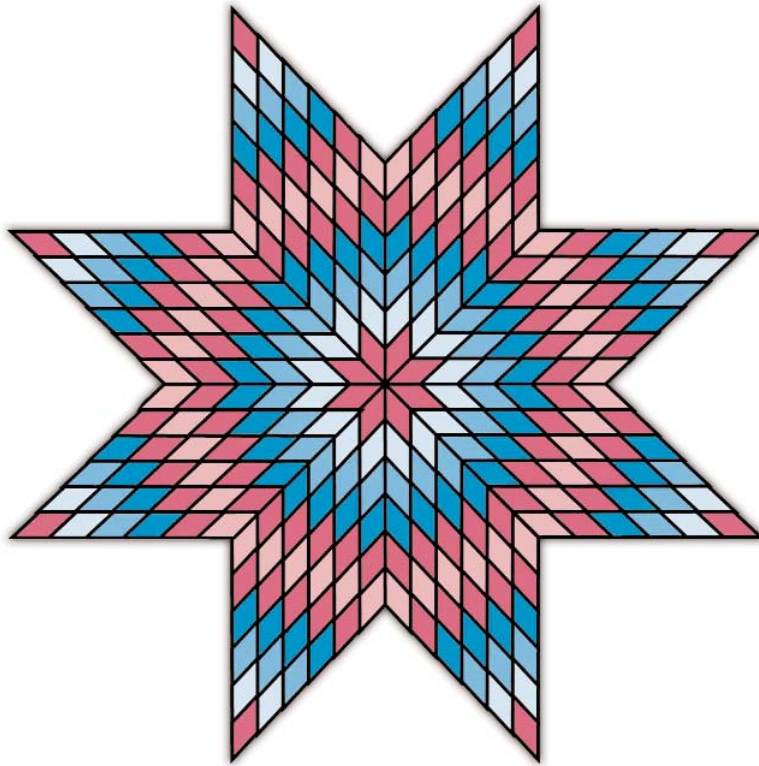


LESSON EIGHT

STARS



Objective/Goal:

Children will gain an understanding about the human family's star origins and the interconnectedness with the Star Nation. They will also learn that the sun is a star. Discussion and questions will focus on tribal star knowledge and different names of constellations.

Setting the stage for learning

Play soothing music as the children are gathered for Circle Time. Tell a regional tribal star story. Extend learning into classroom areas by adding materials such as books about the stars and planets, star shaped stencils, flashlights.

Storytelling

A star story from the Great Plains will be as an example for this lesson. Source: Leola One Feather, Oglala Lakota, June 2003.

Lakota Star Story

Long ago, two Lakota maidens were out one night looking at the stars. One young woman said, "See that big beautiful star, I wish I would marry it." The other woman said the same about another star. Suddenly, they are transported into the star world, and then these two stars become their husbands. The wives become pregnant. They are told this star world is theirs but also warned not to dig any wild turnips.

Eventually one of them does and as she pulls out the turnip a hole opens in the star world. She is able to look down and see the earth and even her own village. She becomes homesick and decides to return to earth. She braids more and more turnips to make a rope and lets herself down through the hole. But the braid doesn't reach the earth and she falls. The crash kills her but her baby is born. The baby is raised by a meadowlark. Since meadowlarks speak Lakota, the baby, now named "Fallen Star," grows up speaking it too.

Fallen Star matures rapidly, in days rather than years. He is taller than normal and a light emanates from him. The meadowlark grows old and takes him to a Lakota band where he settles for awhile.

Fallen Star, the protector, the bringer of light and higher consciousness, travels from one Lakota band to another and everywhere he is recognized, expected and revered.

One year a band of Lakota is camped near Harney Peak in the Black Hills. Every day a red eagle swoops down and steals a girl-child and carries her to the mountaintop and kills her. The men try to shoot the red eagle but fail. They pray for Fallen Star and after seven days (and after seven little girls have been killed) he arrives. He shoots the red eagle and places the spirits of the seven girls in the sky as a constellation – Pleiades; in Lakota it is called Wicincila Sakowin, the Seven Little Girls.

At another time while a band is camped near the site of Devil's Tower, a brother and a sister are playing and are chased by some bears. A voice directs them to a knoll. The bears, however, surround the children and close in. Fallen Star (as a voice of power) commands the earth to rise up out of reach of the bears, who claw at the hill as it lifts. The clawed hill becomes Devil's Tower. Later an Eagle carries the children to safety, back on Mother Earth.

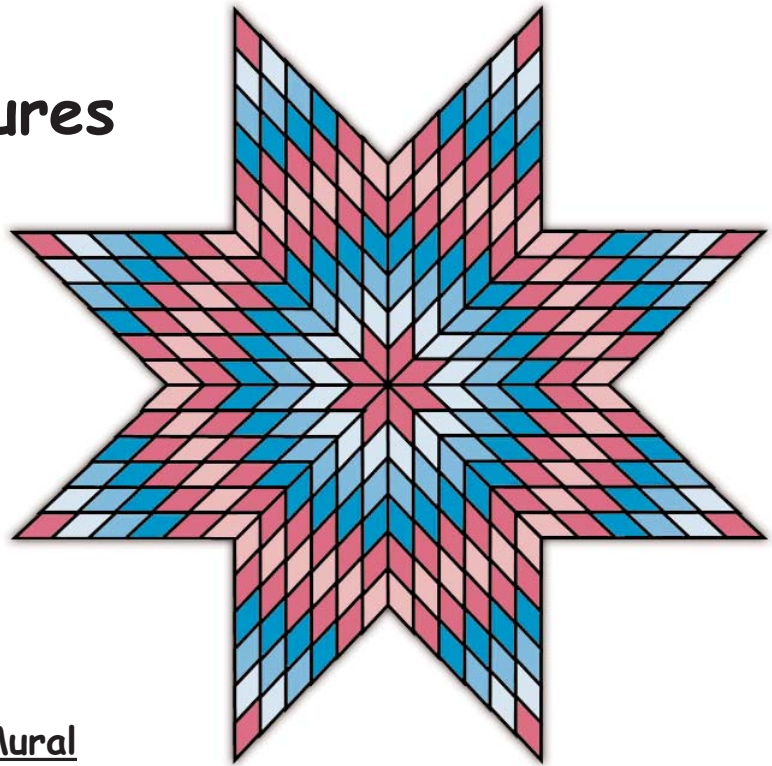
Lesson Eight

Stars

Plans and Procedures

Circle Time Questions

- What are stars?
- Why do stars shine so bright at night?
- Do you see any shapes in the stars?
- How are we related to the stars?
- Is the sun a star?
- What are falling stars?
- When can you see stars?



Mother Earth and Creation Mural

Provide children with different sized star shaped stencils for tracing. Ask children to trace and cut out many star shapes. Give the children white or silver glitter and glue to decorate their stars. As teacher tells star stories they will make the form of the constellation while holding their stars. This activity will promote a physical memory of the shapes and location of the different characters in the star story and help them realize their connection to what they see in the night sky. Hang all of the stars made by the children on the mural's night sky (Dark blue or black paper behind the stars to represent the night sky). Don't forget to hang the moon up as well.

Nature Walk

If possible, take children to a local museum where the night sky is represented. Ask the children to make believe that the trip is happening at night and the stars are real. Using the circle time questions above lead a group discussion on stars. If a visit to a museum is not possible a small room or closet can be decorated to resemble the night sky. Simply cut open large black garbage bags and tape on the walls. Stars can be made and hung or glow in the dark stars can be used. Children will be using their imaginations and that means anything can happen.

Music and Movement

Teach children the song “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star. Ask the children to help you make up a dance to go with the song. Encourage participation from all of the children. Invite an audience to come watch the children perform.

Vocabulary

Yellow	-	zi
To fall	-	hinhpaya
Star	-	wicahpi
Seven	-	sakowin
Turnip	-	tinpsila
Brave	-	Ohitika
Bear	-	mato



NOTES FOR LESSON PLANNING: