



Looking Inward: How Do We Impact the World Around Us?

Organization:

Title: How Do We Impact the World Around Us?

Summary: Students explore the principles of the Honorable Harvest through an in-class activity.

Inquiry Question: Inquiry Question 5: How can Humans Interact with Plants in a Respectful and Sustainable Manner that Promotes Biodiversity?

Duration: 1 - 1.5 hours

Learning Environment: Indoor or Outdoor Classroom

Season: All

Materials:

- 6-10 different kinds of dried beans (different sizes preferred, can be purchased at local Bulk Barn)
- One big basket or bowl that can be passed around
- Big spoon (ex. Soup spoon)
- Small bowls or cups for each participant
- *The Honorable Harvest* –Chapter found on pgs. 175-200 of Robin Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* can be reviewed by teachers to better understand this activity. (Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants*. Milkweed Editions.)

Curriculum Links:

Science and Technology: A3.3, B1.2, B1.3, B2.1, B2.5, B2.7, B2.8

Geography: B3.4

Meta Data:

Content Type: Activity

Bundle: Gifts of the Earth and IK

Theme: Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Biodiversity Crisis,

Subject Area: Biology, Environmental Education, Science

Curriculum Focus: 7

A Knowledge Keeper or community member should be present.

Instructions:

Students take part in an activity that demonstrates the concepts of the Honorable Harvest. The Honorable Harvest is a mindful way of harvesting and using gifts from the land. The actions of the Honorable Harvest stem from a collection of Indigenous principles and practices of living in a good way, in reciprocity with the land (Kimmerer, 2013). Kimmerer, in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants*, writes:



"They are rules of sorts that govern our taking, shape our relationships with the natural world, and rein our tendency to consume — that the world might be as rich for the seventh generation as it is for our own. The details are highly specific to different cultures and ecosystems, but the fundamental principles are nearly universal among peoples who live close to the land. The guidelines for the Honorable Harvest are not written down, or even consistently spoken of as whole—they are reinforced in small acts of daily life. But if you were to list them, they might look something like this:

Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them.

Introduce yourself. Be accountable as the one who comes asking for life.

Ask permission before taking. Abide by the answer.

Never take the first. Never take the last.

Take only what you need.

Take only that which is given.

Never take more than half. Leave some for others.

Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.

Use it respectfully. Never waste what you have taken.

Share.

Give thanks for what you have been given.

Give a gift, in reciprocity for what you have taken.

Sustain the ones who sustain you and the earth will last forever." (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 180)

Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants*. Milkweed Editions.

1. To begin the teacher will prepare a large bowl that has a mixture of dried peas and beans (6-10 different types with varying amounts). The peas and beans represent the plants and animal food sources in the ecosystem. Students are given a cup to place their beans into. This represents the plants and animals that the person takes to use as food/medicines. They will also need a notebook to record what they collect.

2. The students are to sit in a circle and the large bowl will be passed around the circle to each student. When the bowl arrives at them, they will take a single scoop from the bowl using a wooden spoon and put the items into their cup (except for rounds 1 and 7) and take a scoop from their cup and put it back in the bowl. Students consider what strategies/decisions they made when the bowl arrived at them. At the end of each round, they will record on their paper what they collected each round and the strategies they used when deciding what to scoop.



During the first time around, the student does not take from the bowl, but can simply look at what is within it and plan what they will take next round (to symbolize that we don't take the first you find).

At the end of Round 2, students are to share with the class what strategies they use (to learn from each other).

3. Continue to pass the bowl around the circle for another round.

4. Before Round 4, one of the items gets "spoiled" and they are all taken away (teacher takes away all of one type from the bowl).

5. Before Round 5, a handful of a new bean gets added to the bowl (to symbolize something that grows later in the season).

6. On round 7, again they don't take anything and observe how the bowl (or ecosystem) changed from the beginning. As a class, they can tally what types of beans are remaining in the large bowl and what is in their individual cups.

7. Students then reflect on what is in the bowl and what they have within their cup. Are there some beans in the bowl that no one has in their cup? Are there beans in their cups that are no longer in the bowl? What are the implications of that? Relate to what seeds need to grow and how people are similar.

8. Teacher gives an example of a plant (sweetgrass, wild leek, rhubarb, etc.) and why the concept of the Honourable Harvest is especially important for the survival of that plant and the entire ecosystem.

Please note that the learning represented in these activities reflects Big Idea C. in the Indigenous Knowledge Learning Bundle: "Reciprocity, Interdependence, and Holism are at the Heart of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being". To help your students learn more about these foundational concepts check out the Learning Activities titled: *Holism*, *The Honourable Harvest*, and *Our Responsibilities* found in the *Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being with the Natural World* Learning Bundle (Grades 7-10).