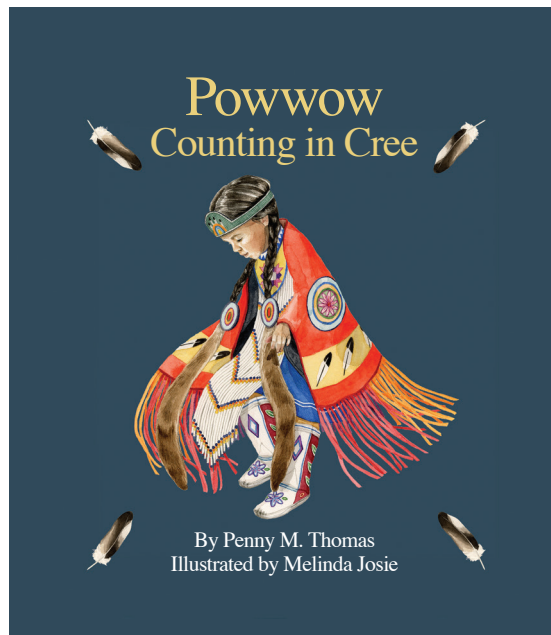


Teacher's Guide

for
Powwow Counting in Cree

by Katherena Vermette



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Portage & Main Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Province of Manitoba through the Department of Culture, Heritage & Tourism and the Manitoba Book Publishing Tax Credit and the Government of Canada through the Canada book fund (CBF) for our publishing activities.

The book Powwow Counting in Cree is published by HighWater Press, and imprint of Portage & Main Press

Digital ISBN 978-1-55379-510-0

Print ISBN 978-1-55379-508-7



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ILLUSTRATION-ACTIVITY CORRELATION

ILLUSTRATION	ACTIVITY
Eagle feather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Special Topic: Eagles – Activating Activity, Activity 1: Counting Feathers; Activity 2: Feathers I; Activity 3: Feathers II (pages 14–17).
Hair/Braiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas for Discussion: The importance of hair in Aboriginal and, specifically, Cree culture; why all nations and tribes have different views about hair. In the past, hair style distinguished the different nations and tribes. Hair is a source of pride among the Cree. At the powwow, braided hair shows this pride. Hair also keeps one safe; therefore, to allow someone to braid another's hair is a sign of trust. There are also many practical reasons for wearing braids. What are they?
Women/Regalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Exploring Cree Language – Activity 2: Shape Identification (pages 6–7). See Exploring the Powwow – Activity 1: Powwow Dances (pages 9–10). Ideas for Discussion: Different types of regalia; How women are respected and considered sacred because of their ability to give life.
Eagles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Special Topic: Eagles – Activity 4: Eagles (pages 16–18).
Moccasins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idea for Discussion: How different nations can be identified by the type of moccasins worn, the beading, and other decorative elements.
Fire/Fire keepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idea for Discussion: The purposes of fire at the powwow (for example, fire warms the drums, has ceremonial uses, provides warmth as night approaches)
Seven sacred teachings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Special Topic: The Seven Sacred Teachings – Activating Activity (pages 19–20).
Drums/Drummers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Exploring the Powwow – Activating Activity (pages 8–9).
Dances/Dancers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Exploring the Powwow – Activating Activity; Activity 1: Powwow Dances (pages 8–10). Idea for Discussion: The role of young children and their importance in Cree culture
Eagle staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Special Topic: Eagles – Activity 5: Eagle Staff (page 18).

Exploring Cree Language

Background Information

Cree is an Algonquian language spoken by Cree people from Labrador and northern Quebec through central Manitoba to northern Alberta (see map, page 3). The current population of Cree-language speakers is somewhere around 115,000. It is one of the most widely spoken Indigenous languages in Canada and includes several regional dialects.

Language acquisition often begins with simple substitution. Learning the Cree words for the numbers 1–10 is an easy place to start. The Cree words can easily be compared to their counterparts in your own language. Learning how to count to 10 in Cree is also a good segue to activities that involve simple numbers.

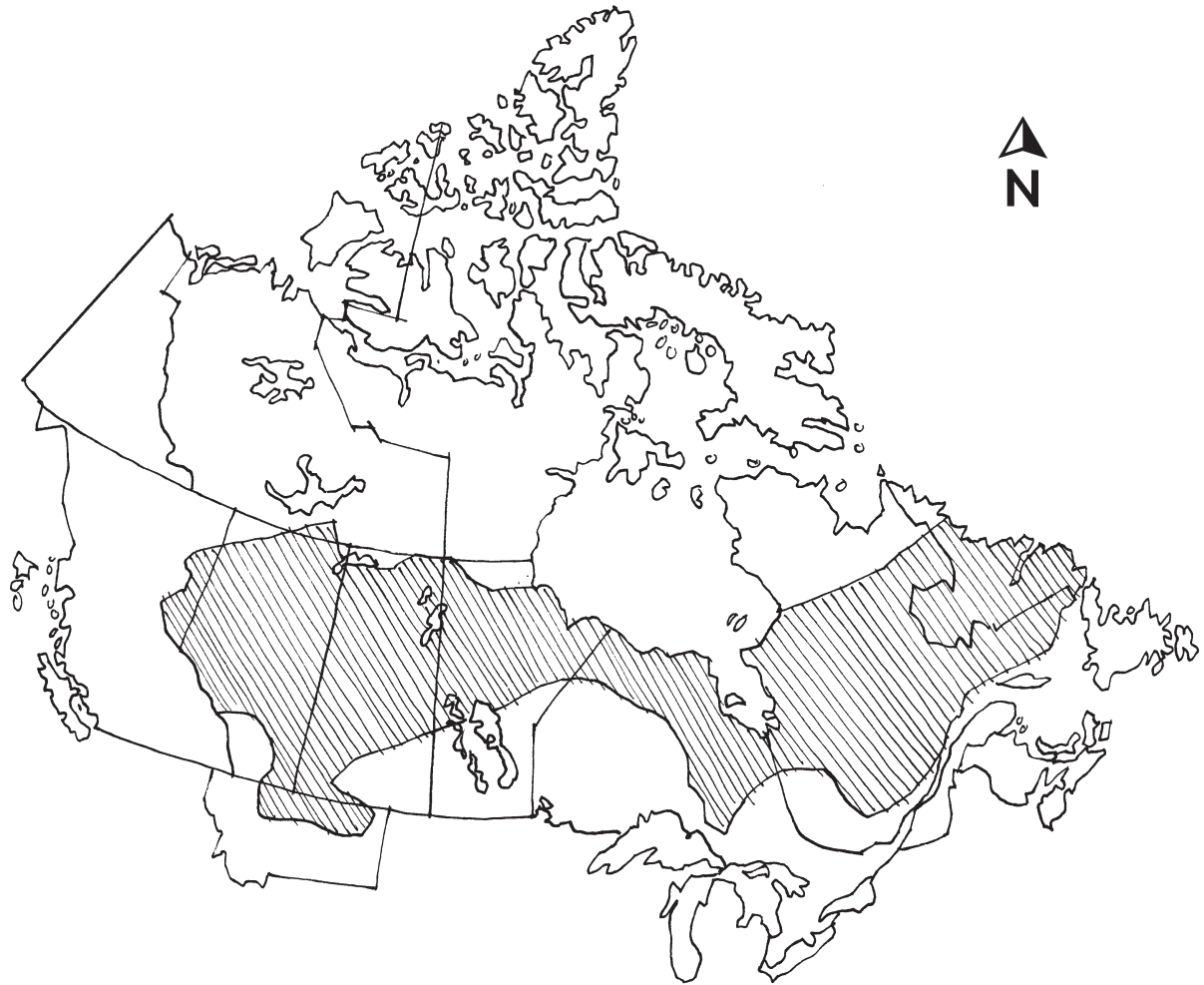
Note: Cree, like any language, can be difficult for novice speakers to learn. It is very different from English in construction and pronunciation. The best way to learn any language is to have a fluent speaker visit your classroom and walk you and your students through the basics. If that is not possible, refer to online and print resources (many cited in this guide) to help you.

The following resources are useful:


- Pronunciation guide for counting from one to ten in Cree that is found on the last page of the book, *Powwow Counting in Cree*, by Penny M. Thomas
- Online pronunciation guide for the Cree language: <www.native-languages.org/cree_guide.htm>
- Online Cree dictionary (including a syllabics converter): <www.creedictionary.com/search/>

Cree words can also be represented by syllabics. Syllabics are defined as a written character that represents a syllable, and are often used with languages that are traditionally oral in nature, such as Cree.

Areas of Cree-Speaking Populations



Legend

 Cree

4 Powwow Counting in Cree

These Cree* words (the numbers 1–10) are represented as follows:

Number	Cree Word	Syllabics
One	Peyak	ᐅᐱᐱ
Two	Niso	ᐅᐱ
Three	Nisto	ᐅᐱᐱ
Four	Newo	ᐅᐱᐱ
Five	Niyanan	ᐅᐱᐱᐱᐱ
Six	Nikotwa'sik	ᐅᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
Seven	Tepakohp	ᐅᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
Eight	Enanew	ᐅᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
Nine	Kekac Mitataht	ᐅᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
Ten	Mitatahtmeh	ᐅᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ

Another picture book that shows the Cree language, including syllabics, is *A First Counting Book in Swampy Cree and English*, Lori Hart, Bookmates, 2008.

Note: The Swampy Cree dialect is different from the Cree dialect that is represented in *Powwow Counting in Cree*. As a result, some of the spellings and pronunciations are different in Lori Hart's book.

* The syllabics are from the Eastern Cree (EC) dialect. Check the online Cree dictionary for the words and syllabics spoken in your region.

Activity 1 (Language Arts): Counting to 10

Supplies Needed

- chart paper or whiteboard
- marker
- copy of *Powwow Counting in Cree*

Action

1. On chart paper or whiteboard, create a two-column chart. In the left column, write the numbers from one to ten; in the right column, transcribe the corresponding Cree words (see chart, page 4). Display for the students.
2. Tell students that you are going to read aloud *Powwow Counting in Cree*, a book that will introduce them to Cree, a language that they may not know. They will learn the numbers from one to ten in Cree.
3. Read the book, *Powwow Counting in Cree*, to the students.
4. Reread the book, pointing to the words on the chart as you read. Have students join in as you point to the words. Have students practise pronouncing the words in Cree. They can also practise distinguishing one word from another.
5. Give students opportunities to practise using the words out of context and sequence.

Extend the Learning

Have students find other languages in which to count to 10. How many languages can your students collect? Have students, in groups or individually, prepare posters of the numbers 1–10 in other languages. Display the posters around the classroom.

Optional Activity (Mathematics): Numeric Identification

In the book, the numbers 1–10 are written in Cree. Discuss with students that there are several ways to show numbers: by dots, by numerals, or by English words, for example.

Supplies Needed

- several large squares of thick paper or cardstock (old file folders make great squares of cardstock)
- marker
- string (enough to extend across the classroom and hang 60 number cards on)
- clothespins

Action

Note: Prior to this activity, make three sets of number cards, numbered 1 to 10, by variation – for example: numerals, dots, lines. In addition, make three sets of cards for each number that show the number written in English, in Cree, and in syllabics (see chart, page 4); put these sets of cards aside until step 2.

1. Have students group the first three variations by number (for example, the three cards that represent the number 5 together).
2. Have the students group the second set of cards according to number and add to the first set. (Each number will now be represented by six cards.)
3. As a class, pin the groupings together on the string.

Extend the Learning

As a class, add other languages to the groupings. Attach the cards in rows to compare and contrast.

Activity 2 (Mathematics): Shape Identification

There are several shapes depicted in the book's illustrations. For example, there are triangles in the women's regalia, circles in the drums and hoops, and squares in the beading designs.

Note: Before beginning this activity, explain that the word *regalia* refers to decorations, insignia, or ceremonial clothes that are worn during special occasions.

Supplies Needed

- various shapes for visual reference; for example: circles, squares, triangles, diamonds, rectangles (these can be made and cut out from construction paper, felt, foam, or just drawn on chart paper or whiteboard)
- chart paper or whiteboard and marker (optional)
- drawing paper
- coloured pencils or crayons
- copy of *Powwow Counting in Cree*

Action

1. As a class, look at the images on the book's cover and throughout the book. Discuss the various shapes. Ask:
 - Are some shapes more common than other shapes?
2. In groups or individually, have students draw their own powwow images, using at least three of the geometric shapes found in the book.
3. Display the drawings around the classroom.

Extend the Learning

Have students identify how many of each shape they have included in their drawings. In groups, they can then compare what they found with others in their group.

Exploring the Powwow

Background Information

A powwow is a traditional gathering of people, often from other tribal groups or from far away, and involves dancing, singing, and ceremony. For example, Winnipeg's Manito Ahbee gathering includes dancers from around the world. Some powwows are only for neighbouring communities and serve as annual gatherings. Several different Indigenous cultures throughout Turtle Island (North America), including the Cree, participate in powwows. Many different dances, songs, and types of music are associated with powwows, and powwows vary according to season, reason for the event, location, and cultural group. Dancers wear elaborate and intricately designed regalia. Regalia differ according to dance, and regalia symbols represent the individual dancer's taste, community, clan, and family.

Types of powwow dances include: Men's Traditional, Women's Traditional, Men's Fancy, Fancy Shawl (female), Jingle Dress (women's dance), Grass (male), and Hoop (both genders but traditionally a male dance). These dances vary according to regional practice and availability of dancers. Dancers at a powwow often compete with one another for the best dance in each category.

Note: The best learning happens when powwow dancers and singers can visit your classroom and discuss their traditions and practices. There are several dancers, singers, and drummers who connect regularly to schools and school divisions for class visits. Contact an Indigenous organization or friendship centre in your community or the Aboriginal education consultant affiliated with your school district for information. If this is not possible, there is a plethora of online and library resources available. One of the best ways to get a fuller idea about the dances and songs is a quick online video search. Several picture books have also been published recently.

Activating Activity

Supplies Needed

- chart paper or whiteboard
- marker
- copy of *Powwow Counting in Cree*

Action

1. As a class, read *Powwow Counting in Cree*. Ask students:
 - Besides numbers, what kinds of things do you see in the illustrations in this book?
 - Does anyone know what a powwow is?
2. On chart paper or whiteboard, list all the answers that students come up with.
3. Tell students that each picture in the book relates to the powwow celebration. Explain that they will be learning about the powwow from this book and from other resources.
4. Start with a conversation about the different dances and regalia represented in the book. Students who are not Indigenous may have celebrations in their own culture that will help them relate to this gathering, dancing, and singing.
5. Discuss with students that every powwow begins with a "Grand Entry" when all dancers come in and circle the big drum. The big drum is regarded as the spirit and heart of the powwow and must be treated with utmost respect. The dancers first dance around the drum to acknowledge it and to show their respect. The dances, as outlined on page 8 in Background Information, then begin. Discuss these different dances with students.
6. Divide the class into three groups. Assign one aspect of the powwow – dance, music, regalia – to each group to research.
7. After students have collected and discussed the information assigned to their groups, ask the students in each group to share the group's findings with the rest of the class.

Following are some ideas for resources that students can use:

- Powwow Dancer Book set, Native Reflections, 2012. (Books 1–7: *Jingle, Women's Traditional, Men's Traditional, Grass, Fancy Shawl, Men's Fancy, and Hoop*)
- School library or YouTube videos. Search by specific dance or type in "powwow music" to find examples.
- *My First Powwow*, Native Reflections, 2011.

Activity 1 (Social Studies): Powwow Dances

Note: Prior to this activity, search your library or YouTube for specific dances or type in "powwow music" to find big drum and hand drum music.

Supplies Needed

- access to library and/or Internet
- copy of *Powwow Counting in Cree*

Action

1. Show students images and/or videos of the different dances. Have students compare and contrast the dances. Ask:
 - How are these dances similar to one another? How are they different from one another?
2. Have students focus on the dancers' regalia, particularly on the different regalia worn by each dancer. Ask:
 - What does the regalia tell you about the dancer?

Extend the Learning

Connect the powwow to other cultures. Ask students:

- What are some traditional dances from other parts of the world? From your own culture?

Activity 2 (ELA): Telling Stories

Supplies Needed

- dress-up clothes for dramatic play (younger students)
- paper
- pencils
- pencil crayons for colouring (older students)
- copy of *Powwow Counting in Cree*

Note: Other age-appropriate books about the powwow are cited on page 9.

Action

Younger students:

1. Explain to students that they are going to make up their own stories. Divide the class into groups, and have the groups look at the images in the book and pick one picture as a starting point for creating a story.
2. Have students create stories using dramatic play or oral stories. Give them time to practise basic story sequencing, such as beginning, middle, and end. Encourage students to use the costumes for their dramatic plays.

Older students:

1. Explain to students that they are going to make up their own stories. Have the students, individually or in pairs, look at the images in the book and pick one picture as a starting point for creating a story.
2. Have students look at various elements of story, such as character, setting, and plot. They can then write short powwow stories. Encourage students to include drawings with their stories.

Exploring Cree Culture

Background Information

The Cree, one of the largest Indigenous groups in North America, inhabit territory that extends from northern Quebec and Labrador through central Manitoba to northern Alberta (see map, page 3). Just as traditions and language of other cultures (such as English and Italian) vary throughout the world, so too do Cree traditions and language vary between the regions.

Note: Learning about any culture can be a difficult and large-scale endeavour. With younger students, the best practice is to pick one or two elements with which to go into depth. In this guide, we have chosen maps and demographics. With older students, you may want to assign groups of students to research additional elements – such as lifestyle (food, shelter, material culture) and governance – as well as a variety of communities.

Activating Activity

Supplies Needed

- access to Internet
- map from page 3

Action

1. As a class, read about and discuss Cree culture. Go to: <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/cree/>>.
2. Take students on a virtual tour of the Cree Cultural Institute and learn more about the culture of the James Bay Cree. Go to: <<http://www.creeculturalinstitute.ca/en>>. Although this site focuses on one northern group of Cree, the information provided gives a good idea about Cree culture as a whole.

Activity 1 (Social Studies): Fun with Maps

Note: Penny Thomas, the author of *Powwow Counting in Cree*, is from Fisher River, Manitoba. Prior to this activity, contact the community of Fisher River to get more information and a community profile and/or go to the community website at: <<http://www.fisherriver.com/>>.

Supplies Needed

- maps (one of Manitoba and one of Canada)
- calculators
- paper and pencils
- access to Internet
- community information (your community and Fisher River)

Action

As a class, highlight community statistics and profile, research further information. Learn how far Fisher River is from where you are. Compare Fisher River to your community in terms of population, weather, housing, and other elements of interest as identified by you and your students.

Special Topic: Eagles

Background Information

Eagles are special and sacred animals in Cree culture. The eagle is said to embody the sacred teaching of love (see *The Seven Sacred Teachings*, page 19). Eagle feathers are regarded as special objects and are given as special gifts to honour a ceremony or milestone such as a graduation.

Note: For anything related to a sacred teaching, the best practice is to engage a traditional knowledge keeper or Elder to share this teaching with your students. Knowledge keepers vary in their traditions, but often their teachings are communicated orally and cannot be written down, so it is best to be shared in person.

Activating Activity

Supplies Needed

- variety of feathers
- access to Internet
- copy of *Powwow Counting in Cree*

Action

1. Show students the feathers. Explain that among the Cree, the feather is said to represent the individual, and the way the feather is treated is how the person treats himself or herself.
2. As a class, look again at the images in *Powwow Counting in Cree*. Discuss the incidence of the eagle, the eagle feather, and eagle staff in the book. Explain that eagle feathers are sacred objects in Cree culture. When an eagle feather is given as a gift, it is a gift of honour. Gifted feathers are often brushed and kept very clean. The eagle feather has to be treated with respect and not mishandled or left on the floor.
3. As a class, watch an eagle feather teaching. Go to: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=flDnZmWyTaE>.

Activity 1 (Mathematics): Counting Feathers

Supplies Needed

- muffin tins or other containers with multiple slots for sorting
- various feathers of different colours or patterns (can be fabricated feathers or real ones; smaller is better for this activity)
- simple bird guides of North America
- access to Internet

Note: An assortment of coloured feathers can be purchased from a craft store or dollar store.

Action

Younger students:

1. Show students the video of the song “Counting Feathers” by Al Simmons. Go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRk7IGCBEoc>.
2. Show students several feathers of different colours and patterns. Have students count the feathers and then sort them by colour, size, or pattern.
3. Have students place the feathers in containers, such as muffin tins, according to sorting rule(s).

Older students:

1. Show students the video of the song “Counting Feathers” by Al Simmons. Go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRk7IGCBEoc>.
2. Show students several feathers of different colours and patterns. Have the students explore multiplication and division with the feathers – for example, 3 red feathers (spread across) and 2 black feathers (spread down) represents 3×2 .

Activity 2 (Science): Feathers I

Feathers are so light and fun to play with. Tell students you are going to hold feather races!

Supplies Needed

- various feathers (real, not manufactured. You will need about 5–6 feathers, all about the same size)

Action

1. Divide the class into teams, and give a feather to each team.
2. Have the first member of each team drop the feather from a few metres off the ground.
3. When the feather lands on the floor, have the next team member pick up the feather and drop it from the same height as before.
4. When the feather lands on the ground, have the next team member pick it up.
5. Repeat until all members of the team have dropped the feather and watched it land on the floor.
6. Declare a winning feather.

Activity 3 (Science): Feathers II

Supplies Needed

- labelled diagram of a feather (see page 17)

Action

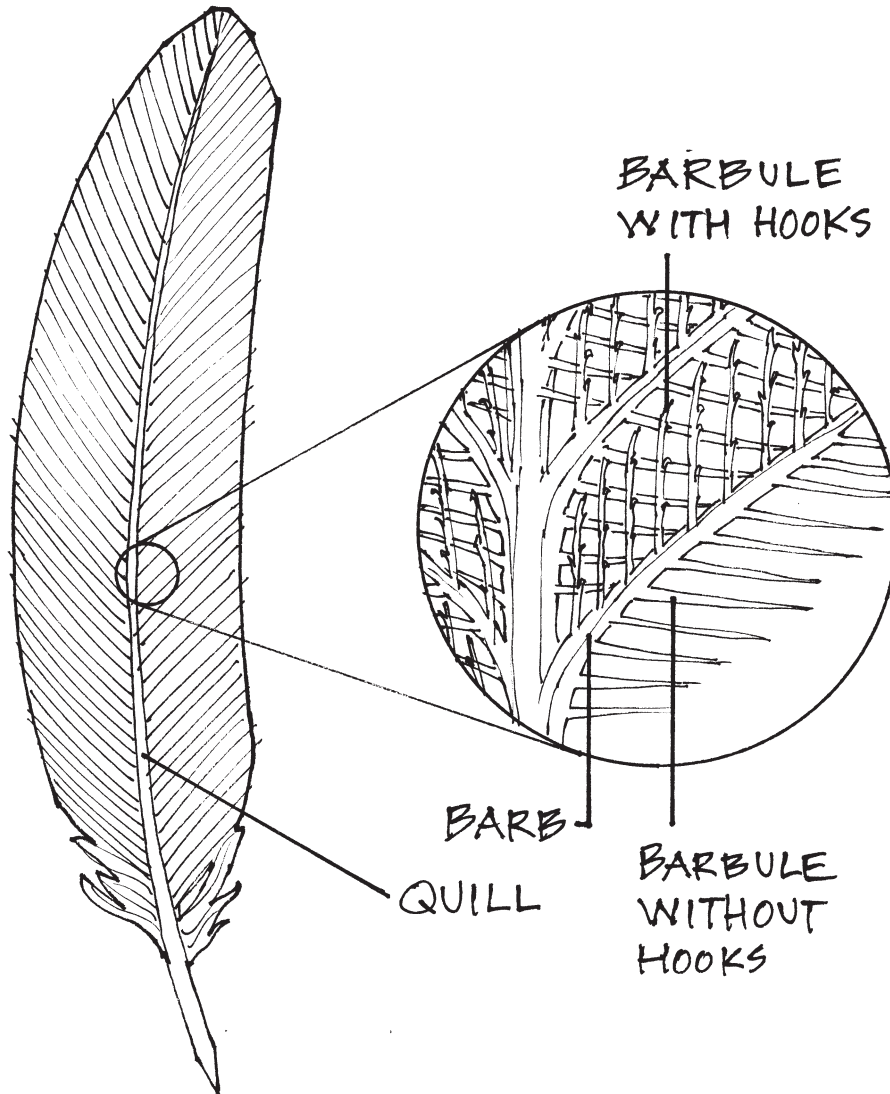
1. Ask students: Did you know the fibres in an eagle feather are called *barbs* and the stem in the middle is called a *quill*?
2. Show students the diagram of a feather. Ask:
 - How different is a feather from human hair?
 - In what other ways are birds different from humans?

Activity 4 (Science): Eagles

Two kinds of eagles are often discussed in Cree stories – golden eagle and bald eagle. Prior to this activity, print out visuals of the golden eagle and the bald eagle (golden eagle: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/84/Aquila_chrysaetos_Flickr.jpeg>; bald eagle: <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:2010-bald-eagle-kodiak.jpg>>).

Supplies Needed

- chart paper or whiteboard
- marker



Action

1. Tell students they will be learning about the golden eagle and bald eagle, common to Cree stories.
2. Display the visuals of the golden eagle and the bald eagle, as well as the Cree term for each. In Cree, the golden eagle is called Kihew (Keh – hew), and the bald eagle is called Mikisiw (Meh – keh – see).
3. Have students examine the two types of eagles. Ask:
 - How are the two types of eagles different from each other? How are they the same?
 - Have students share their observations, and record these on the whiteboard or chart paper.

Activity 5 (Social Studies): Eagle Staff

An eagle staff is featured in the book. Eagle staffs are sacred items that are created to honour a person or community of people. Every step in the process of creating the eagle staff is important – the number of feathers used often represents the number of people who are being honoured, and each colour of felt and/or cloth is carefully chosen. This is because different individuals, communities, and clans are associated with different colours. When an eagle staff is presented to someone, a special ceremony is held. Often, a feast is held, as well.

Check out the following site that tells of one story of an eagle staff that was made for veterans. The site also outlines how an eagle staff is constructed: <www.pokagon.com/community/ogitchedaw-veterans/community-eagle-staff/eagle-staff-history>.

Action

Contact an Indigenous organization in your community, such as a friendship centre, or the Aboriginal consultant from your school division, to arrange for a visit from a local storyteller or traditional knowledge keeper who can talk about the eagle staff and share examples. If possible, have them engage the students in some aspects of working with eagle feathers or an eagle staff, or even participate in a ceremony.

Special Topic: The Seven Sacred Teachings

Background Information

The Seven Sacred Teachings is a group of teachings that originated with the Anishnaabe of North America. These teachings have been adopted by many Indigenous culture groups. Said to have come from the grandfathers, or wisdom keepers, and varying slightly between tribal groups, the teachings are guidelines to live by and consider in every aspect of a person's life.

Misbehaviour is often a learning opportunity to discuss what is appropriate in the school environment. The Seven Sacred Teachings are universal concepts, and most Aboriginal students will already be familiar with some if not all of the teachings, and basic questioning about familiarity with these topics always leads to interesting conversation.

Activating Activity

Note: As with any deeply rooted cultural practice, it is always best to go to the experts. If elders or traditional knowledge keepers are not available, the wide usage of the Seven Sacred Teachings leads to several resources readily available for further research. You can also compare these teachings with other values-based curriculum, such as the Virtues Project.

The Seven Sacred Teachings are:

- Bravery
- Love
- Honesty
- Humility
- Wisdom
- Respect
- Truth

Each teaching has an animal that shows, or teaches, that teaching. They are:

- Bravery – Bear
- Love – Eagle
- Honesty – Sabe (Sasquatch or Big Foot)*
- Humility – Wolf

*The Seven Sacred Teachings originated with the Ojibway. Sabe is an Ojibway word that translates to Sasquatch or Big Foot in English. There is no specific word in Cree for this animal.

- Wisdom – Beaver
- Respect – Buffalo
- Truth – Turtle

Supplies Needed

- access to Internet
- drawing paper
- pencils
- crayons

Action

Younger students:

1. Discuss the seven sacred teachings with the students, and explain that each teaching has an animal that shows, or teaches, that teaching. Display the teachings and the corresponding animal in a chart.
2. Have students select a teaching and draw the animal that represents it.

Older students:

1. Discuss the seven sacred teachings with the students, and explain that each teaching has an animal that shows, or teaches, that teaching. Display the teachings and the corresponding animal in a chart.
2. Individually or in groups, have students access the online Cree dictionary (<www.creedictionary.com/search>) and find the Cree word for each animal.
3. Students can then convert the Cree words into syllabics, and copy into their notebooks.