



Discussion Guide for

GIVING THANKS: A NATIVE AMERICAN GOOD MORNING

Author:

Chief Jake Swamp

Illustrator:

Erwin Printup Jr.

Publisher:

Lee & Low Books

THEME:

People of the Earth have different ways of showing their appreciation for nature's gifts, but one of the best ways to say "thanks is to take care of the Earth.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message, written by Chief Jake Swamp and illustrated by Erwin Printup, Jr., celebrates the beauty, bounty and resources of the earth.

The Native American belief that the natural world is a precious and rare gift leads the viewer to a family harvesting cranberries and to city kids planting trees in their neighborhood, reinforcing the message of responsibility that we all share in caring for our environment.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Brainstorm with students ways in which they can be responsible for caring for the Earth.

Discuss ways in which people, animals, and plants are connected to and dependent upon each other.

The morning message of thanks is a ritual of many Native Americans. Discuss with students some of the rituals that are part of their lives.

Discuss different actions that people might take to show their gratitude or to say thank you.

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

The story mentions gifts we receive from water, trees, birds, stars, and many other aspects of our world.

Identify several living things from the natural world and have students brainstorm the variety of gifts we enjoy from those things.

Encourage them to think of scientific contributions, such as: trees help provide necessary oxygen, in addition to their aesthetic contributions.

The story is a message of thanks from the Five Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca) or Iroquois Confederacy. Contact a local Native American Center for information about similar traditions among Native peoples in your area. If possible, invite members of these nations to the classroom to teach students different versions of a ~hanksgiving Address.

Have students research the importance of the natural world to Native American culture.

On a map of the United States, locate where people from the Five Nations live.

Enlarge a map of the United States on a sheet of bulletin board paper. As the students conduct their research, have them label areas of the country in which different Native American nations live. Also have them illustrate these _ regions with pictures of plant and animal life that is representative of the area.

Have students compose their own messages of thanks for nature's gifts.

Instead of giving thanks daily in a morning message, most people of the United States set aside one day a year for Thanksgiving. Have students research the origins of the Thanksgiving festival. Invite them to share the Thanksgiving traditions of their own families.

Research how to say "Thank you" in different languages.

Have students investigate problems and solutions associated with protecting the environment in these three areas: air, water, and land. Start a chart called "Saving the Earth" by brainstorming, and complete the chart through re search. The chart has two columns-"Problems" and "Solutions." The "Problems" side has "Causes" and "Effects" sections. For example, a "Cause might be "car exhaust," the "Effect" might be "air pollution," and the "Solution might be "more people could carpool."



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RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

- And Still the Turtle Watched
- Summer
- Once There Was a Tree
- The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush
- The Gift of the Sacred Dog

RELATED THEMES:

- Ecology
- Native American traditions
- Thanksgiving
- life cycles

About The Author:

Chief Jake Swamp was born on the Akwesasne Mohawk Reservation in New York. He is the founder of the Tree of Peace Society, an international organization promoting peace and conservation, and has delivered the Thanksgiving Address all over the world. Giving Thanks is his first picture book.

About The Illustrator:

Erwin Printup Jr. was born in New York, a member of the Cayuga and Tuscarora nations. He has a degree in fine arts from the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He presently lives in New York. Giving Thanks is the first picture book he has illustrated.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

THE TREMENDOUS TREE BOOK by Barbara Brenner and May Garelick, illus. by Fred Brenner (Boyd's Mills Press)

MY FIRST GREEN BOOK: A LIFE-SIZE GUIDE TO CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT by Angela K. Wilkes (Knopf)

A RIVER RAN WILD by Lynne Cherry (Gulliver Green/Harcourt Brace)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

THE WAY TO START A DAY by Byrd Baylor, illus. by Peter Parnall (Scribner)

THE CIRCLE OF THANKS: NATIVE AMERICAN POEMS AND SONGS OF THANKSGIVING told by Joseph Bruchac, illus. by Murv Jacob (BridgeWater Books)

THE EARTH UNDER SKY BEAR'S FEET: NATIVE AMERICAN POEMS OF THE LAND by Joseph Bruchac, illus. by Thomas Locker (Philomel)

DID YOU HEAR WIND SING YOUR NAME? by Sandra De Coteau One, illus. by Christopher Canyon (Walker)

GOING GREEN: A KID'S HANDBOOK TO SAVING THE PLANET by John Elkington, et al., illus. by Tony Ross (Puffin)

SCHOOL OF NAMES by M. B. Goffstein (HarperCollins)

THE LAND OF THE GRAY WOLF by Thomas Locker (Dial)

MOTHER EARTH by Nancy Luenn, illus. by Neil Waidman (Atheneum)

EARTH ALWAYS ENDURES: NATIVE AMERICAN POEMS edited by Neil Philip, photographs by Edward S~Curtis (Viking)

EARTHDANCE by Joanne Ryder, illus. by Norman Gorbaty (Henry Holt)

Programs Details

Length:

30 minutes

Subject Areas:

Culture/ Environment

Audience Levels:

Ages 6 - 11

Order Number:

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