

Activities for Rolling the Medicine Wheel into your Classroom

The following are just a few suggestions for incorporating the medicine wheel into various curriculum areas:

1. Group Medicine Wheel Collage (Primary, Junior or Intermediate)

Materials needed: magazines, glue sticks, scissors, flip chart or brown craft paper
Divide the class into 4 groups. Each group must create a collage of pictures using a quarter of a large medicine wheel circle cut out of flip chart paper or craft paper. All of the pictures on each section must relate to that direction of the medicine wheel, for example, east should have pictures of eagles, sunrises, infants, spring and lots of the colour yellow.

2. Words First (Junior or Intermediate)

Make cards using 10 words from this glossary. Make separate cards writing the definition for each of those 10 words. Have the students try to match the definition to the word. After this activity discuss the words and their meanings and see if the students have any questions about these terms. If you can't answer their questions, ask them to research the answer and then bring it back to the group.

3. Aboriginal Stories (Primary, Junior or Intermediate)

Find as many Aboriginal storybooks from the library as possible. Try to get books that have characters of various ages (from different parts of the medicine wheel). Once the students have finished reading each book has them reflect on any lessons that characters might have learned in the story. Ask them to relate this to their own lives or those of their family members. Does the age of a person affect the kinds of problems they may face?

4. Checking Books for Bias (Late Primary, Junior or Intermediate)

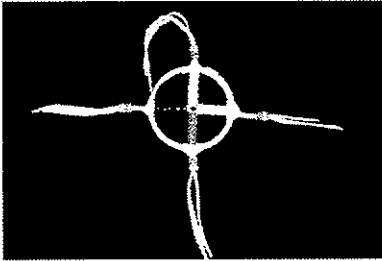
Using the Bias bookmarks, challenge the students to critically review a variety of Aboriginal books from your library. Are any of the books selected biased? Ask students to present their findings to the rest of the class.

5. Individual Medicine Wheels (Late Primary, Junior or Intermediate)

Materials needed: small 3" brass or wooden rings from a craft store. 1/4" plastic beads in white, yellow, red and black (5 of each colour per person), thin strips of leather

The ring can be left plain or wrapped with a thin strip of leather then end glued using white glue. Put the 5 beads of each colour on a long thin strip of leather starting with black, then red, yellow and white. Hold the end with the white beads at a spot on the wheel then loop the string over to a point 90 degrees from where the white beads are against the circle. Loop the leather string over the ring then push it back through the 5 black beads. Proceed down another 90 degrees to a point directly across the circle from where you are holding the white beads against the circle. Loop the leather string over the ring then push it back through the 5 red beads. Proceed to the next point another 90 degrees around the circle and loop the string over the ring and push it back

through the yellow beads. Now push the string up through the white beads and pull it tight so you now have the four directions colours lined up with 90 degrees separation between each (see picture). Tie the two ends of the leather string together and cut to an appropriate length leaving enough so you can hang it up. You can attach separate pieces of leather with different coloured beads on them at each of the other directions as shown in the picture.



6. Class Pattern book based on *We Are All Related* by George Littlechild (Late Primary, Junior)

Have each student create a page about themselves and their family following the pattern in this wonderful book. Use some of the paint techniques described below or use block printing techniques to create a unique border using symbols that may be meaningful to the student.

7. Voices of our Ancestors – Creating an Individual book about a family elder (Junior or Intermediate)

Materials needed: white cartridge paper 12” X 18” (about 10 sheets per student), coloured construction paper 18” X 24” cut to size of approximately 13”X19”, tempera paint, sponges cut into 3-4 cm pieces, squares of corrugated cardboard cut into 10 cm squares, glue sticks, scissors, assorted patterned wrapping paper, skintone paper

Students interview a grandparent or elder and have a completed final edited copy of the story of their elder’s life.

Students are each given 10 sheets of white cartridge paper and they put their names in pencil on the back of each before painting. Demonstrate the techniques of sponging and using the edges of cardboard squares to create textured patterns on background sheets for the book. Each group of 4 students will have a paper plate with 3 blobs of primary colours of tempera paint. They will use the sponges and sides of cardboard to dip in the paint and dab on each page creating a variety of patterns. Each student will create about 8 to 10 background sheets for their book

Allow only 1 minute for each sheet otherwise students will put too much paint on sheet or colours will mix together too much and end up a muddy shade of brown. For sponging, students dip a small piece of sponge in paint so that more than 1

colour of paint is on sponge. Paint should not be applied too thick on sponge or on background sheet. Students can also use the edge of a small square of corrugated cardboard to create line patterns or cardboard can be dragged across page to create a broad band of colour.

Students take sheets as they are finished to area for drying. Along the edge of corridors works well if you do this activity during a time when corridors will not be heavily used by other students. Parent helpers are a definite asset during this activity to supervise neat placement of sheets and to assist with paint handling and clean up.

Once background sheets are completely dry, students can fold them exactly in half for storage in their art portfolio. Folding is very important in order to properly glue pages together during the final stages of this activity.

Students can begin to work on the pages of their book by deciding how to cut up the text of their story into 5 or 6 logical pieces. Text pieces should immediately be glued onto the textured background sheet they have chosen for that page. Try to avoid gluing anything across the centrefold. Once text has been glued onto each page, student should write page number on back of sheet.

Student can then begin to create the artwork that goes with the part of the story on each page using skintone paper for faces and patterned gift wrap to create unique illustrations (see examples). Photocopies of black and white photos are very effective when people are cut out and included as part of the illustration. When all pages are complete student can create the title page with title and author's name in large font. A page about the author can be placed either after the title page or at the end of the book.

When all pages are completed, glue folded pages together in this sequence:
right side of title page glued to left side of page 1
right side of page 1 glued to left side of page 2 etc.
right side of last page glued to left side of About the Author page

Student can create the cover now using one of their remaining textured pages, cutting it in half and attaching to coloured construction paper 13"X19" which is folded in half. Artwork for cover, title and author's name can be completed and covers can be laminated by teacher to increase the durability of student's book.

Book pages can then be glued into laminated cover by gluing left side of title page to left side of open cover and right side of About the Author page to right side of open cover. Make certain to place book contents snugly down into fold of book cover to ensure good seal when book contents are glued into cover. Celebrate with a Book Launch party, inviting parents in.

8. Animal Medicine class book (Late Primary, Junior or Intermediate)

Each student creates a page to summarize research about a particular animal. Headings could include size, weight, range, food, young, habitat, and interesting information. You could also include some information about what qualities that animal has that humans could learn from, for example, bees work very hard all the time to make sure they have enough food for the coming winter.

9. Paint a Stone to use for a Talking Circle

Materials needed: Small river stones from a local garden centre, acrylic paint and small brushes

Give each student a small stone and ask them to create a simple but meaningful design sketch that they can use to paint on their stone. In a talking circle, a stone, feather or stick is passed clockwise around the circle and each person has a chance to speak. They can pass if they don't want to speak. When someone is speaking everyone else is listening carefully. Everything said in a talking circle is confidential and stays in the circle. The talking circle is a traditional way used by many Aboriginal nations for presenting views on a subject. No one judges, criticizes or tries to solve issues raised by others in the talking circle. It is simply a forum for presenting all points of view.

