

Title: The Giving Tree Lesson Plan

Oki, Tansi, Hello!

As a first grade teacher entering my second year at a school with an Indigenous focus, I am passionate about highlighting holistic learning opportunities.

What drew me to this project is the chance to lend a hand in supporting my fellow educators weave together western knowledge systems and Indigenous ways of knowing so learners may see there is equitable space and value for both within the classroom.

<p><b>Resources used and possible concerns</b></p>	<p>Picture book: The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story By Leah Dorion</p>
<p><b>Author/creator and/or literature background</b></p>	<p>Leah Dorion: A Metis author and artist raised in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Has written children’s books, academic papers for the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples and created video documentaries showcasing Metis culture and history. Paintings are influenced by traditional cultural teachings from the medicine wheel, and circle of life.</p>
<p><b>UPE course connections (not exhaustive)</b></p>	<p>EDUC 435: With a focus on literary learning, this text includes a variety of vocabulary that can be used as an example of how to appropriately select, categorize, scaffold and tier key words. (le. Starting with tier 1: basic vocabulary, moving to tier 2: high frequency words, and finally tier 3: low frequency/context specific words.)</p> <p>EDUC 445: This course explores theories surrounding individual learning. The concept that each child learns in their own way can be explored through this text, as topics can be presented through multiple starting points. Pre-service teachers can experiment with creating lessons that utilize art, dramatic play, hands on manipulatives, visuals, etc. This will provide a better understanding of how to offer a multitude of options for students to learn through.</p> <p>EDUC 450: Diversity in learning highlights the importance of representing a variety of cultural backgrounds that may be present in pre-service teachers’ future classrooms. This lesson provides an example of how to meaningfully utilize Indigenous ways of knowing, such as land-based learning and circle teachings.</p>
<p><b>K-12 connection</b></p>	<p>The target age range is K-2. Subjects: English Language Arts and Health.</p>

## **English Language Arts: Kindergarten**

**General Outcome 2 (K):** Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

### **2.1 Use Strategies and Cues**

#### **Use comprehension strategies**

- begin to use language prediction skills when stories are read aloud
- ask questions and make comments during listening and reading activities
- recall events and characters in familiar stories read aloud by others

#### **Kindergarten Heath: Relationship Choices**

#### **Group Roles and Processes**

*Students will:*

**R-K.8** demonstrate sharing behaviour; e.g., at home and in school

**R-K.9** recognize that individuals are members of various and differing groups

## **English Language Arts: Grade 1**

**General Outcome 2 (1):** Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

### **2.2 Respond to Texts**

#### **Experience various texts**

- participate in shared listening, reading and viewing experiences, using oral, print and other media texts from a variety of cultural traditions and genres, such as poems, storytelling by elders, pattern books, audiotapes, stories and cartoons
- illustrate and enact stories, rhymes and songs
- remember and retell familiar stories and rhymes

#### **Construct meaning from texts**

- relate aspects of stories and characters to personal feelings and experiences

#### **Grade 1 Heath: Relationship Choices**

#### **Interactions**

*Students will:*

	<p><b>R-1.5</b> identify the characteristics of being a good friend</p> <p><b>R-1.6</b> examines how personal behaviour and attitudes can influence the feelings and actions of others.</p> <p><b>English Language Arts: Grade 2</b></p> <p><b>General Outcome 5 (Gr. 2): Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to respect, support and collaborate with others.</b></p> <p><b>5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community</b></p> <p><b>Appreciate diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss the experiences and traditions of various communities portrayed in oral, print and other media texts</li> <li>• ask for and provide clarification and elaboration of stories and ideas</li> </ul> <p><b>Grade 2 Health: Relationship Choices</b></p> <p><b>Interactions</b></p> <p><i>Students will:</i></p> <p><b>R-2.5</b> demonstrate ways to show appreciation to friends and others</p> <p><b>R-2.6</b> develop strategies to show respect for others</p>
<b>Materials</b>	<p>The Giving Tree book          Box, basket, or handmade giving tree          Props/Picture cut outs similar to the items found in the book: sugar, flour, tea, a letter, cloth, etc.</p>

<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Big idea: Bring awareness to Indigenous ways of knowing and learning such as only taking what you need, and reciprocity.</p> <p>Purpose: Enhance understanding of Metis culture, and symbolism in accordance to a Metis woman's personal teachings.</p> <p>This text can be used at any time, but is an effective way to highlight Metis month in November. Keep in mind that teachings can vary by individual and these are specific to Leah and her Metis ancestors. Additional symbols and teachings can be found on her website: <a href="https://www.leahdorion.ca/symbolism.html">https://www.leahdorion.ca/symbolism.html</a></p> <p>OPTIONAL: The artwork in this book is incredibly special. An extension activity could be to create an art piece inspired by Leah's style, incorporating 'symbols' from the students' own lives. I.e. things that the students value or are important to them as an individual. This is a great way for students to explore their own interests and what makes them unique while highlighting Indigenous art.</p>
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<p>Lesson/activities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prior to reading the text, have a conversation with students about the author, and her cultural origin. It is helpful to provide context about Metis people and what this word means prior to delving in.</li> <li>2. The artwork in this text is extremely telling. Show the front cover of the book and allow students to respond to the art.</li> </ol> <p><b>Question to consider:</b> What do you notice about the front cover? How do the colours on this page make you feel? Do you see any patterns in the art? What do you think is happening? If you could ask the artist a question about the art, what would you ask?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow students to become familiar with the text, read "The Giving Tree" as a class.</li> </ol> <p>Leah is known for incorporating many symbols into her literature. Some examples of her teachings to point out as you read are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The infinity symbol:</b> can be found on the Metis flag.</li> <li>• <b>Dragonfly:</b> the spirits of ancestors, and their ancient wisdom.</li> <li>• <b>Deer:</b> mother deer teaches us to walk gently on earth's path.</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. After reading, have a conversation about what the characters do when they get to the giving tree.</li> </ol> <p><b>Questions to consider:</b> If you came across the giving tree, what would you hope to find? What would you leave in return? Be sure to document these ideas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. On a separate day, head outside and find a nice tree! Have your class sit in a circle. Read the book once more, assigning students a character role to play. Use a box, basket or handmade 'giving tree' with hollow and props. As the book is read, have students reenact the giving/taking process. You can create your own scenarios too to further engage in dramatic play and reinforce the idea of reciprocity.</li> </ol> <p><b>Key vocabulary to explore:</b> Offering, Hollow, Respect, Generous.</p>
<p>Supporting Sources (APA):</p>	<p>Dorion, L. (n.d.). About. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.leahdorion.ca/about.html">https://www.leahdorion.ca/about.html</a></p> <p>Dorion, L. (n.d.) Symbolism. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.leahdorion.ca/symbolism.html">https://www.leahdorion.ca/symbolism.html</a></p>