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Métis Cultural Connections

OUR DISTINCT MÉTIS CULTURE DEFINES US AS ONE OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. MAKE CONNECTIONS TO YOUR MÉTIS CULTURE, AND LEARN WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE.

York Boats were traditional watercraft used by the Métis and voyageurs to carry furs and trade goods along inland waterways for the Hudson's Bay Company. It was named after York Factory, the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company. The boat was modelled after Orkney Island fishing boats and built by Orkney Islanders recruited by the Company for their



Métis artist and craftsman Pat Calihou built a York boat which is on display at Fort Langley National Historic Site.

boat-building skills. The first York Boat was built in 1749, and by the 18th century, boat-building stations existed from James Bay to Fort Chipewyan. For over a century, it was the primary mode of transportation between inland trading posts and the York Factory.

The boat builders used local wood and imported iron forged by the Hudson's Bay post blacksmiths. The York Boat was up to 14 metres (46 feet), and the largest could carry six tonnes (13 000 pounds) of cargo. It had a pointed bow, a flat bottom and a stern angled at 45 degrees. The boat was propelled by both oars and sail and steered with a long pole or rudder. It had a crew of six to eight oarsmen working oars up to 6 metres in length. The boat was poled when the rivers were shallow; when swift, the crew pulled them along the riverbank with ropes. The boat had a large square sail for open water on large rivers and lakes.

SOURCES: *York Boats – The Canadian Inland Fur Trade Fleet* by John MacFarlane 2010 https://www.nauticapedia.ca/Gallery/York_Boats.php
The York Boats of Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDUJAbhgWPw>

Buffalo Bulletin

MÉTIS TRADITIONAL LIFE WAYS CONNECT US TO THE LAND AND OUR ANCESTORS, AND TRANSMITS KNOWLEDGE TO OUR CHILDREN. LEARN TO ACKNOWLEDGE, HARVEST, GATHER, AND SHARE NATURAL RESOURCES.

"As Métis, our environment has influenced our lifestyle. Being Métis meant knowing how to survive in nature. Being Métis meant having respect for our environment. Being Métis meant being in tune with nature. Being Métis meant being in tune spiritually with our surroundings" — **Rose Richardson**

Being in and connecting with our natural environment has always been a part of Métis culture. Learning about plants as food and medicine is an easy way to connect to our roots and to replicate what was a common practice of our Métis ancestors. Like us, plants in our environment have varying properties, appearances, skills and preferences; it can be fun to imagine plants as people with different personalities, patiently waiting to meet you and for you to get to know them.

Exploring nature together with your children is togetherness time. You strengthen your bond and create memories from your experiences in nature. While your children are learning a lifelong love of nature, you are learning more about your children—how they think, what they like and dislike. Enjoy this time together!

When first learning about plants and their medicinal uses, it can feel intimidating as there are so many beautiful plants to learn about. However, a good way to start is to go for a walk in your local park or neighborhood with your child(ren). Encourage them to listen to that little voice inside, and to notice which plants or flowers they feel attracted to, as those feelings could be a plant calling to their spirit to connect.

After they pick a plant, spend time with it together. Read about it and ask them to notice what season the plant is growing in and to pay attention to small or subtle details about it. For example, an easy and identifiable plant to start with could be a dandelion. Show your child(ren) the entire plant, from when it is seeds that blow into the wind, to when it eventually grows into a yellow flower. Show them the leaves, the roots and learn about the varying stages of the plants' maturation together-or let them draw the plant at different stages of growth. Ask your child questions about what they see when studying the plant:

- Does it grow in the shade?
- Does it like direct sunlight?
- Does it grow near a river, near the ocean, in a field or in the forest?

Lastly, remind your child(ren) to never touch or consume any plants without an adult, parent, knowledge keeper or Elder present as there are many plants that could possibly cause harm. Additionally, there are many free plant identification apps to download, groups to join or books to read to begin your plant discovery journey with your child. A great book to start with and to learn from is, "Medicines to Help Us: Traditional Métis Plant Use by Christi Belcourt".

Over time, you and your child may notice that plants not only offer us food and medicine, but also bring us closer together and to the natural world.

Louis' Kids Club

MÉTIS CHILDREN WILL LEARN ABOUT THEIR CULTURE AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM WITH A FUN ACTIVITY. FAMILIES WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE, CONNECT AND SHARE TIME TOGETHER.

A talking stick or talking feather is used by many nations to show and give respect when we are communicating. The person holding the talking stick has the respect of all of those around them. People must listen to the speaker and are unable to interrupt while the speaker has the stick. When seated in a circle, everyone can be equal; no one is behind or in front of anyone else.

Elder Stella shares the significance of the way the talking stick or feather is decorated. For example, the talking stick should represent our four-legged friends using hide, feathered friends with a feather, and Mother Earth is represented by a rock. The stick itself represents the medicine we use. In addition, using the four colours of the medicine wheel: red, yellow, white, and indigo are often represented on the talking stick. The colours can be represented by using fabric, beads and/or ribbon.

Elder Stella shares that we should "Go out gathering in nature and make a small offering of tobacco and give thanks for the items that nature or environment has provided for our use." To make your own talking stick, go outside and look for rocks and feathers. Gather bits of ribbon or craft items to decorate your talking stick and make your family their own talking stick. Practice using your talking stick during a family meeting. Remember, only the person holding the stick is talking and sharing at that moment while the rest are waiting and listening respectfully. Thank you, Elder Stella, for sharing these essential teachings. Hiy hiy.



Daily Physical Activity

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WILL LEARN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES FOR HEALTHY GROWTH AT EVERY AGE. THE ACTIVITIES WILL INCLUDE MÉTIS TRADITIONAL PRACTICES, OUTDOOR PLAY AND MUCH MORE.

Physical activity is the key to good health and wellbeing – physically, emotionally, and mentally. But when you hear the words “go get physical,” do you think of the gym, weights, treadmills, or organized activities for children? Do you groan and drag yourself out to do something physical? Do you pay for an abundance of sports you cannot really afford just to ensure your kids get all the activity they need?

What about free play? Hikes, walks, tag, hide and seek... are all genuine and valuable forms of fun and can be spontaneous. With summer upon us, swimming at the lake, playing with water balloons, and geocaching are easy

and fun ways for your kids (and you!) to get the recommended amount of daily activity.

Have you heard of geocaching? It is the ‘world’s largest treasure hunt’; using the geocaching app on your phone, you can choose a geocache location to find treasures in your area. They are usually little Tupperware containers with trinkets inside – the idea is to take something, leave something and sign the logbook. It is a fantastic way to find new trails and parks wherever you are, ranging from urban stroller-accessible locations to alpine mountaintops. A great way to spend active time as a family! Visit www.geocaching.com for more information.



What’s your name, where you from?

SHARE YOUR FAMILY’S CONNECTION AND JOURNEY WITH THE MÉTIS NATION COMMUNITY. TELL YOUR STORY AND HAVE YOUR FAMILY FEATURED IN THE NEXT EDITION OF *LEARN WITH LOUIS*.

SUBMIT YOUR STORY TO: MÉTISEARLYYEARS@MNBC.CA

THE HURLBURT FAMILY

My name is Stephanie Hurlburt, Hurlburt is my husband Graham’s last name, and it’s of English origin. It was initially “Hurlbat,” named after a sizeable axe-type weapon used in battle many centuries ago! My maiden

name is Molander, and it’s a Swedish name meaning “People of the Clouds.” Graham and I grew up in the Rocky Mountains, in the East Kootenays, and now we live in the Lower Mainland. We have two daughters, Audrey and Madeline.

I can trace my Indigenous family history back to Manitoba and the Red River Settlement. Some names in our family are Moore, Moar, Munro, Campbell and Brass. Since the early 1700s, my ancestors on the Munro/Moar/Campbell side were Scottish and Métis HBC Fur Traders who ran several trading posts, including Manitoba House and Norway House. Like most families, my family moved around, a lot, between communities. My Moore/Brass family were Anishinaabe and Cree. However, my Great Grandmother called herself and spoke “Saulteaux,” an older term for Plains Ojibwe. Growing up, we knew about our Indigenous heritage, but it was never really talked about. It isn’t until now, as we are reconnecting that I realize how important those stories my Grandmother told are – and that really they are threads of a larger story that I have yet to weave. In fact, I recently found out I am in possession of an Ojibwe Star Blanket, handmade by my Great Grandmother. Who knew that old quilt I had laying around was so significant.

My goal is to carry on the stories I have of our family history to my daughters. I am so thankful for Métis Nation British Columbia because they help connect us all to a past that sometimes seems hard to reach.



Indigenous Peoples Day Contest Winner

TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY, THE MÉTIS FAMILY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM HOSTED A MÉTIS ART CONTEST! FAMILIES WERE INVITED TO SUBMIT A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF HOW THEY CELEBRATED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY. THE WINNER WAS THE SVEDBERG FAMILY, WHO CREATED THIS BEAUTIFUL ART PIECE OUT OF NATURAL MATERIALS.

"The most important Métis value for my children and I would have to be interconnectedness, interconnectedness with others but also with the outdoors. The Métis infinity symbol on our flag perfectly represents this for us. We have a deep love of nature as so the clover and wood in this photo tie that in. Lastly, the words 'Metis Proud' in chalk beneath remind us that we are a strong people and are proud of how far we have come in our history." —Kathleen Svedberg



The Learning Journey

EDUCATION IS A LIFE LONG JOURNEY THAT INVOLVES EVERYONE. THESE LESSONS, ACTIVITIES, AND RESOURCES WILL HELP FAMILIES SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH BASIC EDUCATION WHILE LEARNING THEIR MÉTIS CULTURE.

Summer is the best time to tell stories while camping, late-night stargazing, or gathering friends and family. Young children enjoy stories that they can see, feel, and touch. Having visual, tangible things to hold, feel, and enhance storytelling. It allows children to begin to attach words to items. A fun way to create stories as a family is to make story stones.

Story stones are small rocks. Often, river rocks work best to draw or paint small items on the rocks. To embrace the Métis culture, make a tipi, a sash, a Red River Cart, a buffalo, a family, a fiddle, or others. You can make the rocks related to special traditional items of your family as well.

When gathering for storytime, each family member can pick a rock and add their rock item to the story. Or perhaps take an opportunity to have each family member tell a story from the rocks chosen. An excellent way to store the rocks is in a small drawstring bag. Enjoy your stories and write them down to make your own unique family storybook to read for generations to come.

Wellbeing Program

WHAT IS THE MIYOOPIMATISHIK (WELLBEING) PROGRAM?

The Miyoopimatishik (Wellbeing) program has been created for Métis families with children birth to 8 years old. Métis families with children that require extra support may be eligible and can apply for services funded directly by MNBC. Families can access funds up to \$5000 per child. Any parent or guardian who cares for a Métis child, birth to eight years old, is an MNBC citizen or self-identifies as Métis can apply for the Miyoopimatishik (Wellbeing) program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

Wellbeing program – Métis Nation British Columbia (mnbc.ca/wellbeing)

OR CONTACT US:

Email: metisearlyyears@mnbc.ca

Call: 1-800-940-1150

Michif with Maddy the Magpie

THE NATIONAL MÉTIS LANGUAGE IS MICHIF, A DISTINCT LANGUAGE DEVELOPED FROM FRENCH, CREE AND OTHER FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES. HAVE FUN LEARNING MICHIF WITH MADDY THE MAGPIE.

Michif is the national Métis language. It is a unique language that developed in the Red River valley in the early 1800s and has features of French, Cree and other First Nations languages. Maddy the Magpie would like to share some words in Michif with you! To find out how to say Maddy's words go to http://www.metismuseum.ca/michif_dictionary.php or download the App "Heritage Michif to Go" on iTunes or goggle play.

Sunshine: Li salay nakooshiw | **Beach:** Araa dlou | **Bonfire:** Aen groo feu dahor

li salay
nakooshiw
(sunshine)



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