

Learn With LOUIS



Métis Cultural Connections

THE ROLE OF ELDERS

"Historically, Métis Elders were more commonly referred to as 'Ahneegay-kaashigakick' — 'the ones who know.'" — BARKWELL, L. J.

Métis Elders are the knowledge keepers of their communities. They are respected for their wisdom, experience, and teachings. Métis Elders embody their community's core values and are role models for the young. Traditionally, Métis Elders passed on their traditional teachings through oral storytelling. These lessons contained teachings of their language, history, and traditional medicines. They also speak on how to take care of each other, live in harmony with animals and the natural world, and how to view the world through a spiritual lens.

Not all older people in the Métis community are considered Elders. This title is earned through hard work, self-reflection, meaningful life experiences, and the ability to uphold and teach the shared values of the community. Children are taught to respect the Elders in their communities by following their advice, listening intently to their teachings without interrupting, and offering them food, drink, and a comfortable place to rest.

Today, we often see community Elders offer a traditional land acknowledgment or blessing for large gatherings and ceremonies. This is a sign of respect from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups alike to show their commitment to the inclusion of Métis, Inuit, and First Nation values reflected in Canadian governance, education, and health care. Elders are often offered tobacco for the acknowledgment or blessing, as tobacco is traditionally viewed as "a link between the physical and spiritual worlds" (Impey, B. et. Al., 2017)

"Elders are recognized for their wisdom, their stability, their humour and their ability to know what is appropriate in a particular situation. The community looks to them for guidance and sound judgment. They

are caring and are known to share the fruits of their labours and experience with others in the community" (Berkwell, L., N.D.)

Families can connect with Métis Elders through their local Métis Chartered Community.

Find your closest Chartered Community here:

<https://bit.ly/CharteredCommunitiesMNBC>

QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK AN ELDER:

- What are your core values?
- Can you tell me the most memorable story from your childhood?
- Did you grow up learning about Métis culture?

References:

Barkwell, L.J. (2014). Métis Elder Protocols. Gabriel Dumont Institute.

<https://bit.ly/Elderprotocols>

Impey, B. et. Al. (2017). Authentic Engagement of First Nations and Métis Traditional Knowledge Keepers. The Wiç itowin Conference Committee.

<https://bit.ly/wicहितowin>



Elder Jo-Ina



Elder Stella

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Elders Philip & Stella

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.

ICE FISHING

Métis people have always fished to provide a healthy food source for their families and communities. Most fishing was for personal consumption, and there were also many Métis involved in the commercial fishery. The species of fish caught varied depending on the region, water source and season. Métis families consumed fresh fish or preserved it by drying, smoking, or canning. Métis people fished every season, including fishing through the ice in winter, either on single lines or using large nets under the ice.



kokanee, whitefish and burbot. Fisheries have stocked many lakes, so a sustainable fish population exists.

Métis Core Value: Ni maamaa la tayr

(Mother Earth) "Honour the earth and its gifts"

Stay safe when out on the ice! Always check the thickness of the ice before heading out onto a lake. Ensure the ice is at least ten centimetres (four inches) thick if you are fishing alone and at least thirty centimetres (12 inches) thick before you bring out your family.

You will need a Freshwater Fishing license and be aware

of the fishing regulations. The Fresh Water Fishing Regulations Synopsis can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/fishingsynopsis>

Here are some great ice-fishing lakes in British Columbia:

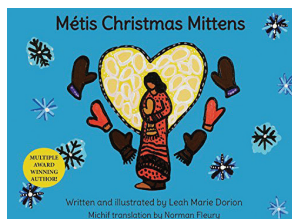
<https://bit.ly/icefishingbc>

<https://bit.ly/icefishcampbc>

Louis Kid's Club MÉTIS CHRISTMAS MITTENS

What comes to mind when you think about gifting? It doesn't have to cost money! Could you come up with ways to create something to share with someone special you love? What would you make?

The book *Métis Christmas Mittens* is a touching ode to Métis family life and is accompanied by Leah Dorion's distinctive and evocative art. The holiday season has always been "a very special time for Métis families. A family-oriented people, the Métis often didn't have money to buy expensive presents, but instead made practical items with much love." Maybe you have someone that you love and would like to gift them with their very own *Métis Christmas Mittens*!



If you are interested in purchasing this beautiful children's book, *Métis Christmas Mittens*, written and illustrated by Leah Dorion, you can find it on our trading post webpage to enjoy as a family.

<https://bit.ly/metischristmasmittens>

What did you make for your loved one?

If you'd like to share a photo of your creation, please send it to metisearlyyears@mnhc.ca



Métis Child Care Benefit

The Métis Child Care Benefit Program is a service offered by the Métis Child Care and Navigation and Support Program, for families with Métis children birth to 12 years. Through the Métis Child Care Benefit Program, families can access additional funding, bridging the connection to the [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#).

The Métis Child Care Benefit (MCCB) is a monthly benefit to support parents with their Licensed or Registered License-Not-Required childcare and Licensed Preschool fees.

To apply for the MCCB, children must first be enrolled in the Métis Family Connections Program.

FOR INFO VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

Métis Child Care Benefit – Métis Nation British Columbia
<https://bit.ly/child-care-benefit>

OR CONTACT US:

metisearlyyears@mnhc.ca
1-800-940-1150



What's your name, where you from?

REN & SAOIRSE

Tānisi. Ren Jager nishkâson. Hello, my name is Ren Jager, and I was born in the lower mainland on the unceded territories of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, and Tsawwassen First Nations. I grew up just a few kilometres from Fort Langley, where one of my Scottish ancestors, James McMillan, founded the Fort while employed for the Hudsons Bay Company. My mother was born in the Red River area of Manitoba and came west, on her own, in her 20s.

I am proudly descended from many great Red River Métis families: Hogue, Carrière, Taylor, McMillan, Bourgeois, Dease, Rivard, and Lyon.

I've lived all over BC, and I moved from the Okanagan to the traditional and ancestral lands of the Tla'amin people a few weeks after the birth of my youngest child, Saoirse. She's now 6 and has just started grade one. We live here together with our cat, Future, and our new puppy, Fig.

I work in harm reduction - helping to support those living through the 7th year of BC's public health emergency/toxic drug crisis, and as a birth-keeper/full spectrum doula for Indigenous and 2SLGBTQ+ families. I take great pride in the social activism work I do, in making space for tradition and ceremony for life-givers in our community and supporting those who need extra care and compassion.

Like many Two-Spirit folks, I'm estranged from my biological family, but we have an amazing and supportive chosen family and strong

Métis community here on the Sunshine Coast. We are so rich with love and support. We are active in our local Chartered Community, and my daughter is growing up with a strong sense of what it means to be Métis. Our ancestors were French-Michif and my daughter is enrolled in her second year of French Immersion at a school that is vibrant with Indigenous culture and language. She especially likes learning the local language, ʔayʔaʔuθəm.

Saoirse has also taken fiddling camps and helps me bead, sew and do needlework. I'm a very active hide tanner and she's been especially interested in hide tanning with me. This summer she did almost all the softening on her own sheepskin, which she named "Teddy Bear", and when I recently co-facilitated a week-long hide tanning camp with my hide mentor, Mara Curr of Fern & Roe, I overheard her teaching the children who were there about the hide tanning work she's done. I hope to do a bison hide with her this year. I'm so proud of her knowledge, confidence sense of herself as a Métis person.



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

Louis' Journey to Métis Crossing, Alberta

FOLLOW ALONG AS LOUIS TRAVELS. FULL OF CURIOSITY AND A LOVE OF LEARNING, LOUIS WILL BRING JOY AND LAUGHTER TO CHILDREN AND ADULTS ALIKE. SHARE WITH US YOUR *LOUIS' JOURNEY* BY SUBMITTING PHOTOS AND A BRIEF DESCRIPTION TO METISEARLYYEARS@MNBC.CA.

LOUIS HAS BEEN ON THE MOVE, ONCE AGAIN! THIS TIME HE JOURNEYED TO MÉTIS CROSSING, THE FIRST MAJOR MÉTIS CULTURAL CENTRE IN ALBERTA.

Métis Crossing is located 1.5 hours northeast of Edmonton and 10 minutes South of Smoky Lake on the Victoria Trail... over 1200km from MNBC's Headquarters in Surrey, BC! That's a great distance from home for our friend! How far from home have you travelled?

After a long trek, Louis received a warm Pihitkwe (welcome) to the lodge at Métis Crossing. [1]



Next, it was time to explore Métis Crossing. What a great place for Louis to learn more about his Métis culture!



He had the opportunity to learn how to finger weave and use a loom, with Danielle, MNBC's Early Years Director. Looms make weaving things much faster; a Métis sash woven by hand could take up to 300 hours, but with a loom, it could be finished in only

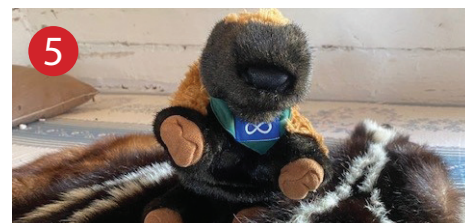
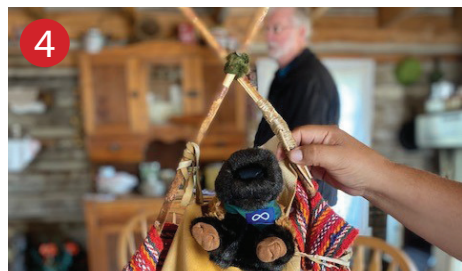
20 hours! Louis let Danielle do most of the hard work, though, as he considered himself more of a 'supervisor' for this venture. [2]

The Métis are known as the Flower Beadwork people. Louis 'tried his hoof' at beading but without opposable thumbs, he found it quite difficult. Thankfully, there were other activities and displays to check out! He learned about how to grow and harvest different traditional medicines – does your family grow any medicines?



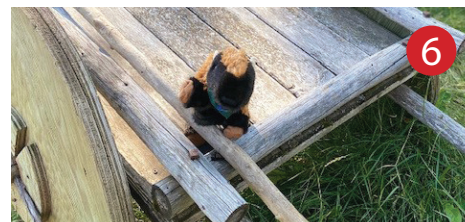
Just like Ren and Saoirse (from "What's Your Name, Where You From?"), Louis was very interested in tanning hides. [3]

'Tanning' is what creates leather from animal skins and hides. It makes the skins much more durable so they can be used for a variety of purposes and will last a long time. Like this carrier bag that, silly, Louis decided to go for a ride in! Carrier bags like this would commonly be used to collect medicines out in the garden. They would be fashioned out of twigs, hides, and sinew to tie it all together. [4]



Many Métis were skilled hunters and trappers that were heavily involved in the fur trade. At Métis Crossing, Louis had the opportunity to feel the fur of a skunk! [5] It had a soft underfur with long, coarse guard hairs. Thankfully, it was not a stinky skunk! How would you describe how other furs feel? Have you felt soft rabbit fur? Or the prickly quills of a porcupine? Or the smooth fur on a horse's back? The fluffy wool on a sheep. Which fur is your favourite?

The perfect way to end the day, and the final display that Louis enjoyed at Métis Crossing was the Red River Cart. [6]



On the long journey back home, Louis got to meet up with some bison cousins at Elk Island National Park! [7]



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 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 Heritage 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 google play.

fish: li pwasson | **frozen:** aahkwatin | **windy:** yootin | **Elder:** li pleu vye | **mittens:** lii pchit mitenn



livair
(winter)



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