

# Learn with Louis

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## Métis Cultural Connections

OUR 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.

The Michif dialect shared is Southern/Heritage and was originally translated by Norman Fleury.

Gabriel Dumont Institute The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture ([Metismuseum.ca](http://Metismuseum.ca))

A Métis Story of **Praentaan** (Spring)

This story takes place many years ago when I was a child living in a rural community in Northern BC. It was the season of **Praentaan** a time of renewal and birth, with longer days, new leaves, blossoms, buzzing insects, and singing birds. I always looked forward to spring and sleeping outdoors under the stars, in a tent or a fort. One of my favourite forts was in a large poplar tree, there was a creek running close by, a game trail where I often saw deer, and a view of the meadows and mountains. I was excited about my first sleep out of spring, and I spent the day cleaning the fort and decorating it with bouquets of **lii fleur kaaya kaa kishtikayhk** (wildflowers). I decided to have snacks for the night so I made a jar of tea and took a can of plums from the cupboard.

That night I read in the twilight, watched the stars come out, and listened to owls hooting, coyotes howling and leaves whispering in the wind. I woke to the sound of Mother calling me for breakfast and I rushed off for Sunday pancakes. After breakfast, my mother was preparing dinner and couldn't find the can of plums for the fruit cobbler. I confessed that I had taken the can of plums, and my father explained that it was wrong to take things without permission and I was sent to work in the **zhaardayn** (garden). I worked with my



mother for some time, and then we were joined by the rest of the family. That day I was taught the important Métis core values of honesty, respect, and sharing. I was guided to learn traditional values with support from my family and I was disciplined with love. Take time to embrace the season of spring, appreciate the gifts of Mother Earth, and remember to share your stories.

### Questions to discuss with your early learner.

What do you like to see in spring?

Have you slept in a tent or fort, maybe when you were camping with your family?

Can you create the sounds of owls, coyotes, and leaves in the wind?

Do you help your family in the garden or with chores?

### We are interested in hearing your stories.

Are you a storyteller? Do you have a favorite story or a traditional story that you would like to share with others? Submit your short story to [metisearlyyears@mnbc.ca](mailto:metisearlyyears@mnbc.ca) to have your story included in the next issue of Learn with Louis. 🌸

# 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.

Once upon a time, in the wide-open prairies of Manitoba, lived our Métis ancestors. They were brave and clever and knew how to live in harmony with the land around them. While there were many creatures important to Métis people, there was one animal that was especially important to them: the buffalo.

For the Métis, the buffalo was like a big, furry friend. They didn't just hunt the buffalo for food and clothes, they also respected and loved them. The buffalo provided everything the Métis needed to live happily on the prairies. They used the buffalo's meat to make delicious meals, its hide to make warm clothes, and even its bones to make tools and toys.

The Métis didn't just take from the buffalo, they also made sure to give back. They knew that it was important to take care of the land and the animals that lived on it, so when they hunted the buffalo they did it with respect and gratitude. Our ancestors thanked the buffalo for giving its life so that they could survive and they promised to use every part of it so that nothing went to waste.

The Métis also had special ceremonies to celebrate the buffalo. They sang songs and danced to honor these magnificent creatures. Our ancestors also loved to tell stories about

the buffalo, passing down their traditions from one generation to the next.

Even though we don't necessarily need to hunt to survive anymore, we still remember our special bond with the buffalo. The buffalo helps us teach children about the importance of respecting nature and taking only what we need. It also is a reminder of our resilience and strength in navigating the natural world. Through stories and art, we can keep the spirit of the buffalo alive in our hearts, knowing that it will always be a part of who we are.

Using your Louis the Buffalo stuffie from your Métis Family Connections enrollment kit, here are some fun and educational activities you can do with a buffalo stuffed animal:

**1. Buffalo Habitat Diorama:** You and your child can create a miniature buffalo habitat using materials like construction paper, cotton balls, and toys. Encourage children to use their imagination to design a landscape where buffalo might live, including grassy plains, rivers, and maybe even a mountain backdrop.

**2. Buffalo Story Time:** Cuddle up together and read a story about buffalo. Afterward, encourage your young child to retell the story using the buffalo stuffed animal as a prop. This

activity helps improve comprehension and storytelling skills

**3. Buffalo Anatomy Lesson:** Teach children about the different parts of a buffalo by labeling them on the stuffed animal. You can use removable labels or sticky notes to identify features like horns, hooves, tails, and fur. Encourage children to touch and feel each part as they learn. Take it one step further and use the Michif translations. You can find them here at the Gabriel Dumont Institute [The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture](https://www.museum.ca) ([Métismuseum.ca](https://www.museum.ca))

**4. Buffalo Movement Game:** Set up an obstacle course or a simple path for children to follow, and have them mimic the movements of a buffalo as they navigate it. For example, they can stomp their feet like buffalo hooves, wiggle their tails, or even gallop like a herd of running buffalo.

**5. Buffalo Art:** Provide children with art supplies like paint, markers, or clay, and encourage them to create their own buffalo-inspired masterpieces.

These activities not only engage children's creativity and imagination but also help them learn about buffalo and their habitat in a hands-on and interactive way. 🌱

## Louis' Kids Club

**Springtime Adventures: Exploring Nature with 'The Giving Tree' Spirit.**

Hey there, explorers! Spring is here, and it is time for a journey into the world of Métis culture amidst the blooming flowers and singing birds. Picture this: a sunny day, a gentle breeze, and stories waiting to be discovered in nature's playground.

But let us make it even more fun! How about creating your very own springtime story inspired by nature? Grab some leaves, flowers, and rocks that catch your eye – they will help you build your enchanting tale. Use these natural items to create a picture, characters, or scene on a piece of paper, a flat surface, or even in the grass.

Now, let us add some special Métis magic to your story. Did you know that our Métis culture believes in showing kindness and respect to everyone and everything around us? That means being nice to each other,

animals, and even plants. Just like in 'The Giving Tree' book by Leah Dorian, where the tree shares its gifts with others, think about how your characters can be kind and helpful too.

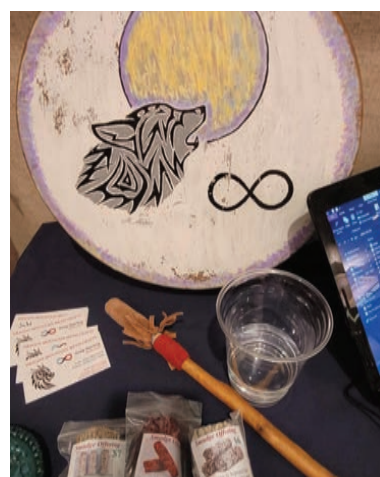
Gather your friends and family and take turns telling your stories. Who are the characters? What adventures will they have in the springtime world you have created? Remember to include moments of kindness and respect in your tale.

As you share your stories and explore together, you will feel the magic of spring in every word. Your stories are not just fun – they are also about learning to be kind, respectful, and grateful for the world around us.

So, let us dive into nature, and let our imaginations soar. With kindness and respect guiding us, we will discover the wonders of nature and create memories that bloom like flowers in the springtime! 🌱







## Louis' Journey in Quesnel to meet Elder Greg Sterling

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](mailto:METISEARLYYEARS@MNBC.CA).

**Taanishi** (Hello), friends and family.

**Ni miyeuytayn** (I am happy) to share with you my visit to Quesnel, BC. I arrived at the Quesnel Arts and Recreation Centre during a big snowstorm. It is a good thing I have a thick fur coat to keep me warm. I was so excited to meet Elder Greg Sterling, spoon player extraordinaire! He is so wise. He shared stories and traditional Métis ways of knowing and being. He can drum and play the flute and spoons; he even writes his own songs. He sure can tap along with his spoons to the Red River Jig. Early learning professionals were there to learn how to make their own spoons, play them, and teach the children they work with about Métis music. It is difficult for a

buffalo to play spoons, but my hoofs made a similar sound. It sure makes you want to dance. We all had so much fun! Elder Greg Sterling said, "Please call me Grampa Greg or **Mooshoom** (Grandfather) Greg."

Grampa Greg said the music of the Métis is fast, fun, and upbeat. The faster the music the faster the jigging. Métis people liked to have a barn dance or kitchen party with fiddle music. The fiddler plays the melody of the song while other instruments, such as the hand drum and spoons keep the rhythm. Grampa Greg also played the harmonica. It was like a party! Métis used wooden spoons in the olden days and later they had metal spoons. By holding the spoons in reverse (back-to-

back), between your fingers and using your thigh and your other hand to bounce the spoons off, you create a clip clop sound, just like my **koozayn** (cousin) the horse, his hoofs sound just like the spoons. Does anyone in your family play the spoons? Put on the Red River Jig, grab some spoons, and try it.

Check out this video of Grampa Greg playing the spoons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rJsAWgmlbU> 🌸

All translations in this issue of Learn with Louis are in Southern/Heritage Michif and were translated by Elder Norman Fleury.





## What is your name? Where are you from?



### Tansi

My name is Linda McCullough, a proud Métis citizen of MNBC (Métis Nation British Columbia).

I was born in Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan, and spent most of my younger years living at Cree Lake in northern Saskatchewan.

I am the daughter of Rosa McKay and Charles McCullough. My mom was Cree/Métis, and my father was a white settler from Northern Ireland. They met when my dad began trapping around her settlement. My maternal

ancestors are McKays, Larivière's, Maurice's, Aubichon's and Laliberté's to name a few.

Due to the fact that we lived in a remote place, we had to attend residential school. I was there from grade one till grade seven. During that time, I grew to be ashamed of the fact that I was an Indigenous person and pretty much stayed in that mindset until I was a young adult and moved to BC. I worked at a social service agency and met a wonderful ex school principal who was a volunteer there. Somehow, he figured out I was Cree and affectionately referred to me as "that Cree girl". He was part of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee for our school district and kept encouraging me to become part of it and finally just volunteered me. In that setting, I met so many wonderful Indigenous people who were so proud of who they were. From that point on, I had to do some hard work within myself to undo the negative feelings I had about myself as an Indigenous woman. Being part of that committee led me to my current job as an Aboriginal Support Worker (they still use Aboriginal in our title) for a school district for the past 25 years.

I am lucky that I get to share my experiences and teachings with my students and the staff

I work with. No longer do I carry that shame that was imposed upon me as a young child. It warms my heart so much seeing the pride that my students feel about themselves.



My eldest daughter and I took up beadwork several years ago and it's been such good medicine for our souls. My late Kokum and my mom did beautiful beadwork and we're so proud to carry on their teachings. I'm hoping that my younger daughter and granddaughter will soon be part of our little beading business.

I am Linda, proud Métis iskwew, mom, kokum, sister, auntie, cousin, and friend. 🌸

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](mailto:MÉTISEARLYYEARS@MNBC.CA)

# Caring for our Children

## SPRING – AN AWAKENING OF MOTHER EARTH

As the weather warms up and we step outdoors for more time in nature, here are a few ideas on how we can learn about different plants and medicines with our children. With the longer days and the milder weather, there are many ways we can learn from Mother Earth.

### A few suggestions may be:

- Create a bouquet of plants or flowers you may find in your backyard. Various parts of the province will have different plants. How could you use a sash to wrap or care for the plants?
- Explore your garden. Take Louis the Buffalo on a bug hunt, how many different types of bugs can you find in your yard? Use a magnifying glass to discover the little ones and take photos.
- Create nature rubbings. Grab some paper and crayons and have fun exploring the different textures of plants and stones in your garden or on a nature walk.
- Make a Terrarium. Using a large glass or plastic container with a wide mouth, spread some potting soil or dirt on the bottom then add little plants and bits of grass from outside with the roots still on them. Give them a little



water then cover with the jar lid or cling film and an elastic band. Place it in a sunny spot, spray lightly with water every week, and watch the plants grow. You could measure the growth every week to see how quickly they grow.

- Read *Relatives with Roots* by Leah Dorion. *Relatives with Roots* is a story about a Métis

woman's connection to the land. It is a heartfelt story about a Métis grandmother who takes her granddaughter out into the bush to teach her how to pick traditional medicines. As the granddaughter learns the traditional beliefs and stories about how the Métis people use plants for food and medicine, she feels happy to be a Métis child with access to such wonderful cultural knowledge. 🌸

# 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 upheld as the national Métis language. It is a unique language that developed in the Red River valley in the early 1800s. Michif is a mixed language that contains Plains Cree verbs and French nouns and noun structure, as well as some vocabulary and structures from Saulteaux and English.

### There are three types of Michif:

- Métis French (also called Michif-French)
- Métis Cree (also called Northern Michif or Île-à-la-Crosse Michif)
- Southern Michif (also called Turtle Mountain Michif, Chippewa-Cree, or Heritage Michif)

The words shared by Maddy the Magpie listed below are from the Gabriel Dumont Institute [The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture \(Métismuseum.ca\)](https://www.métismuseum.ca) The dialect shared is Southern/Heritage Michif which was originally translated by Elder Norman Fleury. 🌸

MICHIF	ENGLISH
Praentaan	Spring
li Zhoor di Paak	Easter
zhaardayn	garden
lii fleur kaaya kaa kishtikayhk	wildflowers

Praentaan  
(Spring)







# Service Provider Highlight

## NIWIKOWIN MÉTIS FAMILY SERVICES

**Niwikowin Métis Family Services** (previously Kikino Métis Children & Family Services Society) in Prince George opened in 2003, recognizing the need for Métis children, youth, and families living in the area to connect with their Métis culture and community, and have Métis specific supports. Niwikowin has come a long way since then and now offers a wide range of Métis-specific programs and services that include:

**1. Kiki Awasis Learning and Childcare Centre**— Métis Early Childhood Educators (ECE's) / Early Years Manager, provides nurturing child care in a culturally rich and safe environment to Métis Early Learners aged 3 to 5 (pre-K). Métis children will see their culture reflected through stories, nature walks, music, dance, arts, and crafts, and more

**2. Family Support Services** – Workers help support families with Métis children at risk

through a strength based approach, helping parents and children see value in themselves both individually and as a family unit. They will also work with MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) / community partners, etc., as needed

**3. Métis Family Connections Services**— The MFC (Metis Family Connections) worker will assist MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) guardianship workers and Métis children/youth in care with pertinent cultural information to strengthen family connections, ideally reuniting the child/youth back with family

**4. Métis Elder/Senior Supports** – We honor our Métis Elders & Seniors and offer walk-in services, hold cultural and social gatherings to show them how important they are to their Métis community and culture.

### Upcoming events:

- **July and August** - Three-day summer camp programs for parents/caregivers of Métis children up to the age of 8. If interested, please email Tamara Croft at [tcroft@niwikowin.ca](mailto:tcroft@niwikowin.ca) or call 250.563.1661

As mentioned, and more than 20 years later, Niwikowin Métis Family Services has had much success, growth, and change over the years, (its' name, # of locations, and more,) however, one thing remains true; their ongoing commitment to help Métis children, youth, and families of all ages. Thank you Niwikowin!  
Phone# 250.563.1661 📞

# THE HELLO SONG

Taanishi, Taanishi Kiiya?  
Taanishi, Taanishi Kiiya?  
Taanishi, Taanishi Kiiya?  
Taanishi Kiiya anoosh?

Hello, how are you?  
Hello, how are you?  
Hello, how are you?  
How are you today?





# Upcoming Events

## Indigenous Village at the Cloverdale Rodeo

Waceyá Métis Society is hosting their annual Indigenous Village at the Cloverdale Rodeo from **May 17-20, 2024**. More details can be found online at [Cloverdale Rodeo and Country Fair](#).

# Past Events

## Mid Island Métis Nation Association

Mid Island Métis Nation Association hosted a family gathering on February 17, 2023. The event included jigging, catered lunch, activities for children and families, and door prizes.

## North Fraser Métis Association

North Fraser Métis Association hosted a family day open house on February 18, 2023. The event included Elders, catered lunch, smudging, axe throwing, potato sack races, and prizes.

## Fraser Valley Métis Association

Fraser Valley Métis Association hosted a series of pow-wows in collaboration with VYPER (Visionary Youth Peers for Equity and Revitalization) and the Abbotsford School District. Activities included a Slahal workshop, catered dinner, and a grand entry.

## Alberni-Clayoquot Métis Society

Alberni-Clayoquot Métis Society hosted a family gathering with 60 people in attendance. Tables were set up as family dining and the Child Care Resource and Referral were in attendance with lending library items. There was even a balloon artist creating amazing items like a balloon bow and arrow. Every person who attended received a door prize and the feeling of community and family were present in the space.

## Métis Nation Powell River

Métis Nation Powell River hosted a family gathering event at the Powell River Recreation Complex that featured food, games, and a private swim hour in the pool. 🌸



# Where's Louis? Find Louis the Buffalo

