

Module 1 Introduction to Care for Our Common Home

Lesson 3

# An Indigenous Lens

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

**What can we learn from our indigenous brothers and sisters about care for our common home?**

**For the teacher: some essential elements in an indigenous worldview- land based identity, sharing not ownership, human's place in creation (humility), relatedness (kinship), respect.**

**How do sources of knowledge impact the way we make meaning in our lives and the way we relate to the world?**

## TEACHER PREPARATION

**Download and Set Up**

the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

**Print/Copy**

Student Handout for Two-Eyed Seeing, one copy for each student

**Print/Copy**

Student Handout kikàwìnaw askìy: Our Mother Earth, one copy for each student

**Print**

Lesson Plan An Indigenous Lens, for the teacher

**Read**

Appendix The story of the translation, for the teacher

**Extra**

Poster Nàkatèyimatàn kikàwìnaw askìy (2 sizes for printing)

## LESSON PLAN

### IGNITE

Project Slide 2: the digital photograph without titles

Ask students to look at this photo thoughtfully and carefully.

*Ask students:*

- What do you notice?
- Imagine it is you standing where this person is in the photo. Be there in a moment of silence and take it all in. Pay attention to what you feel in your body (give a minute here).

Project Slide 3: the digital photograph with the English and Cree titles

Story of the translation into the Cree language (*see appendix*). What does this story tell us about the Cree way of being in the world? (humility, community, intentional about seeking clarity)

What do you notice in this image that makes “**Nàkatèyimatàn kikàwinaw askiy** an appropriate title? (pronounced nuh guh day yih mah dhan .... Let us take care key gah wee naw us-key .....our mother earth)

*Note: One student asked in a class why we didn't just get the translation online. We explained how a literal translation is not what we wanted; we wanted a translation for the meaning of Care for Our Common Home. But for his own curiosity, he checked on google. He came up blank. Google does not always have the answers we seek.*

- *Project Slide 4* and invite open discussion. Ask: Which of these symbols represent your general experience of the education system we are in? Explain your thinking and offer specific examples.

*Note: the picture in the middle is not one of the symbols for this discussion*

### IMMERSE

The various links invite students to discover what an Indigenous lens offers on human's relationship to mother earth. This is a journey through different sources, inviting students to listen and read with their heart as well as their mind.

- *Project Slide 5*, and discuss the invitation in “Two-Eyed Seeing”.
- *Project Slide 6*, as the essential questions in Two-Eyed Seeing for our purposes.
- *Hand out the Student Worksheet for Two-Eyed Seeing.*

*Project Slides 7-9* for the Two-Eyed Seeing exercise and give time for students to fill in the hand-out at the end of each video segment. After students have had some moments to record their thinking, invite them to share their thinking with the class.

The Two-Eyed Seeing worksheet refers to the hand-out Kikawinawaskiy- *Our Mother Earth*. You may choose to do that exercise after Jim Desroches' video, as it takes a little longer.

*Of note: this one invites quiet reflective individual time.*

Hand out *Kikawinawaskiy- Our Mother Earth* worksheet.



**Video links:**

[The Art is the Land and the Land is the Art](#)

[Marilyn Dumont: Poem](#)

## COALESCE

You will use the video on slides 10 and 12 for the Exercise “Seeing Urgent Issues through Indigenous and Western Eyes”

Explain that now, students will have an opportunity to hear two teenage female activists: Canada’s Autumn Peltier and Sweden’s Greta Thunberg. They both have the attention of the United Nations and the world. Autumn sees the world through an Indigenous lens; Greta sees the world through a Western lens.

*As you listen to the speeches of each of these young leaders*, you’ll notice many similarities even though the lens or worldview is different for each. Listen closely to the *words and ideas and sources of knowledge* that reveal their distinct worldviews. For each activist, on your Two-eyed Seeing worksheet, *record three significant quotations* which reveal the particular ways they make sense of the world and their place in it. For each quotation, explain what it reveals to you about the young leader’s worldview and cultural identity.

*Project Slide 10:* Greta Thunberg (4:34)

*Project Slide 11 and then 12:* Autumn Peltier (4:50)

*Post-Viewing Reflection:* Imagine the two in conversation with one another. Could they find common ground while remaining true to their own cultural identities and worldviews? Explain.



### Video links:

[Greta Thunberg to world leaders, The Guardian](#), Sept 23, 2019

[Water protector Autumn Peltier speaks at UN](#), CBC News,

## CREATE

Represent what insight, knowledge, and appreciation you have gained about an Indigenous Worldview through:

- Writing a letter of gratitude to our Indigenous brothers and sisters for the gift of their traditional teachings.
- Composing a song expressing gratitude for the gift of Indigenous traditional teachings.
- Drawing/painting a picture that expresses gratitude for the gift of Indigenous traditional teachings.
- Some other form of expression that humbly offers your gratitude for this other set of eyes to help all of us see more wholly.

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## Kikawinawaskiy – Our Mother Earth

(pronounced key-ca-wee-now-us-key)

### **Worldview: A comprehensive view or philosophy of life, the world, and the universe.**

Worldview can be described as a philosophy or view of life that shapes how we interact and respond to the world around us.

Our own worldview influences, shapes and interprets what we experience and provides us with a sense of vision for the future.

*Excerpted from Teaching Treaties in the Classroom, Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Sask, © 2002, p. 448-449*



### **Instructions**

As you read the story that follows, create sketches as you go to represent what you hear and see in your mind's eye!

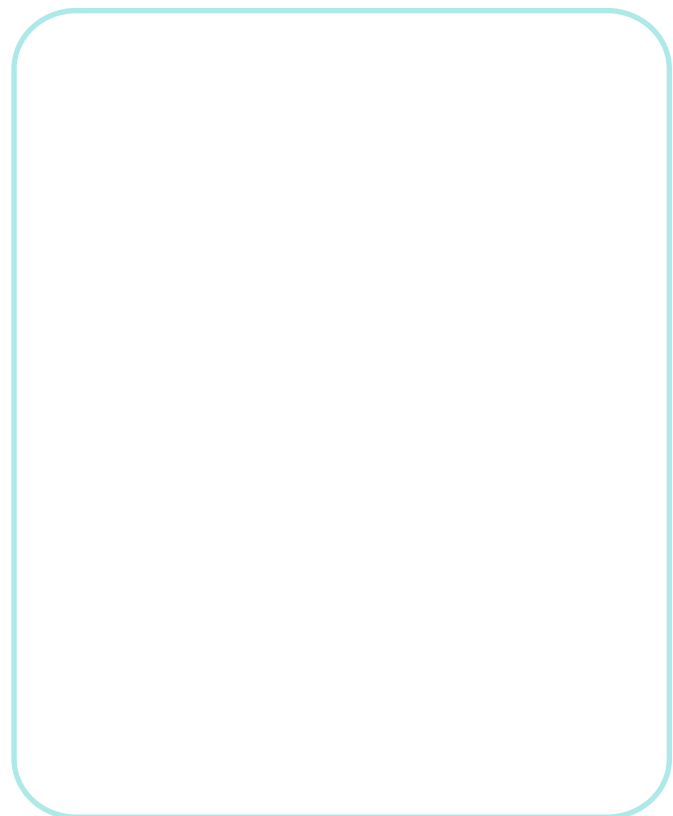
Taken together, these sketches will illuminate a worldview.

## **In our great, great ancestor's past, long, long ago, this story comes.**

*Excerpted from Teaching Treaties in the Classroom, Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Sask, © 2002, p. 431-432*

It was told to us by our ancestors, that in the beginning of time, there existed a Power so mighty, that it created the Earth as we know it today.

We, **Nehiyawak** (Nay-hee-ya-wuk), were taught by our ancestors, that our Mother is the Earth, because we were born on her, as did our brothers the animals, the birds, the aquatic and the small life. The plants are part of Mother Earth; it is from this source; we are all nurtured. In our language, we say **Kikawinaw** (key-ca-wee-now), which means our Mother.



Each plant that grows on Mother Earth, has a purpose here on Earth. Most life forms depend on the plant, directly or indirectly. Some animals, whether the aquatic, the winged or the small life, each may depend on the plant as their main food source. Meanwhile, animals such as our brother wolf, do not live on plant life. The food he catches, eats plants like the rabbit, the prairie chicken, the squirrels or the deer. Brother wolf eats meat. If there is no plant life for the plant eaters, they will either move until they find food, or they could die. So, when these plant eating animals move, brother wolf has to follow. As brother wolf knows, to survive, he has to hunt where there is food. This is the way; all life depends on each other.

**Kikawinawaskiy** (key-ca-wee-now-us-key), our Mother Earth has natural elements, forces and growth, and it is these combinations that make plants grow. In Creation, it was said that **kikawinawaskiy** (Mother Earth) has the cycle of rebirth, renewal and death, and there is also the good and the bad. It is this balance, that makes harmony. Then finally, there is the birth of the humans. Being her last and the youngest child, the humans are the most spoiled, most dependent and weakest. The human's only survival tool will be thought process. So, to this day, it is the human thought process that is changing all of creation. The values toward **kikawinawaskiy** (Mother Earth) have changed. Once, long ago, all humans were humble people. All humanity was once equal to other life forms, creating an interrelatedness and a balance that is no more.

In view of all creation, humanity is the weakest. We say this because our ancestors have shown us that we are the most dependent. We are weak, because our thinking is our weak link. We are dependent, because our place in the hierarchy shows us, we cannot continue to live, or survive, without our brothers: the animals, the aquatic, the winged, the small life, the plants and most of all, Mother Earth. This is why we humble ourselves as people, and everything's above us. We need Mother Earth and all that existed before us, to continue in the cycle of life. This is why I tell you my Grandchildren, respect nature, treat Mother Earth with care and gentleness, for all our Earth things to work in a cycle. The cycles of life, seasons, water, rock, and weather are all a part of the wonders of Mother Earth.



Each year, **kikawinawaskiy** (Mother Earth) goes through changes. In the seasons, just like we do. Our bodies go through changes too. **Kikawinawaskiy's** (Mother Earth's) natural forces such as the winds, also go through sudden changes, just as we do. Our emotions change in a second.

**Kikawinawaskiy** (Mother Earth) gives new life to the grass, trees, shrubs, and all green growth. So do our women, they are special because only they can give birth and bear children, just like our Mother Earth.

**Kikawinawaskiy's** (mother Earth) life forms decompose and return back to the soil eventually, so does Man and everything that is natural. This is the life cycle. Our Mother Earth is warm, and humans are warm blooded as well.



***My Grandchildren, there are many ways that we humans are similar to our Mother Earth.***

It is up to us to take care of **kikawinawaskiy**, our Mother Earth and her children. We have to allow **kikawinawaskiy's** life forms to balance. Humanity has to allow natural balance to occur in the animals, birds, other small life and the plants, by allowing Mother Earth's life forms to flourish naturally. Humanity needs to keep track of their behavior toward their Mother.



Record 5 words or ideas that are central to the worldview in this story.

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## THE STORY OF THE TRANSLATION FOR THE POSTER *(slide 3)*

*Louise Bitz, Catholic Schools Program Officer, Development and Peace-Caritas Canada*

I knew that I needed to get the poster made with *Care for Our Common Home* in English and in Cree.

I texted a Cree woman whom I had recently met in another city and asked her to provide a translation. She said she did not speak Cree. But she could put me in touch with a university professor who taught Cree. She said she would ask his permission, and then give me his number.

A few minutes later, she texted me his number and said he would receive my call. I called.

He was a gracious man. He asked me to articulate clearly exactly what I meant by “Care for Our Common Home” and the purpose of the poster. So, then I had to be very sure of the answers to those questions. I heard myself articulate as best I could. He said “Okay, I think I know what the translation would be then. I’ll get back to you in a few hours.” I said, “A few hours?” (he was, after all, a University Professor of the Cree language). He said, “Yes, I have to confirm this translation with at least three other people.”

I was struck by his humility. I think it’s a very important part of this poster. If we all lived with that kind of humility about our place in the created world, and in our relationships with each other and God, we probably would not be in the ecological crisis that we are in.

So, to me, now, the Cree translation on this poster is imbued with a humble way of being in the world.

“Home” is more aptly translated here as “Mother Earth”, which is an example of the kind of kinship that Indigenous peoples feel with the land. He told me there is no Cree word for “common”. So, the translation is closer to “Lets take care of Mother Earth”.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

**Through what 'eyes' do I see the Earth?**

**What can another worldview offer to widen the aperture for what I see?**

**How can "two-eyed seeing" help us on our journey of reconciliation with the earth and with each other?**

### ***"The Art is the Land and the Land is the Art."***

Identify 2 images and 2 quotations that enrich your understanding of an Indigenous understanding of and relationship to the Earth.

Image	
1	2

Quotation	
1	2

Worldview: Kikawinawaskiy: Our Mother Earth

- As you read the story that was handed out, sketch what the storyteller describes in the spaces provided on the hand out.
- Then pick out the 5 most important words, ideas, concepts. Write them here.
- Then share with a peer: "In your own words, what does each of the 5 most important words, ideas, concepts mean? Are they connected? Can you use them all in a single sentence.







# care for our common home nākatēyimatān kikāwīnaw askīy

