

A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO LESSONS FROM MOTHER EARTH

Written by Elaine McLeod and Illustrated by Colleen Wood

ABOUT THE BOOK

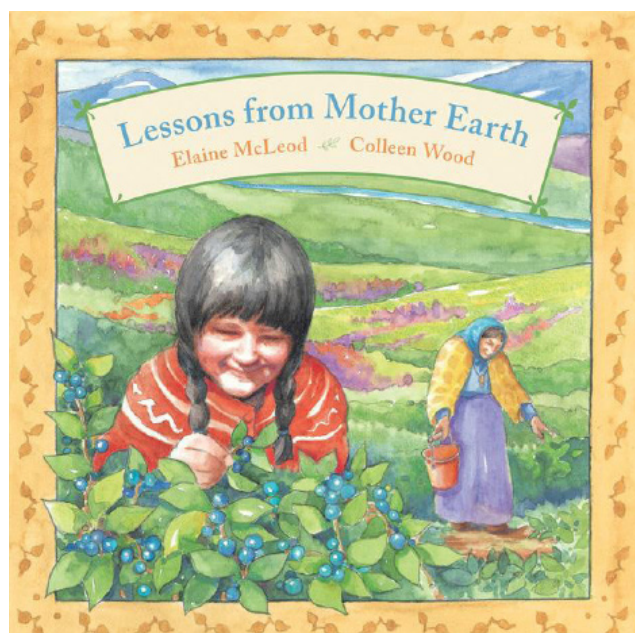
Tess has visited her grandmother many times without really being aware of the garden. But today they step outside the door and Tess learns that all of nature can be a garden. And if you take care of the plants that are growing, if you learn about them — understanding when they flower, when they give fruit and when to leave them alone — you will always find something to nourish you. This gentle story demonstrates the Indigenous tradition of taking care of Mother Earth.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elaine McLeod is a teacher who has lived and worked in many parts of the world. She was born in Mayo, Yukon, and is a member of the Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation. The stories she writes were originally told to her children so that they would know their history and understand their roots. Elaine lives with her family in Whitehorse.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Colleen Wood has worked as a graphic designer, illustrator and painter for more than twenty years. She lives in Vancouver.



Lessons From Mother Earth
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JUVENILE FICTION

Reading Ages 2 to 5

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BEFORE READING

Mother Earth

Ask the students, “Who do you think Mother Earth is?” With the students, discuss what Mother Earth means to Indigenous peoples. What kinds of lessons might we learn from the Earth?

Book Cover

Looking at the cover image of the book, lead a whole group discussion by posing the questions: “What do you see in the photo?”; “Who do you think is in this photo?”; “What do you think they are doing together?”; “What season do you think this is? Why do you think that?”

Indigenous peoples have a special and spiritual relationship with the Earth. They call her Mother Earth and believe that she provides all the flora and fauna and gives “birth” to us as human beings. Indigenous peoples see themselves as caretakers of Mother Earth.
<http://www.afn.ca/honoring-earth/>

Picture Walk

Take a picture walk with the students through the book. Discuss what students see in each illustration re: location, landscape, characters, activity, etc.

Grandparents

Discuss things/activities students have done or do together with a grandparent or other family member. Why was this a special time for them?

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WHILE READING

Gardening

Tess's grandmother says to her, "Let's put on our boots and our sweaters. I am going to show you my garden." Ask students to think about a time when you have been to a garden. Describe what you have seen. Ask students if they have gardened. If your school has a garden, ask students to describe the kinds of plants they grow. What is required to care for the garden? Record their thoughts.

Curriculum Connections: Science, Growth in plants, Soils, Habitats and Communities, Biodiversity, Plant classification (kingdoms, phylums, etc.)

The text says, "I had been visiting Grandma since I was born, five years ago, but I had never explored her garden." What do students think Tess will find in her grandma's garden?

Rules of the Garden and the Importance of Rules

Grandma shares the first rule of the garden with Tess: "Not everything in the garden is ready for picking just yet Rule number one is that you must always take good care of our garden." What do students think Grandma means by this rule? How might you take care of the garden? Why is it important to take care of the garden? Why is it important to have rules?

Curriculum Connections: Social Studies, Our changing roles and responsibilities, Local Communities, Global communities

With the students, generate a list of the rules of the garden. Have the students articulate with a partner the importance of these rules. There are a few options for sharing their learning: create a poster, a video, a slideshow or have students write a persuasive essay.

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WHILE READING

Patience

Ask the students about a time when they had to wait to do something they were excited about. Write down their ideas and the feelings that they had during this experience. Work together to define the word “patience.” What lessons are there to be learned from having patience?

Conservation

Conservation involves caring for all things on the Earth, and it is important to maintain diversity and ensure that there will always be things for the present and future. Tess’s grandmother utilizes her “garden” in such a way. Ask the students: Why is it important to pick the right amount from the plants? Why do you think it is important to thank Mother Earth for the gifts she provides? How do the characters in the story show their thanks to Mother Earth?

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AFTER READING

Grandmother's Garden

Discuss with the students how they think Tess felt after spending a day in her Grandmother's garden. What do you think Tess learned?

Growing Plants

Depending what time of year you are reading this book, you have different options to grow plants from bulbs or seeds. Explore the requirements to grow something with your class. Decide if you would like to grow something from seed to plant in a pot or school/community garden. Or, you may want to grow flowers from bulbs or sprouts from seeds. Regardless, each plant will have certain needs to grow and flourish. Investigate these needs with students and record them as your plants are growing. Observational booklets can be kept for the duration of the growing period.

Curriculum Connections: Science, Growth and changes in plants, Habitats and communities, Soils

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CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Earth Day

April 22nd is Earth Day every year. Check <https://www.earthday.org> to see how your class can make a positive contribution to protecting Mother Earth. They have many ideas for how schools and students can take actions and make a positive change.

Earth Hour

Earth Hour takes place on March 30th at 8:30 p.m. Check <https://www.earthhour.org/celebrate-the-hour> to see how your class can learn about and participate in Earth Hour.

Science

Explore the parts of a plant and the role each of these parts plays. Students may choose to examine different plants. You can use a magnifying glass or microscope to examine the parts of the plant.

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CONNECTIONS TO OTHER TEXTS BY GROUNDWOOD BOOKS

Grandpa's Girls written by Nicola I. Campbell, illustrated by Kim LaFave
ISBN: 9781554980840

INTERNET RESOURCES

Project H.O.M.E.

<https://www.helpingourmotherearth.com/inaaknigewin.html>

First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun

<http://www.nndfn.com/history/>