Excerpts from the Activity and Resource Guide

Children of Native America Today
by Yvonne Wakim Dennis and Arlene Hirschfelder
foreword by Buffy Sainte-Marie
1-57091-499-0 $19.95, HC

Children of Native America Today: An Activity and Resource Guide
0-9651722-7-9 $6.95, PB
Native Foods

Wampanoag (womp-uh-NO-ag)

Let’s explore Native American foods  An estimated 80 percent of the food consumed in the United States and 50 percent of foods eaten worldwide were developed by Native American agronomists. Tomatoes, corn, beans, squash, pineapple, wild rice, and potatoes are a few crops domesticated by Native Americans. Host a Native American Foods Day for parents. Have the class research and prepare Native recipes. Use measuring to make this a math activity as well. Have the students design invitations and decorate the room with food illustrations. Have the students research and tell traditional Native American stories about foods and their origins.

Let’s investigate our sources of food  Native agronomists were successful because they used a variety of methods, like symbiotic planting and natural ways of discouraging pests. Because of the nature of modern agriculture, contaminants like pesticides, herbicides, hormones, and antibiotics are rampant in our food supply, and much of our food is grown in toxic soil. However, using natural methods of food production can ensure that there will be healthy plants and soil in the future. Some organizations are leading the movement to produce healthy, nontoxic food. Have the students contact one of the following for information: Children’s Environmental Health Network (www.cehn.org), Mothers and Others for a Livable Planet (40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011; 888-326-4636) and the Environmental Justice Resource Center (www.ejrc.cau.edu). Have students compile information and develop information flyers for the community. If you have a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in your area, invite a representative to make a presentation at your Native American Foods Day.

Making connections  Many Native nations or individual tribal members operate food businesses. Have the students research the businesses, write to them, or go on-line to obtain catalogs. If your budget allows, order some provisions for your Native American Foods Day. Some companies to consider are: Red Corn Native Foods; Dennis Banks and Co., Ltd.; White Earth Land Recovery Project (Native Harvest); Daybreak Farming and Food Program; San Juan Agricultural Cooperative; and Fish Point Seafood.

Suggested Resources


“Community Supported Agriculture,” www.nal.usda.gov/afs/csa

“Plimoth-on-Web: The Wampanoag People,” www.plimoth.org/team/history/wampanoag/wampanoag.asp

“Wampanoag Tribe,” www.wampanoagtribe.net
Kimberly Puanani Johnston [contemporary] lives on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. She teaches first grade in the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program of the state’s Department of Education. Students in Kula Kaaipuni o Kualapu’u study the same subjects as other students, but all instruction is conducted in the Hawaiian language. In addition to language, the curriculum emphasizes Native Hawaiian cultural traditions and values. Children in Johnston’s class learn about their home and the world around them through lessons in and outside of the classroom. They learn their history by taking trips to areas of great significance to their ancestors. Students journey around the island, learning ways to protect the ocean and the streams and all that live there. They also do activities in reforestation, restoration of ancient fishponds, and the preservation of Native foods and herbs. Johnston teaches her students about computers, and they share their activities on the Internet. Through the efforts of Kula Kaaipuni and teachers like Johnston, the Native Hawaiian language and culture will thrive through the children of Hawaii.

**Clean Water Hawaiian (hah-WHY-un)**

**Let’s explore the water cycle** Have the students read *A Drop around the World* or explore other resources to learn about the water cycle and how streams depend on rain. Discuss the following questions:

- What would happen if a stream dried up because we diverted all the water?
- What would happen if there were no plants on a mountainside?
- What would happen if people dumped trash and chemicals into a stream or an ocean?

Make a chart to display ways to take care of streams and rivers and conserve resources. Write ideas on paper raindrops and stick them to the chart.

**Let’s investigate our need for water** Share the following Hawaiian proverb: *Ue ka lani, ola ka honua* (When the heavens weep, the earth lives). Discuss the figurative meaning of the proverb. Have the students share examples from their own lives that relate to our need for life-giving rain by drawing pictures and then explaining their work to the class. Have the students write and rehearse a skit about the importance of rain, streams, rivers, and the ocean. For Earth Day, invite other grades to join your class, decorate the classroom with proverb-inspired drawings, perform the skit, explain the charts, and ask for ideas from the audience.

**Making connections** Take action for the streams of Hawaii and bodies of water in your own community. Have the group compose a joint letter to the community from the perspective of the plants and animals that live in local bodies of water. Suggest that the students ask the community to cooperate in caring for these ecosystems, and include suggestions for doing so. Encourage the students to send the letter to the editors of local papers and explore other outlets for promoting this cause. Read in *Children of Native America Today* about other groups that are working hard to preserve ecosystems.

**Suggested Resources**

*Discover Hawaii’s Freshwater Wildlife; Discover Hawaii’s Natural Forests; Discover Hawaii’s Sandy Beaches and Tidepools.* Katherine Orr: Waipahu, HI: Island Heritage Publishing.


*“Central Pacific Island Environments,”* http://home.hawaii.rr.com/cpoe


*“Hawaiian Ecosystems at Risk,”* www.hear.org/index.html

*“Hawaii’s Streams,”* www.hawaii.edu/fga/gw01/website.html

*“Hawaii Watersheds,”* www.hawaii.edu/environment/welcome.html
Photography

Comanche (ka-MAN-shee)

Let's explore photojournalism

If possible, obtain publications that carry Walter BigBee’s work. Have the students check libraries for copies of Time-Life books or Native Peoples magazines. If his work is not available, select other examples of photojournalism. Show the students the photos without the accompanying text. Ask each student to write a paragraph that tells what is happening in the pictures. After the writing exercise, read the text to them. Did they have an accurate view of the events? Chief Joseph said, “It does not require many words to speak the truth.” Have students discuss what this means to them.

Let's investigate telling stories through pictures

Select a day for the students to record events through photography. A class trip or another class activity during the regular school routine would work well. Divide the class into groups, giving each a disposable camera. Instruct the students to divide exposures equally, giving each student a certain number of shots to take from his or her perspective. After developing the photos, have the students select those that best tell the story of the day’s events and display them on a poster with corresponding text. The students can also make and decorate photo albums for their friends or families. Investigate developing a website that the children can design for posting their photos. Have them look at the Memory Book section of Hawaiian teacher Kimberly Puanani Johnston’s website for ideas.

Making connections

Have students look for photographs in publications by and/or about Native Americans. Students should identify the photographers of images they like and learn more about the artists. Some photographers to consider are: Pena Bonita, Apache/Seminoite; Tom Fields, Cherokee/Creek; Katherine Foggden, Mohawk; Dorothy Grandbois, Turtle Mountain Chippewa; Lee Marmion, Laguna; Martin Neptune, Penobscot/Passamaquoddy; Lehua Pekelo-Stearns, Hawaiian; Jolene Rickard, Tuscarora; Monty Roessell, Navajo; Huileah Tsinhnhajinnie, Navajo/Creek/Seminoite; and Richard Ray Whitman, Yuchi.

Suggested Resources

Kimberly Puanani Johnston’s Memory Book: www.kualapuu.k12.hi.us/Johnston/memory.html
“Walter Tuatsiwa BigBee,” www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/WOODS/walter.html