

NEW WORDS:

unloaded
strict
elders
extra
expected

LITTLE WEASEL'S DREAM

Developed by the Kootenai Cultural Committee of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA: Plateau Region

STORY TYPE(S): Ideas of Spiritual Beliefs

Summary:

Little Weasel had gone whortleberry picking with his mother. While playing he became lost and tired. He fell asleep only to dream that a big black bear was about to catch him. His dream, however, rescued him for when he cried out in fright while dreaming, his mother was able to find him. The story has a surprise ending since the reader is not aware that Little Weasel is dreaming until the end.

This story is an example of the fourth story type labeled Ideas of Spiritual Beliefs. Little Weasel learned the value of listening to his elders and obeying their commands. More importantly, this story alludes to the significance placed on dreams. Dreams have a way of helping people. Today and long ago Indian people sought a vision which helped them throughout life. For some a message of this kind came to them in dreams. Little Weasel, lost, tired and upset, had achieved such a state of mind that his vivid dream brought the help he needed. Little Weasel's dream changed the outcome of an event in the boy's life.

Teacher Guided Activities:

1. Before beginning these activities generate discussion about different kinds of dreams. Avoid interpretation of dreams. Dreams are personal and they are more help to us if we think about them without openly interpreting them.

If a child does not want to tell a dream that's alright. Some questions you might ask are as follows.

- Have you ever done something or talked about something late in the evening and then dreamed about it that night?
- What is psychic? How have psychics helped people?
- What is a medicine man or holy man? How have medicine men helped people?
- How is seeking a vision different from having a dream? (Usually accompanied by prayer with a purpose in mind.) In times of great hardship or stress it is not unusual to have a lot of dreams or extra vivid dreams. In seeking a vision Indian people have provided the stimuli or stress for receiving a vision (sweating, fasting and isolation)?

- Do all dreams help us?
- Have you ever had a dream that was particularly helpful to you?
- Have you ever had a dream that enabled you to help someone else?

Generate as much discussion as possible about dreams then allow students to break into the Four Winds groups for further activities.



2. Ask students to write a story or make up a story about a dream they have had that may have helped them or someone else.

or

Have students write about a dream which has a surprise ending. Have them leave off the ending at first and let a friend add an ending. Then allow the dreamer to tell how the dream really ended.

Put the group's dreams together in a booklet with pictures or drawings to share with another group. Perhaps the group can choose a couple of the best dreams to read aloud.



3. Little Weasel did not follow his mother's directions. What type of directions must be followed in the school?

Within each group, make a list of the important rules which either parents or teachers have said students must obey?

Have students decide which rules are good rules and tell why. Decide which are bad rules and tell why. Rewrite these rules to make them better. As a group have students decide on which rules they feel would be the best rules for the classroom.

After all groups have made a list return to the Council Lodge for a vote on the best set of rules for the class.

Student Activity Card(s):
See Dream Shields Card (7A-7B).

After the discussion of dreams students should begin taking an informal inventory of themselves (things they think about, things they do). To help facilitate this have students begin keeping a journal.

As the teacher, you will be the only other person who will see a student's writing. You may respond to comments in their journal. Explain that they are writing to themselves. They do not have to write about personal things unless they want to do so. Ask them to be honest and to write about what they think is important. To get started each student needs a notebook for which they will be responsible. The notebook will help keep everything in one place. The entire journal should be turned into you on a

weekly basis. Journal entries should cover at least one full page for each week.

By writing regularly, students' writing ability should improve, although the journals should not be corrected for grammar, punctuation, etc. A student's ability to understand their experiences may deepen by reflecting on their experiences and writing them down. The interaction or response that you give to the journals should help further their understanding.

The journal is not for the purpose of criticism or to evaluate student writing. It should be used as a sincere way to begin to know and understand each one of your students.

Read the following description of a journal to the whole class and discuss the "Suggestions for Writing a Journal" as students read along.

A journal is partly like a diary and sometimes like a newspaper. But mostly a journal is about the individual writing it. The most important person one needs to get to know really well in this world is oneself. A journal can help anyone put into words personal experiences, thoughts, or feelings. It can help one to think more clearly about daily life. It could help one to understand why things are done as they are.



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SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING A JOURNAL

- Be yourself. Write about the things you know best.
- Do what you always do:
 - seeing new things
 - talking with people
 - doing new things
- Stop to think about yourself.
- Put your thoughts and feelings into words.
- Put your words into writings.
- Turn your journal into your teacher.
- Read or listen to what your teacher has to say.
- Think some more!
- Live and learn some more.
- Write some more.

THINGS TO WRITE ABOUT

- What do you like most about yourself?
- What things do you like least?
- Describe your community. What would make your neighborhood the best place to be?
- Describe your surroundings at different times of the day, sunrise, noon, sunset or night. Describe how you feel during the different seasons.