



Greetings everyone.

To continue the 4Directions group, we continue to share a weekly plan of resources to use on each unit.

You are all welcome to use it any day of the week as you see fit to ensure that all members of the group continue to feel the presence of their spiritual and cultural practices. Of course, in the spirit of reconciliation and community, neighbors and friends of the group members are also welcome to join to learn about Indigenous culture and life.

To preserve the intention of the 4Directions as a sharing circle, you can set up the people you support in small groups in the living room (maintaining the 6 feet/2 meter between people). Using the laptop, ipad or Smart TV along with reading the notes that follow, people can also be supported to explore the weekly program.

People can also work individually in their own room using their own devices if they choose that. When you begin, all you need to do is support people to read through the guide and pause to play the video links that are noted. Thank you.

Thank you for finding the courage to continue to share your gifts of caring and support with one another and your creativity to create meaningful experiences with people who you support.

Please touch base if you have any questions.

*Kind regards,
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April 16, 2020 – What is the Relationship between Indigenous People and Animals

Greetings to all as we gather again to support one another with our practices as well heal our minds in dealing with the daily stress of our new normal. Today we will open the gathering with an eagle song <https://bit.ly/2XzU0Uj>

“Native American Indians were a deeply spiritual people and they communicated their history, thoughts, ideas and dreams from generation to generation through symbols and signs such as the Eagle symbol. Native American symbols are geometric portrayals of celestial bodies, natural phenomena and animal designs. Native American bird and animal symbols and totems are believed to represent the physical form of a spirit helper and guide. The Native Americans consider the bald eagle and the golden eagle to be sacred. As eagles are the highest flying birds they were seen to be nearer to the Creator.

People ask about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and animals. For some, the knowledge of the natural world - the **land, plants**, animals, seasons and cycles of nature - has been a central tenet of their lives and worldviews since the dawn of time. Their understanding of the natural world is sophisticated and comprehensive. The natural world, now commonly referred to as the “environment”, is not viewed as a separate entity but one, interconnected aspect of the whole. This interconnectedness equates to a moral responsibility to care for, live in harmony with, and respect the natural world.

Many Indigenous Peoples believe that “the Animal People have spirits and enter the human world to give their bodies to supply men with food, fur and other materials. After their flesh is used the animals return home, put on new flesh and re-enter the human world whenever they choose.

Animals, in many Indigenous cultures, are imbued with great spiritual significance. In the Seven Sacred Teachings “the traditional concepts of respect and sharing that form the foundation of the Indigenous of life are built around the seven natural laws, or sacred teachings. Each teaching honours one of the basic virtues intrinsic to a full and healthy life. Each law is embodied by an animal to underscore the point that all actions and decisions made by man are manifest on a physical plain. The animals represent the qualities or laws that indigenous people practice to live by;

Love - Eagle
Respect - Buffalo
Courage - Bear
Honesty - Bigfoot

Wisdom - Beaver
Humility - Wolf
Truth - Turtle

The animal world taught man how to live close to the earth, and the connection that has been established between the animal world and that of man has instilled a respect for all life in those who follow the traditional Indigenous way.

Given this interconnected relationship between animals and humans, Indigenous Peoples were careful and respectful of the natural lifecycles of the animals they shared the Earth with - they made efforts to not over-fish, over-hunt or over-harvest. They hunted, fished and collected what was needed to sustain their families, tribes, or clans. Every part of the animal was used, and in many cultures there were

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accompanying celebrations and rituals of appreciation. There was no stock or species depletion due to over-harvesting - this came with the Europeans and a prime example is the sad fate of the buffalo.

There was also no need for artificial management of wildlife, which is an alien concept to numerous Indigenous cultures. “Many Yukon First Nations people find the assumption of control inherent in the agricultural metaphor absurd, perhaps even offensive to the animals. At wildlife management meetings, one Kluane First Nation hunter regularly objected to use of the term *wildlife management* itself. Humans cannot “manage” wildlife populations, he said. Animals manage themselves; they make their own decisions about when to reproduce, and where to go, decisions that are quite independent of any human desires. Wildlife management, he said, is not about managing animals; it is about managing people.”

While there is a great diversity between cultures, animals frequently figure prominently in creation stories, legends, ceremonies and art. In Northwest coast art, the animals of particular significance are the orca, bear, wolf, beaver, dragonfly, owl, eagle and salmon. Again, as in the animals in the Seven Sacred Teachings, each animal is imbued with spiritual significance.

Activity: Here are some links to coloring pages you can use with markers / crayons. Create conversation about the way the teachings are represented in the images as you color.

[elks grazing](#)

[Menu](#)

[Girl fishing](#)

[Menu with label](#)

[Ice Fishing](#)

[Ptarmigan](#)

Video: You can play [this video https://bit.ly/34tAUAn](https://bit.ly/34tAUAn) of Inuit creation story while coloring. Learn how the animal raven played a part in their teachings; Another Ojibway creation story can be seen [here. https://bit.ly/2XqHNku](https://bit.ly/2XqHNku)

Discussion: Talk about your current or past pets and how you took care of them. Do you consider them part of your family? How do they feature in your daily lives and activities?

Closing Ritual: To close the program, acknowledge each person present and thank them for their time. Choose one or more people to lead in closing the circle; support them to thump the drum four times (or clap their hands four times) to close the circle.

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