



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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May 28, 2020 – Northern Lights

It is almost the end of the week of May. Hoping you all have enjoyed bits of sunshine and gardening time and looking forward to outdoor visits with your family.

Let us start the gathering with [Northern Lights Song](#).

People generally know the aurora borealis by their common name, the Northern Lights. The northern lights are natural phenomena that occur in nature. Often on a clear, dark night in the boreal forest, green, purple, pink, and white lights dance on the horizon changing their shape and color. It is perhaps one of nature's most fascinating displays of artistry.

There are a number of tales relating to Northern Lights and here are some of them:

1. When they witnessed the lights, many Inuit, the Arctic's indigenous peoples, believed they were spirits of the dead playing a game with a walrus skull as the "ball." The Inuit of Nunivak Island in the Bering Sea flipped its take on this story believing that it was walrus spirits playing with a human skull.
2. Indigenous Greenlanders believed that the lights were dancing spirits of children who had died at birth.
3. For Wisconsin's Fox Native Americans, the aurora gave them a sense of foreboding—representing their slain enemies preparing for revenge.
4. In Alaska, some Inuit groups saw the lights as the spirits of the animals they had hunted, namely beluga whales, seals, salmon and deer.
5. In Norse mythology, the lights were the spears, armor and helmets of the warrior women known as the Valkyries. They rode on horseback, leading fallen soldiers to their final resting place at Valhalla.
6. The Inuit of Hudson Bay dreaded the lights, believing they were the lanterns of demons pursuing lost souls.

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- 7.** In Finland, a mystical fox was thought to have created the aurora, its bushy tail spraying snow and throwing sparks into the sky.
- 8.** Some Algonquin peoples believed their cultural hero, Nanahbozho, relocated to the far north after he finished creating the Earth. He lit large fires, which reflected back to his people in the form of the northern lights. This let them know he was thinking of them, even though they were far apart.
- 9.** In perhaps the best oxymoron in British folklore, Scottish legend refers to the lights as “Merry Dancers” engaged in bloody battle.
- 10.** Native Americans of the Great Plains thought the light display came from northern tribes who were cooking their dead enemies in huge pots over blazing fires.
- 11.** Inuit in Point Barrow, Alaska’s northernmost spot, believed the aurora was evil. They carried knives to protect themselves from it.
- 12.** In Estonia, one legend said the lights appeared when whales were playing games. Another said they were sleighs taking guests to a spectacular wedding feast.
- 13.** Wisconsin’s Menominee Native Americans saw the lights as torches used by benevolent giants used when they speared fish at night.
- 14.** Fishermen in northern Sweden took the lights as a good prophecy, believing they were reflecting large schools of herring in nearby seas...

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15. If you whistled at the aurora, some Native Americans believed it would sweep down and take you away. Clapping your hands, however, caused the lights to retreat, keeping you safe. Meanwhile, in northern Scandinavia, the Sami people hid indoors during the light show.



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Today there are scientific explanations that tell us why the aurora borealis occur, but for many years, people were baffled by how they happened. Legends and myths surrounding the aurora borealis are common to all native cultures living in the northern boreal forest and Arctic regions.

Watch this [3 minute time lapse of northern lights followed by clips explaining the phenomenon and an introduction to our next activity.](#)

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Activity:

We will do a Ted Harrison painting. You can follow the instructions listed or watch this [8 minute video of how to do a Ted Harrison Painting.](#)

You will need:

Paint Brush

Jar of clean water

Rug / Styrofoam dish (paper plate) for mixing paints

Colorful Paints

Pastel

Bond paper or sketchpad

Ted Harrison Visuals (google samples)

Ted Harrison is one of Canada's favorite painters. He was born in England in 1926 but immigrated to Canada's Yukon in the 1950's. His vibrant paintings of the people and the landscape of the Yukon Territories has brought Harrison many fans.

Use a variety of colored oil pastel to draw a Ted Harrison Inspired background. I like to start at the bottom of the paper and work up towards the middle and finally the sky (top of paper). Working this way allows you to achieve perspective. Mountains or icebergs should grow smaller the farther away they are. Drawing a flat water line can act as the horizon line.

- **Draw gently rolling hills or snow drifts near the bottom of the paper.**
- **Draw icebergs, mountains and a body of water in the middle of the paper.**
- **Draw mountains in the distance.**

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TIP: Don't add too much water to the liquid tempera paints. You only want enough water to allow the paint to spread easily.

To paint like Harrison, use a round pointed brush to paint inside all the shapes you created when drawing your landscapes. Resist the urge to paint over the lines as your painting will look much better if you work slowly and carefully.

Keep each shape one paint color.

If you look closely at Harrison's work, you will see that he uses bold colors to outline his shapes. You could use black oil pastel but it will be better with blues, pinks and red colors.

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Use the water to clean your brush only. Paint that is drippy with water will look more like a watercolor painting rather than an oil painting. You want your paint to be thick so it covers your paper well. Using a paper placemat (top picture) is helpful to help clean your brush and remove extra water.



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When is the best time to see aurora borealis?

Generally, the best time to see the northern lights is between 10:00 PM and 3:00 AM, when the sky is dark and clear. This means that you have to be as far away from all artificial light sources (cities, towns, etc.) as possible. Artificial light and pollution can disrupt viewing almost more than a cloudy night deep in the wilderness. Some scientists believe that early spring and fall are the best time to view the aurora borealis.

Sharing:

Have you seen the Northern Lights? Share your experience.

What time did you see it? What colors were there?

Closing:

Thank each and everyone for sharing their time. [Close the gathering with this song.](#)

Meegwich.