

MÉTIS CULTURE • SYMBOLS, VALUE SYSTEM, ART AND MUSIC • SPIRITUALITY

Learning goal: Students will understand the value system/spirituality of the Métis people.

Suggested timeline: 1 x 75-minute period

Subjects: World Religion

Lesson opener

See it:

“...culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs...”

— *United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2003)*

“I offer tobacco and prayers to the Creator. I participate in ceremonies whenever I can and end my Métis prayers with Amen, Merci and Megwetch, to honour all of my ancestors from both traditions.”

— **Senator Roland St. Germain**

Review the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose metisnation.org/governance/statement-of-prime-purpose and the song “We Aspire” by Amada Rheume metisnation.org/news-media/news/mno-citizen-amanda-rheume-nominated-for-a-canadian-folk-music-award. Ask students what Métis values are specified and inferred within these sources?

Strategy/Lesson activity

Feel it:

Watch the MNO Métis Traditional Healthy Eating Video youtube.com/watch?v=xuQkNIWXsLk

What connection do Métis people have to the land? Why?

Historically, what were the influences in Métis spirituality? How have colonialism, oppression, racism, passage of time (hiding of Métis identity and reclaiming of Métis identity), etc. changed Métis spiritual values and religion?

Know it:

What are the similarities and differences in the ancestral (European and various First Nations) spirituality/religions of the Métis? By looking carefully at the blend European (i.e. French, Scottish, British) and First Nations (i.e. Cree, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, etc.), how would you determine the impact of each of those on the family as a unit? Teacher’s Cue: what would be the effect of blending the two? Would there be an impact on spirituality by the blend? How did the traditional way of life in the fur trade (e.g., dependence on land and water, employment duties, mobility, proximity to churches, etc.) impact Métis spirituality/religion? Explain.

Assessment

Do it:

Explore and identify contemporary Métis spiritual and religious values.

Extension

Invite a Métis Senator in to share their story; to discuss what this “blend” means to them. How will this then translate to the next generations of Métis children? What does it mean “having hearts in two worlds”? How would this blending affect those who are not blended—First Nation only communities or European only communities?

Suggested Resources:

Métis Nation of Ontario Website—Culture and Heritage:
metisnation.org/culture-heritage/who-are-the-métis

MNO Métis Traditional Healthy Eating Video,
youtube.com/watch?v=xuQkNIWxsLk

Statement of Prime Purpose
metisnation.org/governance/statement-of-prime-purpose

Métis—The Canadian Encyclopedia: [thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/Métis](https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/métis)

Our Legacy; Métis Culture: scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_Métisculture

Aboriginal Beliefs, Values and Inspirations (student textbook)—ISBN:978-0-13-510651-8
Co-published by Pearson Education Canada and GoodMinds.com

Indigenous spiritual practices—Ontario Human Rights Commission:
ohrc.on.ca/en/book/export/html/16411

Halfbreed
by Maria Campbell

We Aspire video (MNO)
youtube.com/watch?v=pvIsKStqRms