



HUMILITY – Seven Grandfather Teachings, Métis Artist Christi Belcourt

Students paint a stone base in the style of Métis artist Christi Belcourt and then use Model Magic to create a sculpture that focuses on humility and the connections among humans, animals, and plants.

Required Time

180 Minutes

Grade Level

Grade 1 to Grade 8

Subject

Language Arts
Science
Visual Arts
First Nations, Metis, Inuit

Vocabulary

balance
form
mandala
pattern
repetition
shape

Materials

Found Objects (large flat stones)

Photograph of a Flower

Water Containers

Fine Line Markers

Marker and Water Colour Paper

Model Magic Assorted Colours

Round Paint Brushes

Acrylic Paint

Shop Crayola Products



Marker & Watercolour Pad, 60 Pages



Fine Line Markers, 12 Count



Acrylic Paint, 6 Count



Round Brush Set, 4 Count



Model Magic Classpack, Assorted Colours

Steps



Step One

1. Find a flower outside, or choose from a variety of flower images.
2. Begin at the centre of the flower and draw the image outward on sketch paper creating a balanced, circular pattern, and repeating shapes.



Step Two

1. Find a large flat stone outdoors.
2. Ask permission to use the stone in an artwork, and thank the earth for sharing the stone with you.
3. Draw the flower image onto the stone, beginning in pencil with the centre of the flower.
4. Use a balanced, circular pattern and repeat shapes and contrasting colours.
5. Trace over the pencil drawing with a black fine line marker.



Step Three

1. After viewing the artwork of artist Christi Belcourt, examine the flower drawn on the stone and decide on a variety of colours to paint the flower.
2. Paint in the style of Christi Belcourt.
3. Use the end of a paint brush to paint bead-like circles onto the flower.
4. Make sure the colours contrast with each other in different sections of the flower so that the image is clear.



Step Four

1. Fill the entire flower with colour, working from the centre outwards (similar to a mandala).
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Step Five

1. After reading about, and discussing the Seven Grandfather teachings, brainstorm the teaching of humility.
 - *What animals represent humility?*
 - *What does humility mean to you?*
 - *Share a time you have experienced humility in your life.*
 - *What do humans need to survive?*
 - *How do plants and animals help humans live?*
 - *What animal do you feel connected to? Why?*
 - *What is your relationship with animals?*
2. Reflect on the word *humility* and your relationship to plants and animals.



Step Six

1. Choose an animal you feel connected to.
2. Use Model Magic to form the animal, smoothing together separate pieces.
3. Add detail to the animal using markers that contrast with the Model Magic.



Step Seven

1. Create a self-portrait using Model Magic.
2. Mix colours together to make a variety of skin tones, for example, red, white, yellow, with some blue makes a skin tone.



Step Eight

1. Add clothes to your self-portrait using a variety of colours.
2. Use markers to add detail to your face.



Step Nine

1. Set up your self-portrait and the animal you feel connected to on top of the painted flower stone.
2. Share your sculpture with your classmates.
3. Reflect on the connections between plants, animals, and people, and the meaning of humility.



Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

1. Find and identify an interesting flower;
2. Paint the flower on a stone in the style of Christi Belcourt;
3. Use Model Magic to create 3-dimensional forms of an animal, and a self-portrait;
4. Communicate the meaning of the Grandfather teaching, *humility*, through human, animal, and plant connections/relationships; and
5. Share their understanding of the artwork, *Our Lives are in the Land*, painted in 2014 by Métis artist Christi Belcourt.

Extensions

1. Take students on a nature walk observing the plants and animals in the area. Discuss why both plants and animals are essential for life.
2. Brainstorm what we can do to help promote and care for the natural habitat in your area.
3. Have students further explore and research plants in their community, identifying and discovering the uses of local plants.
4. Explore mandalas. Discover why and how people around the world create mandalas. Have students make their own mandala.

Prepare

1. Prior to this lesson download images from the Internet, or find images in books or magazines of flowers in Ontario. The following link has a list of wild flowers growing in Ontario, [Wildflowers](#)
2. Explore the Anishnaabeg Bimaadiziwin: An Ojibwe Peoples Resource, website from Georgian College, to deepen your understanding of the 7 Grandfather teachings, use the following link, [Resource](#)
3. Download images from the Internet, or find images in books or magazines of Christi Belcourt's artwork, *Our Lives are in the Land*, (2014). The following link has images of the artwork, [Christi Belcourt](#)
4. Discuss the artwork, and the artist's intended message. Reflect on the importance of plants and animals to the lives of people.
5. The Traditional Teachings Handbook, from the Native Women's Centre will provide background information for the teacher on the 7 Grandfather Teachings from the perspective of the authors. It is available in pdf form at the following link, [Teachings Booklet](#)
6. Download the following pdf and read about the Seven Sacred Teachings, Niizhwaaswi gagiikwewin, by David Bouchard & Dr. Joseph Martin, paintings by Kristy Cameron, [Seven Sacred Teachings](#)
This pdf and or video will give you background knowledge about the 7 Grandfather teachings from the perspective of the writers.
7. Download this second link which is based on the Seven Sacred Teachings from a child's perspective, [Sacred Teachings](#)
The paintings and writings about the 'Seven Sacred Teachings' can be shared with the students. Make sure students understand who wrote the teachings and where they are from. *First Nations Peoples from different communities will have different understandings and perspectives on the 7 Grandfather teachings.*
8. Download, [The Seven Grandfather Teachings](#), by Rabbit and Bear Paws, [Seven Grandfather Teachings](#), Rabbit and Bear Paws
The Seven Grandfather Teachings, by Rabbit and Bear Paws can be shared and reflected on daily (one teaching each day) with the students.

Introduction

1. Introduce the 7 Grandfather teachings and the meaning of each human quality.
2. Have a class discussion about the Grandfather teaching *humility*, and how it is connected to the natural world and our relationship to plants and animals. Ask students to share an example from their own life in which they have made connections to the Grandfather teaching humility.
3. Introduce students to the Métis artist, Christi Belcourt. View and discuss *Our Lives are in the Land*, (2014), focus on the meaning of the images she painted, the message she is communicating, and how her painting is connected to the Grandfather teaching humility.
4. Take students on a nature walk with cameras and/or sketchbooks. Ask students to find a flower they are interested in and photograph or sketch the flower.
5. If possible, take students to an area where they can find a large flat stone. Students must ask permission before using a stone for their artwork, and remind students to give thanks to the earth for sharing the stone.

Activities

The Challenge

1. Find and identify an interesting flower.
2. Paint the flower on a stone in the style of Christi Belcourt.
3. Use Model Magic to create 3-dimensional forms of an animal, and a self-portrait.
4. Communicate the meaning of the Grandfather teaching, *humility*, through human, animal, and plant connections/relationships.
5. Share your understanding of the artwork, *Our Lives are in the Land*, painted in 2014 by Métis artist Christi Belcou

The Process

1. Ensure that everyone understands the challenge.
2. Establish success criteria with your students, for example;
 - *use of repetitive shapes and patterns to create the image of a flower;*
 - *the flower is clearly visible on the stone foundation of the sculpture;*
 - *acrylic painting of a flower is inspired from an outdoor area;*
 - *the flower is painted in the style of Christi Belcourt;*
 - *the 3-dimensional form of an animal connected to the artist is carefully constructed with detail;*
 - *the 3-dimensional form of the artist (self-portrait) is carefully constructed with detail;*
 - *together the animal, human, and painted flower create a sculpture in the round.*
3. Guide students through the steps outlined in this lesson.
4. Observe students as they work.
5. Provide individual assistance and encouragement.
6. When students have completed their artworks, ask them to reflect upon human relationships/connections with our natural world and how they represented the Grandfather teaching humility. Ask them to consider why it is essential to take care of and protect the natural world.

Sharing

1. Once all the artworks and reflections are complete ask students to set up their artworks outdoors.
2. Bring students together in a circle and invite each student to share their thoughts, feelings and reflections about their artworks.
3. During the circle discussion include references to colours, contrast, shape, form and pattern.
4. Share personal understandings of the relationships and connections between plants, animals, humans, and humility.

Assessment

1. Observe students as they work – exploring, experimenting, adding detail, thoughtful focus.
2. Listen to and observe students as they discuss the artworks – attentive listening, insightful contributions.
3. Use a checklist to track progress. (Downloads - Humility_tracking.pdf).
4. Have students reflect on their own artworks in their sketchbooks. Ask students:
 - *What worked well in your artwork? What do you see that makes you say that?*
 - *What would you change or do differently next time?*
 - *What does the Grandfather teaching humility, mean to you?*