

GAKINA AWIIYA: "We Are All Related"

Teaching and Research Viewer Guide

PBS eight's landmark series, *Ojibwe/Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look In All Directions*, celebrates an extraordinary Native American nation, the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe of the Great Lakes region. We hope that the *Ojibwe/Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look In All Directions* television series, and teaching/discussion guides for each program reflect the richness and resiliency of the past, present and future *Ojibwe* life. These guides were constructed for use in middle school and high school social studies classes, but they are very usable and appropriate for adult viewers as well. The series illuminates a vibrant, important, indigenous nation of the Great Lakes region with much to share and teach.

Episode One, *Gakina awiia*, "We Are All Related," explores the relationship of connectivity and interdependence the Anishinaabe-Ojibwe people have with the natural world surrounding them. According to the Ojibwe world-view, humans were the last in the order of creation and are dependent on all other forms of life to survive. In contrast, other forms of life are not dependent on humans. Humans are thought of as equals to other living beings. All living things have a spirit including rocks, water, air, etc. according to Ojibwe language. Therefore, spiritual and physical worlds are intermingled to such a degree that the guiding philosophy is one of great respect for the earth mother, reverence for the spirits that guide and teach, and a sense of humility, nurturing and protective responsibility in the day-to-day relationships one has with the natural environment. The Ojibwe cosmology does not make a distinction between the creation and the creator.

The cardinal directions of east, south, west, and north have representation in the cycles of the year (spring, summer, autumn, winter) as well as the cycles of life (birth, youth, middle age, elder). The circle represents this philosophy of connectivity, and interdependence. Group values emphasizing sharing, cooperation, and working together for common purpose are fundamental to the belief system of the Ojibwe. Values include taking only what you need and using all of it

with no waste. It is important to leave seed for the next generation in a sustainable model. As well, a gift of traditional plants (tobacco) or food is offered, and a prayer of thanks is said prior to taking anything from the environment. In this way respect is shown to the spirit of each living thing.

European contact brought a different set of beliefs and values into the world occupied by the Ojibwe, with significant impact on the environment. Trade with the Europeans, based on manufactured goods of metal pots, fabric, weapons, etc. made life easier and caused an increasing Tribal dependence on these goods. One of the most valuable commodities desired by European traders were the furs of beaver for hats men wore in European cities. This resulted in a concentration of trapping of beaver more than other animals, so that European goods could be purchased. Gradually, the delicately balanced cycle of subsistence and interdependence with the environment began to shift. The Ojibwe spiritual connection to the land was in cultural conflict with the European trade economy.

Later, when the Great Lakes became part of the United States, this cultural clash increased. European cultures are partially defined by the concept of individual ownership, especially of the land. The Ojibwe, however, asked, “how could you own your mother?”, meaning how can anyone own land? Ojibwe understood territory and occupying land, but ownership of an entity that is spiritual as well as physical, like the land, was a foreign and abhorrent concept. Since the young American government did not want to go to war with the tribe, it attempted to negotiate treaties that would restrict and remove the Ojibiwe while utilizing the land for the Americans. Coexistence was part of the Ojibwe belief system where land was there to be used but not abused, and it could not be bought or sold. The treaties that were enacted were based on exclusive ownership and rights that reduced the occupation of Ojibwe on the land and land privileges. Eventually, the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe agreed to the treaties with certain reserved rights and privledges. Today, these reserved rights and privledges are being excersized resulting in state and federal challenges in the courts. These rights have been upheld by by the United States Supreme Court and are being exercised on ceded territory today.

The wisdom of the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe beliefs about the connectivity and interdependence of all living things has been borne out by modern ecological science. This wisdom, which is explored in this episode, has significance for all people and for the next seven generations in the future since "We Are All Related" on this earth.

The Teacher Guide for this program consists of:

- Discussion questions and related activities to engage students and other viewers with program specific concepts prior to viewing the program.
- Guide questions to help focus the viewing experience.
- Discussion questions and related activities to reinforce or extend learned concepts following the student viewing experience.
- Assessment suggestions for learning activities.

The following themes are central to using *Gakina awiia* as a learning activity:

- The Anishinaabe-Ojibwe people of the Great Lakes have a cultural tradition of living in accord and harmony with the physical and spiritual worlds around them.
- Nurturing respect, reverence, and coexistence with all things on the land is a central tenet of harmonious living and cultural identity among the Ojibwe.
- Cultural contact with European cultures resulted in a value clash between use and ownership of the land. This cultural contact eroded traditional Ojibwe values and life style.
- Treaties with European and United States agencies reflected this value clash and restricted the territory and land privileges of the Ojibwe.
- The Ojibwe Tribal governments have had their treaty rights upheld in the courts and are currently using natural resource management to help restore the traditional methods of living in physical and spiritual harmony with the natural world.

Suggested Discussion Questions and Activities *before* Viewing the Program

1. Students should know the basic geography of the Great Lakes region: where is the land located, what states are these today, what are the some of the major land and water forms; what are the natural resources of the region (water, timber, wildlife, fish, etc.)
2. Students should break into small cooperative groups of four or five students and brainstorm how geography and climate affect culture (how people live, what they eat, housing, clothing, group size and structure, etc. according to where they live).
3. Students compile a list of what they know or assume about the environment. This should be divided into two sections: "What sustains the environment" and "What destructs the environment."
4. Each student cooperative group should jointly compose a definition for the word "Treaty." With this definition, each group composes at least three questions that should be understood by any group considering a treaty.

A partial glossary of words, terms, and names significant to the program include:

- *Gakina awiiya: We are all related*
- Anishinaabe-Ojibwe
- Sustainability
- Treaty
- Sovereignty
- Negotiations
- Culture clash
- Manifest destiny
- Treaty rights
- Annuity payments
- Removal
- Chief Buffalo
- Treaty of 1837,1842,1854

- Allotment
- 1934 Indian Reorganization Act
- AIM- American Indian Movement
- Voight Decision (1983)
- Seventh Generation Concept
- Tribal Government

Maps

- Great Lakes, showing land and water forms
- Maps showing the extent of Ojibwe occupation at different times

Guide Questions to Focus Viewing

1. What were the European values that were different than the Ojibwe during initial periods of contact?
2. What was the impact on the environment and the Ojibwe culture as a result of the European values being utilized?
3. How did the major treaties affect Ojibwe culture and the environment? Be specific.
4. How did these historic events affect the Ojibwe and the Great Lakes environment today?

Discussion Questions and Activities *Following Viewing the Program*

1. What challenges to both the Ojibwe culture and to the environment remain today?
2. How are the Ojibwe currently relating to the land where they are located?
3. As a research project, students working in small groups can select an area of land in their state to research. Research is conducted on the tribe that was living in this area, the treaty that affected this region, and where the tribe is today that were originally living there. The student group creates a timeline of events that occurred from indigenous people living there through treaties to the local tribe today located on reservations in the state or evolved differently. This research and timeline can be illustrated and presented orally to

other groups to determine more clearly the tribal relationship to the land of a particular state. These presentations can be videotaped and played on cable access television or donated to local libraries for community education.

Assessment Suggestions

- The students can be assessed on the quality of thought and participation in the previewing activities: Brainstorming about the effect of geography and climate on culture; what the students know/assume about the environment; and the definition and questions on a treaty.
- The first two post-viewing discussion questions can be used as group work, preparing students for the final assessment, which is the research project.

The research project, identifying the historic tribe from a selected land base and tracing their location today, is a group project, but each student in the group must be responsible for a section of the research and a portion of the construction of the resulting presentation. The object of this project is to become familiar with the tribal connection to land locally. Historical data can be interpreted according to specific viewpoints.