



pīsim miskam ōmiskanaw

# PĪSIM

## Finds Her Miskanaw

BOOK ONE



By William Dumas  
Illustrated by Leonard Paul



## Teacher's Guide

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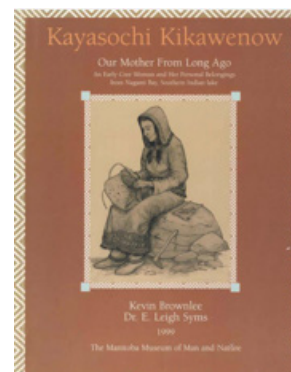


# Foreword

## The Story Behind the Story

### The Archaeology

In 1993, the remains of a Rocky Cree woman who lived more than 350 years ago were found at Nagami Bay (Onākaāmihk) by two South Indian Lake fishermen, Bruce Tait and Bob Moose. Nagami Bay is on the west shore of Southern Indian Lake, Manitoba. The next year, community members from South Indian Lake and archaeologists from the Manitoba Museum worked together to recover the find in a manner respecting and honouring Rocky Cree spirituality and traditions. The story of this woman's life was pieced together based on her remains and her possessions and was captured in the book *Kayasochi Kikawenow, Our Mother from Long Ago* by archaeologists Kevin Brownlee and E. Leigh Syms.



👉 See Map: The Nagami Bay Site

After Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw “shared her teachings” – the words used by archaeologist, Kevin Brownlee, a member of Kinosao Sipi Cree Nation - she was respectfully brought home for reburial in South Indian Lake in 1997.

Rocky Cree Elders told the archaeologists that artifacts found at ancient campsites, like the one where Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw was found, are gifts from the ancestors. The Elders also believe that the woman from Nagami Bay allowed herself to be found so that today's Rocky Cree might gain a better understanding of their heritage. Brownlee and Sims used the science of archaeology to explore and learn about the ancient ways of the Rocky Cree.

### Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw

Brownlee and Sims determined that Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw lived in the region of Southern Indian Lake in northern Manitoba around 1665. They could not determine how she died, but through scientific analysis they could gather information and clues about how she lived. Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw wore a simple dress overtop knee-high leggings and a belt around her waist. Her moccasins were pointed with a seam up the middle. Several thousand pin cherry seed beads were sewn onto her hood, and her dress was decorated with porcupine quills. In her hair, she had beads made from glass, red pipestone, and rabbit and bird bone tubes.

#### TEACHER TIP

South Indian Lake refers to the community, while Southern Indian Lake refers to the lake. South Indian Lake is on the southeast shore of Southern Indian Lake and has a current population of approximately 800 people. It is the main settlement of O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation. Southern Indian Lake is a vast expanse of water and is the fourth largest lake in Manitoba.

Brownlee and Sims determined that Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw and her family were camping at Nagami Bay during a warm period of the year. Her death would have been a great loss to her family. She was placed on her right side facing the water with her head to the north. She was buried with tools she



used every day: awls for sewing, scrapers for working hides, knives for cutting meat, and whetstones for sharpening her tools. Her shallow grave was covered with earth and a cairn of rocks. After her burial and ceremony, the family would have left and continued their seasonal round.

Both Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw's remains and her possessions give us an insight into her life and that of the Rocky Cree. Although she lived in an area rich in natural resources, she had lived through several food shortages as a child. She was thought to be 25-years-old at the time of her death, was about 5'1" and had given birth a number of times. She was in general good health.

The goods buried with her mostly consisted of traditional tools and materials from local sources. Some of the goods came from farther away; for example, the red pipestone beads came from Minnesota and; the glass beads came from the Great Lakes area to the east which had contact with European traders. The goods tell a story of a healthy existence within and reliance on the natural world and of long-distance, established trade networks. In the period in which Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw lived, Europeans had not yet arrived in the Rocky Cree territory of northern Manitoba even though some of their trade goods had via these trade networks.

### **William Dumas and *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw***

Author William Dumas is Rocky Cree from South Indian Lake. He is a long-time educator and a renowned storyteller. He always wanted the story of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw to be accessible to Rocky Cree young people so they could learn about their own history and to all young people so they too could learn about the Rocky Cree. He decided a historically based picture book would be the right form. Inspired by the archaeological find, Dumas developed *Pisim Finds her Miskanaw* using a number of sources, including his own experiences of his Rocky Cree culture and territory and the oral stories he has heard and told throughout his life. Other people, community members from South Indian Lake and researchers from the University of Winnipeg, helped him to draw from other source materials, including from oral history, linguistics, archaeology, anthropology, and picture book studies.

Published in 2013, *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* is an historical fiction. Dumas imagines what Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw was like and what she was doing as a 13-year-old girl. He calls this girl Pisim. Like Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw, Pisim is Rocky Cree and lives on Southern Indian Lake in the mid-1600's before Europeans arrived in the area. The book is beautifully illustrated by Leonard Paul, who is a Mi'kmaq artist from Nova Scotia. Paul's illustrations for the book, which won the Canadian Archaeological Association's 2014 Public Communications Award, are based in many hours of archival research at the Manitoba Museum. The book follows Pisim and her family over seven days as they traverse the stunning landscape of Southern Indian Lake to end with Pisim 'finding her miskana' – her life journey/purpose.

### **Historical Fiction**

Historical fiction is a literary genre that presents a story set in the past, typically during a significant period in time or era. The era and setting are the crux of historical fiction. Because the author is writing about a particular time in history, the information about the time period and locale must be accurate and authentic. Authors must know how people lived, what clothes they wore, what they ate, how they organized their family lives, what their cultures and beliefs were, and what material goods were a common part of their lives.

Historical fiction may include fictional characters, well-known historical figures, or a mixture of the two. Characters often deal with actual events that occurred but are depicted in a way that has not been recorded in history. Oftentimes, the time period complements a story's narrative, forming a

framework and background for the characters' lives. Sometimes, historical fiction can be for the most part true, but the names of people and places have been in some way altered. The genre can be applied to many types of narratives, including novels, plays, film, television, video games, graphic novels, and, like *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*, picture books.

Historical fiction brings the past alive in ways that differ from archaeology and history. Although *Kayasochi Kikawenow, Our Mother from Long Ago* by Kevin Brownlee and E. Leigh Syms offers us many rich details about the Rocky Cree in the seventeenth century, Dumas's *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* additionally creates characters who think, feel, and interact with each other – all within an historically accurate setting.

## Who are the Rocky Cree?

The Asiniskaw Īthiniwak, or Rocky Cree, are a distinct group of Cree-speaking people living in the northern boreal forest of western Canada. In Manitoba, they share borders with the Dene to the north, the Muskego Cree to the south and the Inuit to the east. The Rocky Cree speak the *th* dialect of the Cree language, which differentiates it from the *y* dialect of the Plains Cree and the *n* dialect of the Muskego (Swampy) Cree. They are the most northern Cree in western Canada. The traditional territory of the Rocky Cree is found in the boreal forest located within the Canadian Shield. The boreal forest region is a mix of deciduous and coniferous forest – white and black spruce, jackpine, trembling aspen, and some birch - marshes, rocks, and muskeg extending from British Columbia through Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and eastward to Ontario and Quebec.

The Misinipi, or Churchill River, is the lifeline that connects the Rocky Cree people within their territory from Manitoba to northern Alberta. It has been home to the Rocky Cree since time immemorial. Drawing upon their knowledge of the environment, they carefully planned their movements to hunt, trap, and fish following the seasons. Possessing an intimate knowledge of their physical geography, they have survived by living off the land.

All of the necessities of life were provided for the Rocky Cree in their territory. Alongside the rich forests are berry producing shrubs like saskatoon, pincherry, raspberry, blueberry, and gooseberry. Moose and woodland caribou are found throughout the area, as are bear, wolf, wolverine, lynx, fox, martin, weasel, otter, and fisher. Though totally self-sufficient in their territory, they traded for items not found locally.

The Rocky Cree maintained their livelihood by collecting nature's bounty during their seasonal travels. Their primary transportation was the birch bark canoe and they travelled their territory via countless waterways. Trading was an integral part of Rocky Cree culture and trade networks were well-established prior to contact with Europeans. Camps were set up on the trade routes near waterways with tents constructed around a main fire. Because families were on the move most of the time, women in childbirth often had their babies on the trail.

### TEACHER TIP

Asiniskaw means 'plentiful rock/rocky' and Īthiniwak means 'human beings/the people'. The preferred English term for the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak in Manitoba is Rocky Cree although sometimes Rock Cree has been used. The Rocky Cree have also been called Woodland Cree or Woods Cree. You might still come across these names for the Rocky Cree in textbooks or on websites.

There were seasonal gatherings to communicate, to share food, to trade, to harvest birchbark, to participate in ceremonies, games, and dancing, and to recognize courtship, arrange marriages, and acknowledge rites of passage.

Storytelling and oral tradition were centrepieces of Rocky Cree culture and served a range of purposes from entertainment to the teaching of social norms, history, kinship patterns, and moral lessons. These stories embody the experiences of the Rocky Cree and their ways of knowing.

The Rocky Cree were one of the first Indigenous nations west of Hudson Bay to engage in trade with European fur traders. While European trade goods arrived in the area in the mid-1600's, likely from the region around the Great Lakes, fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Company arrived shortly after 1680.

#### **Rocky Cree communities in Manitoba today:**

- South Indian Lake / pìponapiwin
- Brochet / kisipikamāhk
- Nelson House / nìsicawayasihk
- Granville Lake / okawī mithikananihk
- Mathias Colomb - Pukatawagan / pakitawāhk anik
- Marcel Colomb - Black Sturgeon Falls / kahkitināmiw

 *See Map: Rocky Cree Communities in Manitoba*

## **Where does Pīsim's Story Take Place?**

### **Geographic Setting**

Southern Indian Lake along which Pīsim's journey takes place is an expansion of the Churchill River. The lake measures about 200 kilometres from tip to tip, has a complex shoreline and is dotted with many small islands, long peninsulas, and deep bays. The lake is known for its abundance of fish. Nineteen species of fish inhabit it, including whitefish, jackfish, pickerel, and sturgeon. In the spring, spawning results in even higher fish counts.

 *See Map: Southern Indian Lake, Manitoba*

Pīsim's trip takes place over seven days during the Spring season known as Mithoskāmin (Good Travel). She and her family paddle each day, stopping at traditionally named camp sites. They are travelling to celebrate and partake in the annual Spring Gathering. Use **F.1 Pīsim's Journey** to help students familiarize themselves with the whole journey. Explore the maps in the picture book app and the Journey to the Spring Gathering map on p. 47 of the picture book.



## Pīsim's Journey

Day 1	<b>Onihcāwikinisihk</b> "place where you raise your children"
Day 2	<b>Mistahī wapahk</b> "big narrows"
Day 3	<b>Āpisiwāpāsihk</b> "little narrows"
Day 4	<b>Mōsominiwatimihk</b> "moose point"
Day 5	<b>Wapiciwanōhk</b> "Hole in the Wall"
Day 6	<b>Kahkakiniyahk</b> "crow point"
Day 7	<b>Spring Gathering</b>

## Placing the Story in Time

<b>Time of the Rocky Cree Ancestors</b>	Ancestors of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak or Rocky Cree people live in the northern boreal forest region of western Canada and practice their traditional ways of life on the land. Rocky Cree communities are self-sufficient and self-governing and live a lifestyle of seasonal hunting, trapping and fishing, and move from place to place as natural conditions require. They have trade networks with other First Nation groups along the coast and to the east but no direct contact with Europeans.
<b>Arrival of Europeans (early 1600s)</b>	The Asiniskaw Īthiniwak hear stories about these foreigners and the strange objects they brought with them to trade, but it is unlikely that the Rocky Cree at this period did any direct trading of goods with Europeans.
<b>1611</b>	Henry Hudson, a British navigator in search of the Northwest Passage, perishes with his crew in what has become known as Hudson's Bay. Local Rocky Cree camps hear about the arrival of Mithistowīwak or hairy-faced men who want to trade goods with First Nations in other areas, including a story about trading between northern coastal people and Henry Hudson, but there is no record of their having met.
<b>1619 – 1620</b>	Danish explorer Jens Munk and his expedition set up camp at the mouth of the Churchill River (Misinipi), while in search of the Northwest Passage. Many of his men die over the winter, but they leave behind some log structures and European artifacts. These traces are likely found by the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak or Rocky Cree people of the region.
<b>About 1640</b>	Jesuit missionaries first mention contact with Cree groups in the area west of James Bay.
<b>Proto-contact 1654 – 1682</b>	Archaeological studies identify this period as the time just before direct contact with Europeans, when traditional Indigenous culture was not yet subject to great change due to European influence. During this period some European items begin to appear in Rocky Cree territory: metal knives, axes, copper kettles, needles, beads, thread and cloth. These artifacts may have been traded among several First Nations in the Great Lakes or the northern coastal areas before finally arriving in the camp of the Rocky Cree.
<b>About 1665</b>	At about this time in the proto-contact period, a Rocky Cree woman is buried at Nagami Bay, Southern Indian Lake. At this point the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak people have not yet met the European newcomers to North America, and they are living their traditional way of life with little European influence. However, some European trade goods had trickled into their territory, as shown in this Rocky Cree burial site. The remains and personal belonging of the woman found at the sacred burial site will eventually become the subject of the picture book about Pisim.

<b>Post-contact</b>	<p>This period begins with the appearance of a large number of European goods as a result of the fur trade forts and the arrival of many European traders in the region. The time range for this period differs across Canada, depending upon when Europeans first made contact with various Indigenous nations. In northern Manitoba, there was a different contact period for the coastal Cree on Hudson Bay than for the inland or Rocky Cree to whom Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw belonged.</p>
<b>Fur Trade Period 17th to 19th Century</b>	<p>During this period the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company rapidly develop and compete for the fur trade in the west and north. The fur trade companies are dependent on the help of First Nations of the region as guides, interpreters, hunters and teachers, as well as suppliers of raw fur.</p> <p><b>1668</b> The Nonsuch leaves London to trade for furs in the Hudson Bay region.</p> <p><b>1670</b> The Hudson's Bay Company is established, beginning the European struggle for the northwest. With the guidance of Indigenous peoples, Europeans explore the portages and waterways leading to the Arctic Ocean, and the Churchill River (Misinipi) comes to be used as a "fur trade highway".</p> <div data-bbox="980 596 1404 814"> <p><b>TEACHER TIP</b></p> <p>Students may visit the life-size replica of the original ship in the Nonsuch Gallery of the Manitoba Museum</p> </div> <p><b>1684</b> Until its closing in 1957, York Factory at the mouth of the Nelson River served as a trading post, distribution point and centre for a vast network of HBC fur posts.</p> <p><b>1690</b> Henry Kelsey leaves York Factory and with his First Nations guides travels the Hayes and Saskatchewan rivers and spends the winter near The Pas, Manitoba, before striking out on foot across the prairie.</p> <p><b>1715</b> Thanadelthur, a Chipewyan woman, helps to negotiate peace between the Cree and Dene peoples along the coastal region of Hudson Bay.</p> <p><b>1730s</b> Construction of fur trade forts in the northwest, including Fort Prince of Wales at the mouth of the Churchill River.</p> <p><b>1731 – 1771</b> The Hudson's Bay Company builds Fort Prince of Wales at the mouth of the Churchill River on Hudson's Bay to defend the fur trade against French traders. The HBC constructs fur trade forts at the mouths of the major rivers flowing into Hudson's Bay. First Nations trappers bring their furs to the forts for trade.</p> <div data-bbox="1016 1176 1448 1428"> <p><b>TEACHER TIP</b></p> <p>Further Study: Cree Writer David Alexander has created a graphic novel about the life of Thanadelthur called <i>The Peacemaker: Thanadelthur</i>.</p> </div>
<b>1871 to 1921 Colonial Expansion and Numbered Treaties</b>	<p>Although the growing fur trade depended on the collaboration of the First Nations, it also led to migration and cultural loss for many of the Cree communities in the northwest. After Confederation in 1867, the Dominion of Canada seeks to expand its territory and establish a railroad from east to west through Indigenous lands. Cree chiefs of this period strove to uphold traditional ways of life and protect the interests of their people in the face of European settlement, environmental change and the loss of traditional lands through treaties with the Crown and the establishment of reserves. Mistahimaskwa or Big Bear (d. 1888), Pitikwahanapiwiynor Poundmaker (1842 – 1886) and Piapot (1816-1908) – all tried to maintain traditional Cree culture and protect their people against the subsequent loss of land, independence and self-governance.</p>



<b>1800s</b>	Residential schools were established to assimilate Indigenous peoples to the dominant Canadian culture and religion. This system continued until the 1970s.
<b>1908</b>	The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN) people of Nelson House, Thompson, and South Indian Lake sign the adhesion to Treaty 5, creating the NCN reserve.
<b>1950s</b>	Plans begin for the construction of dams and power plants in northern Manitoba as part of the Nelson River hydroelectric project.
<b>1973 – 1976</b>	Manitoba Hydro constructs the Churchill River Diversion to redirect the flow of the upper Churchill River (Misinipi) into the Nelson River. As a result of this project, flooding dramatically alters the Southern Indian Lake area. The reduced flow of the Misinipi has a long-term impact on fur-bearing animals, shorebirds, waterfowl and fish populations of the area.
<b>June 1993</b>	As a result of flooding and shoreline erosion on Southern Indian Lake, two residents, Bruce Tait and Bob Moose, from the community of South Indian Lake, find a sacred burial site at the south end of Nagami Bay, on the western side of the lake. Since this woman was a young mother of about 25 years old at the time of her death, she is referred to as Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw, “our mother from long ago”.
<b>1994</b>	The community of South Indian Lake and Historic Resources Branch collaborate to recover the story of the life of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw based on her remains and the belongings uncovered in the original burial site.
<b>1997</b>	The remains of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw are respectfully brought home for reburial at South Indian Lake.
<b>1999</b>	Manitoba Museum publishes the book <i>Kayasochi Kikawenow, Our Mother from Long Ago</i> (Kevin Brownlee and Dr. E. Leigh Sims).
<b>2005</b>	December 22, 2005 O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (OPCN) is recognized as a First Nation by leaders of the community of South Indian Lake, representatives of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and representatives of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.
<b>2013</b>	The story of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw (Pisim) is retold in story book form for young people by William Dumas and illustrated by Leonard Paul.
<b>2018</b>	The Clean Environment Commission of Manitoba issues a report based on submissions from community groups on the Nelson, Burntwood and Churchill River systems on the impact of Hydro development in the region. The report describes environmental harms such as declining fish and wildlife and difficulty in travelling due to higher water levels in the area.

#### TEACHER TIP



Have the students complete the Rocky Cree Timeline using ‘[F.2 Rocky Cree Timeline](#)’ at the end of the Foreword.

## Six Seasons of Rocky Cree



The Rocky Cree traditional culture has a model of the weather cycles based on generations of observation of environmental conditions and experience surviving in rhythm with seasonal changes. *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* is the first of six picture books for each of the traditional Rocky Cree six seasons. It takes place in Mithoskāmin, or the season of good travel, after the waterways have broken up to permit canoe travel.

In the Rocky Cree seasonal calendar, each season has two moon cycles of 28 days, and each moon is named to describe the natural conditions observed by Elders in their natural surroundings. The chart on the following page identifies all the Rocky Cree seasons and moons and the corresponding months in the conventional Canadian calendar.

Rocky Cree Season	Conventional Season	Rocky Cree Moon	Calendar Month
<i>sikwan</i> (Rattling in)	Spring	<i>Eagle Moon</i>	March
		<i>Goose Moon</i>	April
<i>mithoskāmin</i> (Good Travel)	Break-up	<i>Frog Moon</i>	May
		<i>Egg Laying Moon</i>	June
<i>nīpin</i> (Gifts from Water)	Summer	<i>Egg Hatching Moon</i>	July
		<i>Moulting Moon</i>	August
<i>tākwākin</i> (Adding-up)	Fall (Autumn)	<i>Flying Moon</i>	September
		<i>Getting Ready Moon</i>	September
		<i>Flying Back Moon</i>	October
<i>mikiskaw</i> (Plenty of Beads)	Freeze-up	<i>Freeze-up Moon</i>	November
		<i>Hoar Frost Moon</i>	December
<i>ipon</i> (Snow Blanket)	Winter	<i>Elder Moon</i>	January
		<i>Wind Clearing Moon</i>	February

The conventional astronomical calendar is based on the hours of sunlight, with the solstices and equinoxes marking the beginning and end of the seasons.

**In the Northern hemisphere the four seasons are divided as follows:**

- Spring begins on the spring equinox in March (night and day of equal length)
- Summer begins on the summer solstice in June (longest daylight hours)
- Fall or autumn begins on the fall equinox in September (night and day of equal length)
- Winter begins on the winter solstice in December (shortest daylight hours)



## Using the Teacher Guide

*Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw: Teacher's Guide* is intended to aid educators in exploring the picture book and picture book app in class. It presents five thematic modules that include teaching strategies with suggested connections to Manitoba middle years curricula in Social Studies, Science, English Language Arts, Health, and the Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts) as well as Rocky Cree culture and language. Many of the suggested scenarios are readily linked to cross-curricular themes in Indigenous studies, land-based education, and education for sustainable development. Each learning activity is linked with an icon indicating a curricular entry point. Those addressed in the learning activity are highlighted in orange. Even if teachers print the guide in black and white, they will still be able to recognize which curricular links apply as they will appear darker.

SS	Social Studies	SS
ELA	English	ELA
RC	Rocky Cree	RC
A	Arts	A
S	Science	S
H	Heath/ Physical Education	H

The Foreword includes historical, archaeological, geographic, cultural, and linguistic information for the teacher about *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*. It also includes a timeline and maps to help set context to Pisim's story. The Appendix Curriculum Connections offers teachers curricular links to Manitoba learning outcomes and supporting pedagogical information. The Guide is also supplemented by a picture book app with visual and audio supports in English and Cree. The app is described further below.

## Modules and Suggested Learning Activities

*Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw: Teacher's Guide* offers five thematic modules:

1. *Maci pimahamīyin kī miskanaw* (Starting Your Path): Introducing the Book
2. *Otinawāsōwin*: The Gift of Bringing Life into the World
3. *Miskanaw*: Life Journey
4. *Wawanaskiwin*: Orienteering Oneself with the Land
5. *Acimowina*: The Power of Storytelling

An **Enduring Understanding** describes the essential learning to be explored in each module. **Key Concepts, Key Words** in Rocky Cree, and **Guiding Questions** are provided to help frame the teaching strategies and focus student learning.

Each module provides a guiding suite of learning activities organized by sub-theme. Teaching strategies are linked to extracts from the book and fortified with printable Blackline Masters which appear in-text in bold green font (and again will still be easily identifiable in black and white). Blackline Masters and additional Teacher Resources are located at the end of each module.

## Module 1: Maci pimahamīyin kī miskanaw (Starting Your Path): Introducing the Book



Module theme

Enduring Understanding

### *Sipi nisohtamowin: Enduring Understanding*

“The Elders believe that the appearance of burials of their ancestors that have been found eroding out of the banks of the Churchill, Nelson, Rat and Burntwood rivers are happening for a reason.”

“These are gifts from the ancestors to today’s generation. They are to be used by our youth to learn about the old ways and gain respect for the past.”

*Kayasochi Kikawenow, Our Mother from Long Ago, (K. Brownlee and E. Syms, 1999)*

### Key Concepts:

Rocky Cree cultural practices, beliefs, oral tradition, values

### Key Words:

maci pimahamīyin kī miskanaw means starting your path. The word is broken down as maci (starting); pima (moving forward); hamī (walking); yin (act of moving); kī (your); miskanaw (path)

### Guiding Questions:

What are the big ideas in this book?

Key Concepts,  
Key Words,  
Guiding Questions

Extract from  
*Pism Finds her Miskanaw*

Module  
sub-theme

## Kiskinwahamakiwin: Teaching Strategies

“This book symbolizes the birth of a sacred bundle. It is a gift to the children of today who are seeking their identity.” –PFM, Introduction, p. 2

### Placing the Book in Context

ELA  
RC  
A  
S  
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This picture book tells the story of a week in the life of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw, or Pism, when she was 13 years old. The story, based on oral history and artifacts found at Nagami Bay at Southern Indian Lake, uses historical fiction to share the thoughts and feelings of Rocky Cree ancestors who lived before direct contact with European culture.

Read aloud the Introduction to the *Pism Finds Her Miskanaw*. Present and discuss the context and history of the book by referring to the background information about its history, geography, and archeology in the Foreword.

Ask students to work in pairs to complete the student resource **1.1 Observer Questions: 5 W's and 1 H**, answering as many questions as they can at this point. They may keep the sheet to fill in the answers as they move forward in their study of the book.

### Reading a Picture Book

In a picture book, all the images, the design, and the written text combine to tell the story. To read a picture book, students need to learn to attentively

Teaching  
Strategy

Blackline  
Master

# Indigenous Pedagogy

“Before the introduction of European-style education, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children acquired knowledge, skills, and values by observing, by listening, by doing, and by dreaming. Education did not take place in classrooms at a particular time of the day but was an integral part of community life that occurred where and as needed. Education meant teaching children to function within the community and to prepare for their adult lives as contributing members of their societies. Adults were role models from whom children learned practical necessities as well as respect for traditional ways and the laws of relationship that governed life. The wisdom of Elders was particularly esteemed. Through the retelling of stories, values and traditions were affirmed. All life was part of a great whole. Humans were related to, interacted with, and shared interdependency with all of nature: plants, animals, water, stars, rocks, and the very earth itself. Teachings were holistic and addressed all aspects of a child’s being: mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual.”

*Current Topics in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies*, p. 3-8

[https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/abedu/foundation\\_gr12/cluster3.pdf](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/abedu/foundation_gr12/cluster3.pdf)

Historically, public education in Canada has played a significant role in the colonization of Indigenous people by its failure to meaningfully include Indigenous knowledge, history, and worldviews in curricula. The story of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw, a Rocky Cree woman who had never met Europeans, is a gift from the past. The story is best approached using the holistic principles of traditional Indigenous teaching and learning. The following principles may be useful to guide teachers’ lesson planning:

*Balance:* planning lessons so that they address the whole person, including the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions of learning. This means offering opportunities to share, reflect on and celebrate personal growth.

*Respect for oral tradition:* including opportunities for telling stories, active listening, singing songs, learning by sharing, and learning by mentorship. This may include prepared visits with Elders or Knowledge Keepers in the community.

*Learning by experience:* incorporating hands-on learning, visual learning, arts-based and place-based activities inside and outside the classroom, including land-based learning experiences.

*Building relationships and cultural identity:* offering many occasions to practice, talk about, and celebrate their culture so as to build identity and nurture harmonious relationships.

**Manitoba curriculum documents are organized into three phases of learning:**

- Activating: connect to previous knowledge, awaken curiosity, consider interests and needs
- Acquiring: observation, guided practice, building autonomy, visioning, struggling, collaborating
- Applying: acting, sharing, doing, connecting, preserving

These three phases of learning are implicit in the suggested teaching strategies presented in each module and are consistent with Indigenous approaches to teaching and learning. In Rocky Cree pedagogy, the learning process also involves a fourth phase: the formal recognition of achievement through shared celebration. This may be employed as a culminating experience at the end of a module or learning project.



## Source:

Information on Indigenous ways of teaching and learning described above is drawn from the following documents on the website of the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate of Manitoba Education and Training:

- *Current Topics in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies*  
[https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/abedu/foundation\\_gr12/introduction.pdf](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/abedu/foundation_gr12/introduction.pdf)
- *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit*  
<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/its-our-time/index.html>

## Revitalizing the Rocky Cree Language

Revitalizing the Rocky Cree language is an essential part of revitalizing Rocky Cree culture and identity. This guide teaches the Rocky Cree language by developing an in depth understanding of several key words for each module pertaining to the module theme. In focusing on vocabulary depth, students will learn what each key word means in English, and how to break it down into its sound components to find root words. Understanding the roots within each word helps Rocky Cree language learners to see both the nuances of the word, which the English translation cannot capture, and the connections among words. Students will also develop a greater understanding of the key words through sub-module activities, which reinforce their connections to the Rocky Cree worldview.

### TEACHER TIP

Depth of vocabulary knowledge refers to how well a language learner understands the nuances of individual words of a language, while vocabulary breadth refers to the number of words of which a learner has at least some superficial knowledge.

Sipi nisohtamowin and Kiskinwahamakiwin are two words users of this guide will see at the beginning of each module. We have used these words as equivalents to concepts with which teachers will be familiar: Enduring Understanding and Teaching Strategies. Following the model used throughout the guide for its Key Words, here are the breakdowns for each word:

Sipi nisohtamowin means enduring knowledge that stays with you a long time.

The word is broken down as sipi (long); nist (cognitive processes); ohta (act of doing); mo (feeding or eating); win (mastery)

Kiskinwahamakiwin means how we teach.

The word is broken down as kiski (remembering something); nwaha (the existing route); maki (giving or teaching); win (mastery)

We hope that by beginning each Module with Sipi nisohtamowin and Kiskinwahamakiwin we encourage teachers to begin practicing and thinking in Rocky Cree and help inspire them to teach their students key words in Rocky Cree.

For schools and programs seeking greater language instruction than this guide can offer, the *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* picture book app is fully available to readers/players in Rocky Cree (both through the oral narration and in written Roman orthography and syllabics), making them a substantial resource for immersion programs.

## ***Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* Picture Book App**

*Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* has been published as a [picture book app](#) as well as a picture book. The app can be used as a stand-alone version of the story or as a supplemental text to accompany the picture book. It has been designed for use on devices with an iOS operating system and is ideally viewed on an iPad, although it is also formatted to be playable on an iPhone. It is free to download from the Apple store.

Before using the app in your classroom, spend some time exploring the material and the options outlined in the menu. You will notice that the Introduction, a diagram of the characters in the story (with both their names and their relationships to *Pisim* noted), a glossary of many of the Cree terms used in the book, a map of the journey that takes place in the story, and a description of the Six Seasons project are all available as supporting information for the story itself. You will also notice that you can choose to turn the narration on or off: when the narration is turned on, you will hear Carol Prince reading the story and the notes aloud; when the narration is turned off, you can read the story and the notes at your own pace. You also have the choice to turn the music and sound effects on or off. Finally, you have the option to listen to the story and the notes read aloud in English or in Cree, and to read the story and notes either in Roman orthography or in a syllabics translation.

The app differs from the picture book version in that the screen that replicates each double-page spread of the picture book shows readers only the illustration that accompanies the story in the picture book. The text for each spread appears when you tap on the right side of the screen, where you can see a shadow of part of the text box; the spoken narration begins at this point, too, if you have the narration turned on. The story notes that appear in the margins of the picture book are available to readers of the app through hotspots embedded in the illustrations that shimmer from time to time until readers have located and tapped on them. Readers can check to see whether they have found all of the story notes by clicking on the Knowledge Album button at the bottom of the screen: the notes they have discovered will appear in colour; the ones they have yet to discover will be greyed out. Readers can also see how the notes can be organized into different categories by sorting them through the various options listed on the bottom left of the Knowledge Album screen.

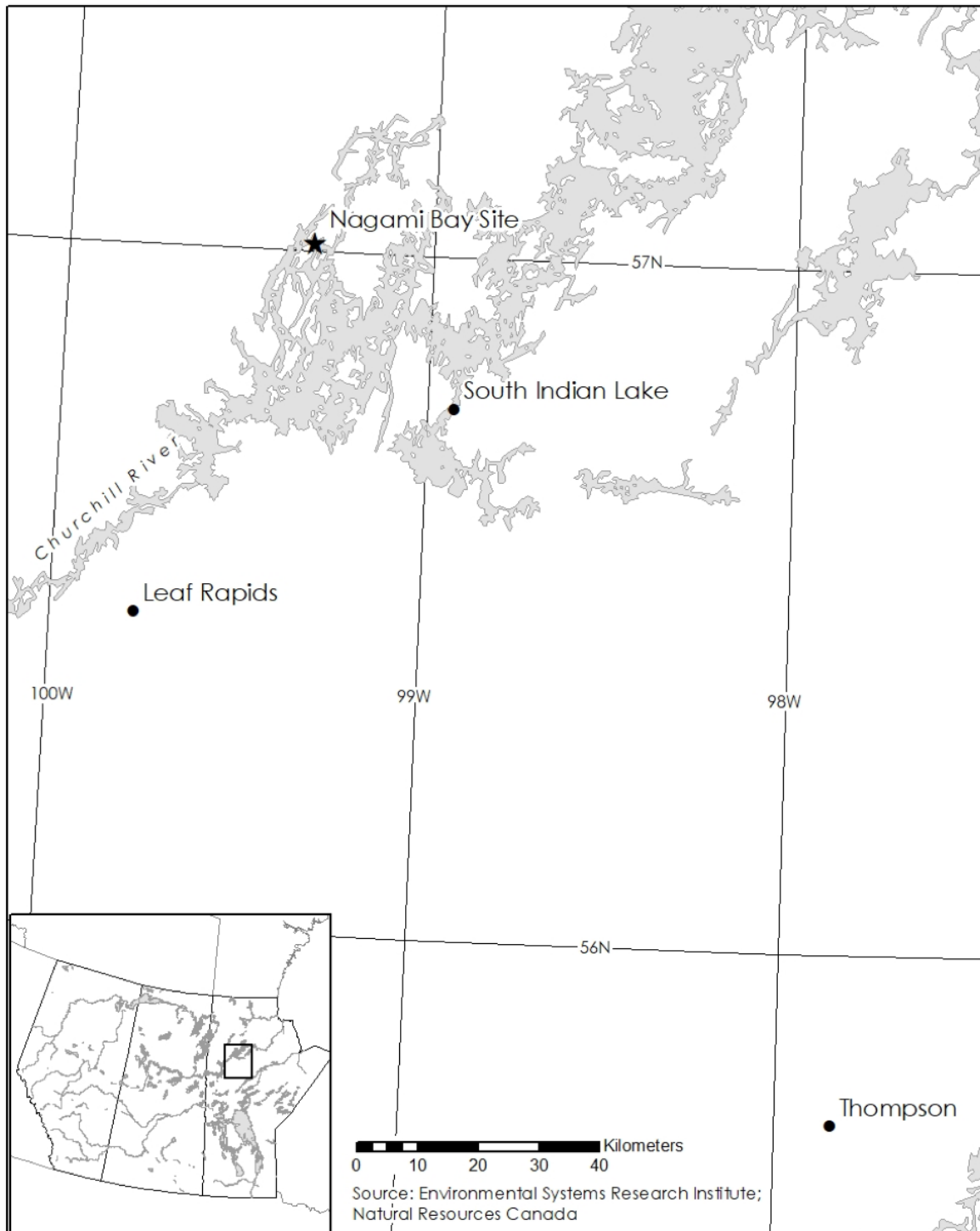
There are two ways to move through the story. The default mode is to experience the story day by day, as the picture book is organized. This is done by tapping on the buttons representing each screen from left to right on the navigation bar. Readers can, however, also choose to move around among the days of the journey without moving through each of the days: using the drop-down menu under Day 1, they can choose to move to the story of any one of the days. This feature will likely be particularly useful for readers who want to re-read sections of the story. When readers click on Map in the navigation bar at the top of the screen, they can see the whole journey or choose to look in more detail at one part of the journey of the story by tapping on the button that marks the geographical place from which the family sets out on that day of their journey.

There are two games that readers can choose to play as they move through the app, the Gather a Bundle game and the Pack the Canoe game. These games will be described in Module 1 and Module 3 respectively.

## Maps

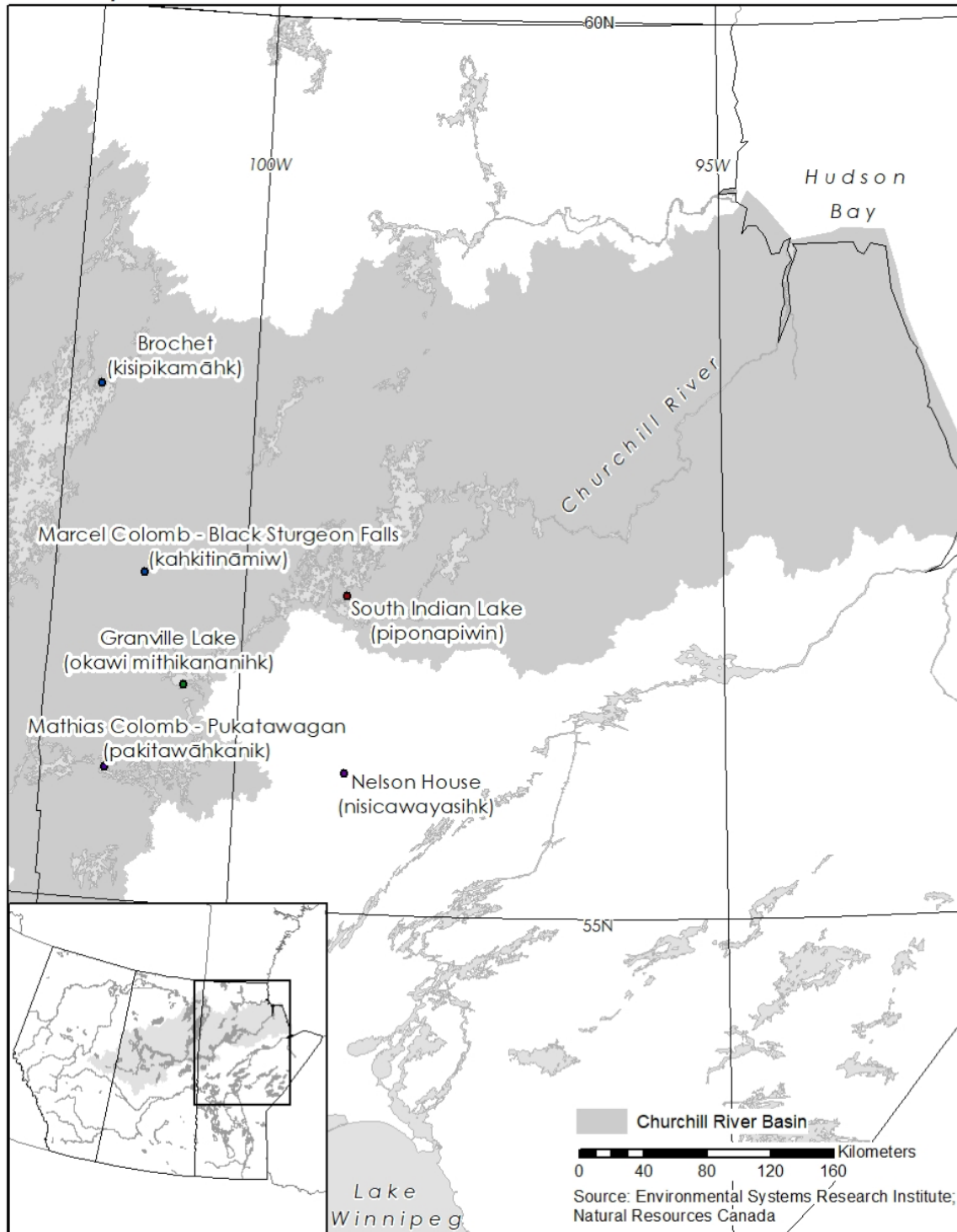
### Map: The Nagami Bay Site

#### The Nagami Bay Site

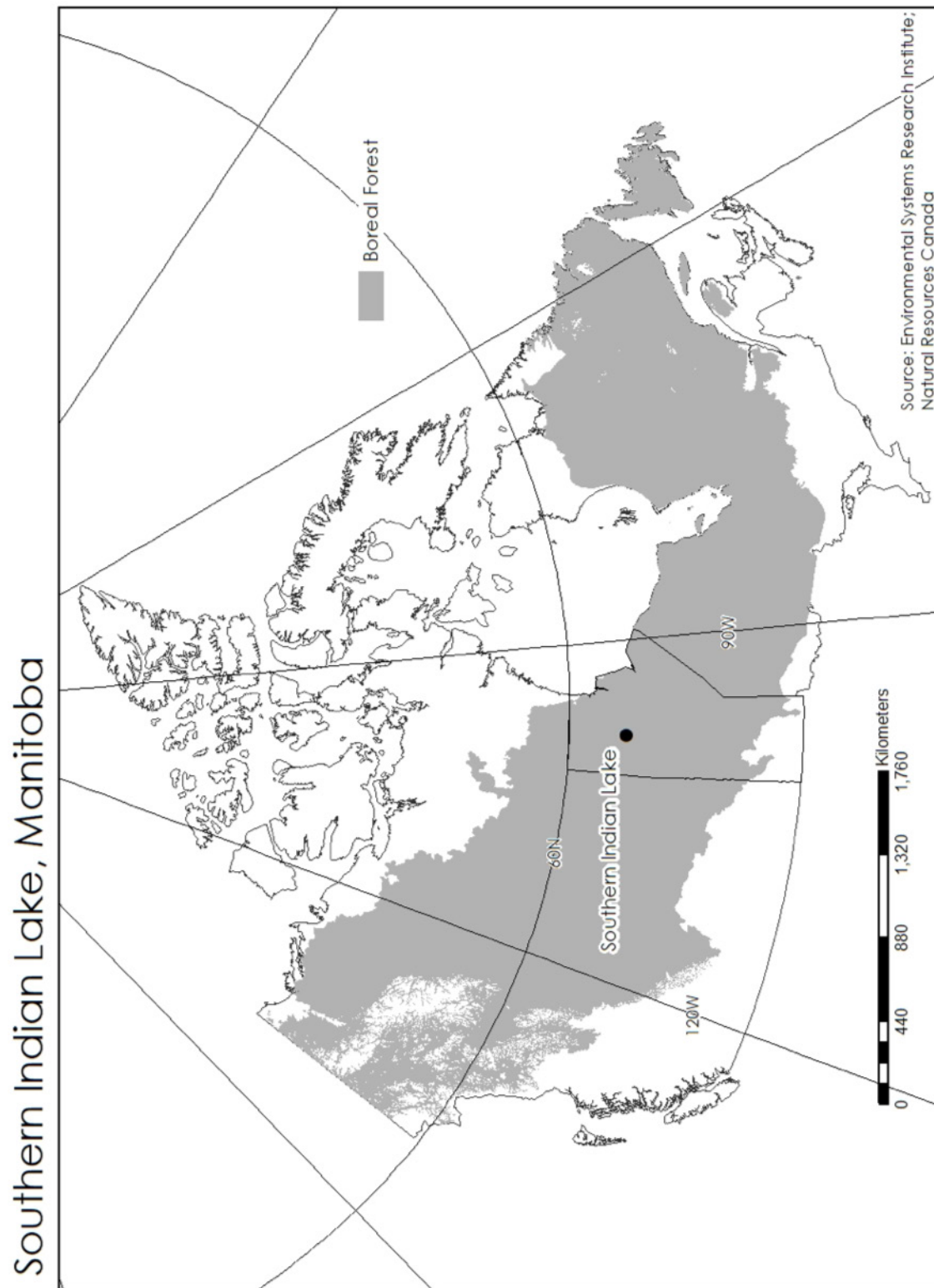


## Map: Rocky Cree Communities on Churchill River

### Rocky Cree Communities on Churchill River



## Map: Southern Indian Lake, Manitoba





## **Foreword Blackline Masters and Teacher Resources**

F.1 Pīsim's Journey

F.2 Rocky Cree Timeline

## **Blackline Master F.1: Pīsim's Journey**

Pīsim's trip takes place over seven days. She and her family paddle each day, stopping at traditionally named camp sites. Carefully read the story and record her journey. Fill in the following boxes: (1) write the Rocky Cree place name of the camp site and (2) the English meaning.

<b>Day 1</b>	
<b>Day 2</b>	
<b>Day 3</b>	
<b>Day 4</b>	
<b>Day 5</b>	
<b>Day 6</b>	
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Spring Gathering</b>

## Blackline Master F.2: Rocky Cree Timeline

Timelines are wonderful methods to share historical information in a sequential or chronological way. They are a tool that historians use often and can help us to understand the context in which *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw* is set. The most challenging thing about constructing a timeline is condensing the information.

**Instructions:** Create a timeline for the Rocky Cree based in the eras below. Add the date/s in the empty box. Provide a short overview in the space to the right. Choose your words carefully with the aim of being informative and concise.



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## Module 1: Maci pimahamīyin kī miskanaw (Starting Your Path): Introducing the Book



### ***Sipi nisitohtamowin: Enduring Understanding***

*“The Elders believe that the appearance of burials of their ancestors that have been found eroding out of the banks of the Churchill, Nelson, Rat and Burntwood rivers are happening for a reason.”*

*“These are gifts from the ancestors to today’s generation. They are to be used by our youth to learn about the old ways and gain respect for the past.”*

*Kayasochi Kikawenow, Our Mother from Long Ago (K. Brownlee and E. Syms, 1999)*

### **Key Concepts:**

Rocky Cree cultural practices, beliefs, oral tradition, values

### **Key Words:**

maci pimahamīyin kī miskanaw means starting your path. The word is broken down as maci (starting); pima (moving forward); hamī (walking); yin (act of moving); kī (your); miskanaw (path)

### **Guiding Questions:**

How do the pictures help tell the story in this book?

Who are the important characters in this book?

What are the big ideas in this book?

# Kiskinwahamakiwin: Teaching Strategies

“This book symbolizes the birth of a sacred bundle. It is a gift to the children of today who are seeking their identity.” PFM, Introduction, p. 2

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## Placing the Book in Context

This picture book tells the story of a week in the life of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw, or Pīsīm, when she was 13 years old. The story, based on oral history and artifacts found at Nagami Bay at Southern Indian Lake, uses historical fiction to share the thoughts and feelings of Rocky Cree ancestors who lived before direct contact with European culture.

Read aloud the Introduction to the *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*. Present and discuss the context and history of the book by referring to the background information about its history, geography, and archeology in the Foreword.

Ask students to work in pairs to complete the student resource **1.1 Observer Questions: 5 W’s and 1 H**, answering as many questions as they can at this point. They may keep the sheet to fill in the answers as they move forward in their study of the book.

## Reading a Picture Book

In a picture book, all the images, the design, and the written text combine to express the meaning of the story. To read a picture book, students need to learn to attentively observe and interpret all the images in the book.

Before their study of *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*, students will practice visual thinking strategies and become familiar with the picture book form.

Focus students’ attention on a double-spread story illustration by Leonard Paul selected from Day One of the story. Guide students to look carefully at the image, talk about what they observe, and discuss with their peers different ways of interpreting the picture. Propose open-ended questions as a starting point:

- *What is going on in this picture?*
- *What do you see that makes you say that?*
- *What more can you find in this picture?*

Using the visual thinking strategies they have practiced, ask small groups of students to interpret the pictures only in the book, without reading the words. This task may be assigned to six small groups, from Day One to Day Six of the voyage, using the student resource **1.2 See Think Wonder** as a guide.

After each group has shared their observations with the class, invite the students to make predictions about the book’s story based on the

### TEACHER TIP

For additional suggestions about visual thinking, refer to the Teacher Backgrounder **1.8 Visual Thinking Strategies**.



images, and to share their interpretation orally. Each group may then record their ideas using the [1.3 Anticipation Guide](#) print-out. As students move forward in their reading of *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*, they may then compare their predictions about the story to the content of the book

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## Discovering Picture Book Design

“This project was a labour of love. Each person who worked on it believes that they were allowed by Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw to act as translators to help piece together her story from her remains and personal belongings.” PFM, Introduction, p. 3

Page through the book with the students and gather their observations about the form of the book: its pictures, colours, fonts, subtitles, border designs. Engage in a discussion about how the elements of design help them to better understand the content of the book.

Invite students to find the elements of design in the book by completing the student resource [1.4 Picture Book Scavenger Hunt](#).

For further information on this task, refer to the Teacher Backgrounder [1.9 Analyzing Picture Book Design](#).

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## Introducing the Characters

Have students refer to the Story Characters diagram in PFM Introduction p. 3 and the student resource [1.5 Story Characters](#). Practice pronouncing the main characters’ names in Cree, reviewing the meanings of their names. Students may then choose one of the characters to introduce to the class, in the form of a “Who Am I” guessing game. (“I am male/female. I am old/young. My name means ... I appear on Day ... of the story. Who am I”)

To complete this task, students may create portraits of their selected characters and arrange them together in a chart of family clusters or minisiwin as on the kinship chart on p. 3 of the Introduction.

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## Introducing the Big Ideas

“Learning a language, therefore, means absorbing the very foundations of Aboriginal identity. As students begin to learn their language, they acquire basic understandings that shape their attitudes. The Elders tell of the power of the language to generate change and a sense of direction within the learner.” –Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Languages and Cultures: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes, p.12

Present the following Rocky Cree words for the main ideas in the story. Model the pronunciation of each word and invite students to practice pronouncing them. Explain that as they read the story, they will be gathering knowledge about each of these important ideas and other related concepts in Cree culture.

- *Miskanaw*: life journey
- *Īnahipathik*: Cree belief that “everything happens when it is meant to happen”
- *Otīnawāsōwin*: “the gift of helping life into the world” or midwifery

- *Asiniskaw Īthiniwak: the Rocky Cree people of western Canada's boreal forest region*
- *Acimostakiwin: Storytelling or oral tradition*
- *Atimiskakiwin: the Rocky Cree ceremonies that recognize the rites of passage in human life, such as birthing, child blessing, pitokiwin or entry into adulthood.*

Generate a discussion about how visual symbols are often used to represent an abstract idea: for example, a heart to represent love, or emojis to represent various human emotions. Encourage students to reflect on the meaning of these Big Ideas in *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*. Refer to the blackline master **1.6 Using Symbols for Ideas** to generate a discussion about the kinds of symbols they might use to represent these Big Ideas as they appear and re-appear throughout the story.

## Creating a Miskanaw Journal

“Miskanaw is the lifelong journey from birth to child to adult, a path along which you’re guided by others who help you to recognize your purpose for being here and to develop the gifts for fulfilling that purpose. In this story, Pisim is starting to recognize her path.”  
PFM, Day 1, p. 5 (sidebar)

In this story, the main character experiences a path of learning as she finds her miskanaw or life journey. In the same way, the students will grow in cultural knowledge and come to know themselves as they read and respond to the book. Each student will create a personal *Miskanaw Journal* to record ideas and experiences as he or she seeks to express his or her identity along this learning path.

Using the student resource **1.7 Creating a Miskanaw Journal** as a guide, students will make regular entries as they move through their own learning. They may choose to share some of these entries with the class or with other members of their community in a Sharing Circle or other group activity.

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## Gathering a Bundle

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“For many years, sacred bundles of the Cree people were absent.  
It is time to renew the medicine bundles of the people.” PFM, Introduction, p. 2

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Gather a Bundle is an inventory game played on the picture book app that invites readers to gather a knowledge bundle.

In Cree culture, sacred bundles are collections of items that hold important memories and teachings for the individual or group that has gathered them. They help people to remember where they’ve been and, therefore, where they are going on their miskanaw, or life journey. A mother might begin a sacred bundle for a child when he or she is born, perhaps with an object that symbolizes their spirit name. Rites of passage, such as the announcement of Pisim’s new place as a woman in her family in the picture book, would often be the occasion for a new item to be added to a bundle.

In the app that accompanies the picture book, readers have the opportunity to gather a knowledge bundle. As readers work their way through the story, they will notice hotspots embedded in many of the illustrations. When they click on these hotspots, they call out the story notes, which are additional pieces of information about the language, culture, and history of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak or Rocky Cree people. Readers can gather the story notes they most want to remember and preserve into their Knowledge Bundle, by clicking on the heart symbol in the upper-left corner of each story note they

want to gather. They can check the items in their bundle at any point by clicking on the Knowledge Album tab at the bottom of each screen. While they're on the Knowledge Album screen, they can also go back to read any notes they've missed. They can only save notes into their Knowledge Bundles, however, if they discover and read them in the context of the story. Once readers have chosen all of the notes they want to keep, they can email their Knowledge Bundle to themselves or to a teacher (if the device is linked to the Internet), or save the Knowledge Bundle in the files on the device. The Knowledge Bundle is intended to remind readers of what they thought were the most important aspects of this story and could be the beginning of further research and reflection.

## **Module 1 Blackline Masters and Teacher Resources**

### **Placing the Book in Context**

1.1 Observer Questions: 5W's and an 1H

### **Reading a Picture Book**

1.2 See Think Wonder

1.3 Anticipation Guide

### **Discovering Picture Book Design**

1.4 Picture Book Scavenger Hunt

### **Introducing the Characters**

1.5 Story Characters

### **Introducing the Big Ideas**

1.6 Using Symbols for Ideas

### **Creating a Miskanaw Journal**

1.7 Creating a Miskanaw Journal

### **Teacher Backgrounders**

1.8 Visual Thinking Strategies

1.9 Picture Book Design

## **1.1 Observer Questions: 5 W's & 1H**

Questions to introduce you to the book *Pīsim Finds her Miskanaw*:

**WHO** – Who are the Rocky Cree? Who wrote and illustrated this book? Who is the main character of this story?

**WHAT** – What is this picture book based on? What happens in this story? What parts of the book are fiction and what parts are non-fiction?

**WHEN** – When was this picture book written? When did the story take place?

**WHERE** – Where did this story take place?

**WHY** – Why was this story written?

**HOW** – How was the story created? How does the story link the past to the present?











## 1.2 See Think Wonder

Describe what you <b>see</b>	<b>Think</b> about what this picture tells you	<b>Wonder</b> about why this picture is important
Objects	What stands out the most? Why?	Think about one word to summarize this picture
Persons	What clues tell you when and where this takes place?	What do you think is the message of this picture?
Colours	What is included and left out of the picture?	Why do you think the author included this picture?
Sizes, (near or far), angles	What attracts you to this picture?	How would you describe the style of this picture?
Actions	Does the image show movement? How?	How else could this same message be expressed in a picture?



## 1.3 Anticipation Guide

Task: Predict the message of *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* based **only** on your reading of only the pictures in the book. Keep this guide to compare to your responses after reading the story.

What happens in the beginning of the story?	Describe the picture that tells you this.	What message do you see in this picture?
		
What happens in the middle of the story?	Describe the picture that tells you this.	What message do you see in this picture?
		
What happens at the end of the story?	Describe the picture that tells you this.	What message do you see in this picture?
		
Who are the main characters in this story?	Describe the picture that tells you this.	What message do you see in this picture?
		
Find an image that is not part of the story.	What is the purpose of this image?	What does this image tell you?
		

## 1.4 Picture Book Scavenger Hunt

Complete the following by skimming through *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*. Focus on getting to know the picture book and its images. We will use your answers to discuss how to learn from and enjoy *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* in class.

Respond to the 'Look Closer' features in your Miskanaw Journal.

1. The story's characters are divided into four clans/peoples. List these. Where did you find your information?

2. How does the author keep track of time/move the story forward?

3. On what day are we introduced to Pisim? How old is she?

4. Describe the image that is on the opening of Day 2, p. 12–13. What are the people doing?

### Look Closer!

The number of pages in a picture book is always a multiple of 8: 16, 24, 32, 40, or 48 pages. Why multiples of 8? Well, it has to do with a technical aspect of book bindery, namely, the fact that the pages of books are printed as signatures.

***How many pages is Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw?***

### Look Closer!

Picture books are so called because the illustrations dominate the text or are as important. They are illustrated using a wide range of media, from water colour, acrylic, and colour pencils to collage, photography, and digital illustration.

***What medium does illustrator Leonard Paul use?***

5. How do the Rocky Cree mark travel routes?

6. Describe what happens to Pīsim and the group on Day 5. How do the images support the text?

7. When does Pīsim receive her ceremonial bag of midwifery tools and is acknowledged by the group in a formal ceremony – atamiskakiwin? What does the bag contain?

#### Look Closer!

The book uses font to differentiate between narrative text (the words that tell Pīsim's story) and documentary text (writing that gives us an insight into the various aspects of Rocky Cree culture, society, history, etc.). There are two types of font used: serif and sans serif.

Example: Franklin font is sans serif; Garamond is a serif font.

*Is the narrative text serif or sans serif? How about the documentary text?*

#### Look Closer!

The *gutter* is a term used to describe the seam of the book, where the book is bound. The left and right pages when the book is open meet in the gutter.

*What does the gutter separate on Day 6, pp. 30–31?*

8. On what day of the journey does the Spring Gathering finally take place?

9. Describe the image on the last page of the story. How is Pīsim feeling?

#### Look Closer!

A book's *end matter* – you guessed it, the material at the end of the book – is optional and may contain a glossary, bibliography, index, or acknowledgments.

*Does Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw have end matter? If so, what is it?*

## 1.5 Characters in the Story

Here are the ten main characters in the story. Fill out this chart as you read the book, deciding about the role of each character. Think about which of the characters you identify with most. You may revise or add to your chart as you move ahead in your reading.

Character	Meaning of the name	Where we first meet him/her	Role in the story	Protagonist (P) or secondary character (C)
<i>Pīsim</i>				
<i>Kīwitin Kānimit</i>				
<i>Āhcapi Okimaw</i>				
<i>Amō</i>				
<i>Mwakwa</i>				
<i>Pipon</i>				
<i>Nōcokīšiw</i>				
<i>Kāmisakāt</i>				
<i>Nikik</i>				
<i>Wāpistan</i>				

## Characters in the Story (Answer Key)

1. Pīsim “sun”, main character based on Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw, 13 years old. We meet her on Day 1, p.5 at the family camp.
2. Kīwitin Kānimit (“North Wind Dancing”), Pīsim’s mother. We meet her on Day 1, p. 6 at the family camp.
3. Āhcapi Okimaw (“Master of the Bow”), Pīsim’s father. We meet him on Day 4, p. 20.
4. Amō (“bee”), Pīsim’s sister. We meet her on Day 1, p. 6 at the family camp.
5. Mwakwa (“loon”), Pīsim’s brother, 9 years old. We meet him on the second page of Day 1. On Day 2, p. 17 he is covered in black soot after having climbed through the burned area. He is with Pīsim through the storm on Day 5, p. 28.
6. Pipon (“Winter/Year”), Pīsim’s grandfather. We meet him on the second page of Day 1, praying at the family camp. On Day 2, p. 13, he wakes up all the family members. He is mentioned in several places as the elder of the Moswak minisiwin or Moose People (see Day 5, p. 25).
7. Nōcokīsiw (“Old Lady”), Pīsim’s grandmother or Nokhom who taught her midwifery. We meet her on the third page of Day 1, at the main camp. As a Moswak Elder, she makes the formal announcement of the birth on Day 6, p. 32. She also hands her the coming-of-age gift on Day 7, p. 40.
8. Kāmisakāt (He or She Who Arrives by Water”), Pīsim’s auntie who is about to have a baby. We meet her on the third page of Day 1, at the main camp. She is in the canoe in the storm with Pīsim on Day 5, p. 26.
9. Nikik (“Otter”), Pīsim’s uncle, husband of Kāmisakāt who is about to have a baby. We meet him on the second page of Day 1 at the main camp.
10. Wāpistan (“Marten”), the travelling storyteller. We meet him on the third page of Day 1, at the main camp.

### Other characters in the story:

Mahikanawāsis, the chief of all the family clusters, mentioned on Day 1, p. 10. We meet him on Day 7, p. 42 at the Spring Gathering, when he formally acknowledges Pīsim as an adult.

Apikosis, the youngest son of the midwife Nōcokīsiw, tells a story at the camp on Day 4, p. 23.

Pipon’s brother who has been very ill, is mentioned by the storyteller on Day 1, p. 8. We meet him at the main camp later on Day 2, p. 17, and he is well.

Piponasiw is the baby boy named for his grandfather and born on the stormy canoe voyage on Day 5, p. 28, with Pīsim’s help. He is presented to the clan on Day 6, p. 32.

Mithistowīwak, the hairy faced people mentioned by the storyteller on Day 1, p. 10.

Mīmīkwīsiwak are the little people of Cree stories mentioned on Day 6, p. 33.

## 1.6 Using Symbols for Ideas

A symbol is a physical object used to represent something abstract like an idea. Here are some common everyday symbols. What ideas do they represent?



As you read *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*, you will learn about these six important Cree ideas. What kinds of objects or images could you create to explain what each of these ideas mean? Are there any other Big Ideas that you appear in the story that you would like to add to this list?

Big Ideas	English Meaning	Symbol
Miskanaw	Life Journey	
Īnahipathik	Cree belief that “everything happens when it is meant to happen”	
Otīnawāsōwin	Midwifery, or “the gift of helping life into the world”	
Asiniskaw Īthiniwak	The Rocky Cree people of Western Canada’s boreal forest region	
Acimostakiwin	Storytelling or oral tradition	
Atimiskakiwin	Rocky Cree ceremonies that recognize rites of passage in human life, such as birthing, child blessing, or entry into adulthood.	



## 1.7 Creating a Miskanaw Journal

*"This book symbolizes the birth of a sacred bundle. It is a gift to the children of today who are seeking their identity." PFM, Introduction, p. 2*

Your Miskanaw Journal may be used as record of your ideas and experiences as you begin to seek and express your identity on your life voyage. Here are some suggestions for creating your journal. Your teacher may also suggest Guiding Questions for you to respond to in your journal as you proceed in your learning path.

1. **Diagram** or write one or two main ideas that emerge as you read the story. You may organize your thoughts in connection to these key ideas.
2. **Organize** your ideas into the four paths of being: heart, mind, body, and soul. You may want to use symbols or colours to represent each of the four paths.
3. In your journal **you may include** sentences, words, pictures, maps, stories, dialogues, letters, opinions, questions. You may want to include a prayer or a song of gratitude inspired by Pīsim's story. You may want write about how you overcame a challenge in your learning journey. You may want to take note of qualities or talents that you discovered in yourself in your learning.
4. With each journal entry, **record the day**, season, moon, weather, and the place where you are working. Use the Cree words wherever you can.
5. As you work on your journal, **find ways to personalize** and map out your journey of learning.
6. **From time to time**, be ready to discuss different perspectives of the life journey with a small group in a sharing circle. You may decide to share some ideas of your journey, and others you may wish to keep private.
7. Your Miskanaw Journal may serve as the starting point to put together your own sacred bundle. What would your sacred bundle contain? What items would best symbolize what you have learned along your path? What items might best represent important places or moments in your learning path? What is an object that would symbolize a teaching that an Elder passed on to you in your learning?

## 1.8 Teacher Backgrounder: Visual Thinking Strategies

*Visual literacy involves learning to interpret images by analyzing how they are designed and presented to communicate ideas and feelings. It includes asking questions about the author's intended message and evaluating his or her decisions about how to best convey this message.*

These types of guiding questions may be used to prompt students to enrich the details of their observations of images.

### **See**

Observe the physical details in the image: persons, objects, location, size, relation, and the perspective or angle from which they are seen.

Describe the colours in the scene: tones, textures, effects of light and shadow.

What is happening in this picture?

What is closest to you, furthest away?

### **Think**

What is the subject? Does the image depict people, a place, or an event?

What stands out the most in this image? What makes it stand out to you?

What visual clues help you understand who the people are, when and where it takes place?

Describe the motion in the image. Is there a lot of energy, or does it feel still? What visual clues support this?

Describe the framing of the image. What is included in the image, and what may have been left out by the artist?

### **Wonder**

Describe the style of this image. Is it photographic, abstract, expressive?

What words would you use to describe this image? Why?

Describe the sounds suggested by this image.

What message do you think this image communicates? Why do you think this?

Describe your feelings about the scene: what mood does it create?

Why do you think the artist chose to depict this scene of the story? Would you have chosen a different scene?

## 1.9 Teacher Backgrounder: Analyzing Picture Book Design

*In a picture book, all the visual and written elements combine to express the message.*

*Pisim Finds her Miskanaw* is not simply a picture book: it contains text and images that tell an imagined story as well as providing factual information about Rocky Cree culture, language, and history. This approach reflects the Indigenous holistic approach of passing on knowledge through the integration of storytelling, visual art, and history.

The design or form of a book can help readers interpret and navigate its content. Content is what a text says, or its message. Form is the way in which the message is presented or arranged. Everything from a subtitle to a paragraph to a punctuation mark is a way of arranging the content of a text. Form and content can't be disconnected from one another because they influence one another. Consider how the use of certain colours, or particular font styles, can change the character of a message and influence the reader.

Analyzing the design or form of a book can help students develop visual literacy and distinguish various genres of texts. Readers can learn more about the story by paying attention to elements such as the cover, the size of the book, the paper, the illustrations, the titles and subtitles, the fonts, the layout or page arrangement, the borders and spaces.

Guide students to observe the “look” of the text and images in the book: colours, scale, patterns, lines, contrast, shapes, spaces, font and text styles, image styles. Ask them to notice how the body text and the subtitles differ, helping them to distinguish their different purposes. As students observe these characteristics of how the book is presented, they will better understand its message.

### Suggested Guiding Questions

- How is this picture book different from a graphic novel? From a biography?
- What are its distinguishing features? How do the images help convey information?
- How does the arrangement of text on the page help you to read and understand the story? How does the layout help you distinguish the documentary parts (non-fiction) from the story of *Pisim* (fiction)?
- If this book were to be made into a movie, which images and scenes would you begin with? Would you choose to make a documentary film or a drama?

For further information about the interaction of text and images in picture books, refer to the following article: <https://www.nrm.org/2013/05/imagination-interacts-with-text-words-and-images-in-childrens-picture-books-by-lynn-chen/>

Students may also be guided to notice the elements of the picture book's **peritext**. Peritext refers to the images and text that are secondary to the main body of the book, such as the glossary, cover pages, preface or introduction, source notes, acknowledgements, indexes, chapter titles, bibliographic and publication details, maps and timelines and diagrams. The peritext serves several functions and often discloses many unique elements about the genre, purpose, character and setting of a published work, which can enhance the reader's understanding of the book.

For further information about the various roles of peritext in helping readers navigate and interpret a book, refer to this article: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1125289.pdf>

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## Module 2: Otīnawāsōwin: Gift of Bringing Life into the World

### ***Sipi nisitohtamowin: Enduring Understanding***

*"Our granddaughter Pīsim has been an Observer from the time she was eight winters. She is now thirteen winters. Pīsim delivered a baby on her own ....  
The Moswak minisiwin formally acknowledge our grandchild Pīsim as  
Helper of otinawāwosōwin..." PFM, Day 7, p. 40*

### **Key Concepts**

midwifery/otīnawāsōwin, naming, gifts and vocations, coming of age, thankfulness, ceremony and celebration

### **Key Words**

Otīnawāsōwin means the gift of bringing life into the world. The word is broken down as otin (to take); awaso (to warm up or shining); win (mastery).

Minisiwin means family cluster. The word is broken down as minis (cluster of berries); i (I); win (mastery).

### **Guiding Questions**

In what ways are the names of persons and places significant in Rocky Cree tradition?

Why do you think midwifery remains an important role for women in our times as in the past?

How do the Rocky Cree define family?

Why do think celebration and ceremonies are an important part of marking events in the life journey?

What does "coming of age" mean to you and why is important? What did it mean to Pīsim?

## Kiskinwahamakiwin: Teaching Strategies



Otinawāwosowin means 'the gift of helping life into the world'. The person that helps the child into the world is called otinawāsō. Wāpamawasowin literally means 'seeing the child' as it is born. PFM, Day 6, p. 30 (sidebar)

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### What's in a Name?

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In the book, Pīsīm comes of age and is acknowledged as a otinawāsō – a person that helps bring life into the world. The day after the baby's birth, the child is named Piponasiw in honour of his grandfather Pipon.

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Nōcokīsīw and the other matriarchs plan an evening ceremony to welcome Kāmisakāt and Nikik's firstborn. Everyone joins the feast in honour of the new arrival and the baby is formally recognized as part of the family.

Pipon welcomes his new grandson by saying:

"Tansi, Piponasiw, I am kimosōm, your grandfather. I carry the stories and history of our family minisiwin. I will pass on those stories to you." PFM, Day 6, p. 36

Explore the naming traditions and ceremonies of the Rocky Cree. Focus on how names are given, cherished, carried, transmitted, and altered within families and communities. Note that the name of every character in the story has a meaning, often related to nature or to their role in the community. Invite students to share stories about ceremonies and celebrations related to their birth or others.

#### TEACHER TIP

Use the film 'The Lion King' as a discussion-starter about naming traditions and ceremonies

Have them complete the **2.1 Ceremonies and Celebrations: Word Splash**. Encourage them to share their work with a partner.

"Pīsīm – her name means 'sun'. Nikik – his name means 'otter'. Pipon – his name means 'winter/year'." PFM, Day 1, p. 7 (sidebar)

Guide students to explore their own names (official names, nicknames, traditional names, terms of endearment). They may do a Google search or interview a family member. Have them write a story about their name and how they got it. Create a class bulletin board sharing the class stories.

Have the students explore further by asking: If you were able to invent a name for yourself or for a family member, what would it be? Why would you choose that name? Have them record their answers in their [\*\*1.7 Miskanaw Journal\*\*](#).

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## What Is a Midwife?

For centuries women gave birth at home surrounded by female relatives and neighbours, with the birth being presided over by a female midwife.

“Pisim knew. ‘I have to deliver the baby,’ she said to her uncle .... Pisim prayed for a calm spirit as she prepared for the task.” PFM, Day 5, p. 28

The word *midwife* comes from an old English word meaning ‘with woman’ since women have been the traditional birth attendants throughout history. In Europe, as in Rocky Cree culture, knowledge about midwifery passed from woman to woman, and new midwives were made by apprenticing at an experienced elder’s side. In Rocky Cree, *otīnawāsō* means ‘person who brings the child into the world’.

In modern times a midwife is a trained health professional who helps pregnant women during labour, delivery, and after the birth of their babies. They also care for the newborn and assist the mother with breastfeeding. Modern Canadian midwives attend typically 4-year training programs and study an array of topics including anatomy and physiology, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, women’s studies, as well as history, philosophy of care, and role of the midwife in Canada and elsewhere. Most schools that teach midwifery also include courses on traditional Indigenous medicine and birthing practices. Like in Pisim’s era, mentoring is a key component to learning the skills of midwifery.

“Pisim assessed the tools she had at hand. There was an askihk for boiling water. Her aunt’s bundle included a rabbit blanket and dry moss for diapers.” PFM, Day 5, p. 28

Explore the role of midwives in the past and in present times. Instruct students to record their findings on the Venn diagram, [\*\*2.2 Otīnawāsō/Midwife: Past and Present\*\*](#)

Throughout Pisim’s 7-day journey she has several opportunities and experiences that help both build her confidence and hone her skills to become an *otīnawāsō*/midwife. Today, in order to become a midwife in Canada, students must apply to a university. Entrance is contingent on high school grades and oftentimes a personal interview.

“And then Nocōkīsiw told the story of Pisim’s first delivery. ‘Pisim has taken her place as my Helper She is well on her way in the miskanaw that has been defined for her.’  
PFM, Day 6, p. 37

Have students imagine that they are part of a midwifery school’s interview team and are crafting a set of questions for prospective midwives. Instruct them to write their interview questions in their [\*\*1.7 Misknaow Journal\*\*](#). Share their individual responses with the class.



## Atamiskakiwin – Becoming a Midwife

In Rocky Cree culture, a young woman would become a midwife after she was recognized for the gifts of helping new babies. This came in steps. The first step was observation; she would attend births with an elder midwife. Next, she would aid the elder midwife in the birthing process as a Helper. Finally, she would deliver the baby on her own, as a midwife.

Recognition as a midwife was a rite of passage that was marked by a ceremony. Atamiskakiwin is a series of formal ceremonies that the Rocky Cree used to recognize important passages in life. In the book, such passages include the birthing ceremony, the child blessing ceremony, and the entry of Pīsim into womanhood.

“Pīsim stood up proudly and walked towards her grandmother. Nocōkīsiw handed her a ceremonial bag containing her midwifery tools. The rest of the Moswak stood up to recognize her...” PFM, Day 7, p. 40

Ask: Why do you think celebrations and ceremonies are an important part of marking events in the life journey? Describe an important celebration in your life or in your family or community that was important to you. Record your responses in your [1.7 Miskanaw Journal](#).

In all cultures, childbirth is a joyous occasion for family and community, often celebrated with ceremonies of gratitude. In the Rocky Cree tradition, the midwife has the vocation or “gift of welcoming life into the world”.

Ask: Why do you think midwifery remains an important role for women in our times as in the past?

“Bag of Midwifery Tools – This bag would contain a chert or moose bone awl to cut the umbilical cord, smoked hide for clothing and baby bonnets, dry muskeg for moss bags (diapers), rabbit fur for baby’s blanket a clay pot for boiling water, sinew for tying the umbilical cord, and a basket of medicine tea for mothers to drink.”  
PFM, Day 7, p. 41 (sidebar)

Investigate the role of the midwife in Rocky Cree culture by exploring the tools of a traditional bag of midwifery tools. What can we learn about one who is a otīnawāsō? See [2.3 Exploring Pīsim’s Bag of Tools](#).

## Minisiwin – Family

Family is the centre of Rocky Cree culture. Laws of kinship held that everyone was related and connected: everyone and everything in the human world, the spiritual world, the animal world, and the natural world.

Extended family – wāhkotowin – was an important facet of the family unit. The extended family was (and remains) expansive and multigenerational. For example, cousins are considered sisters and brothers. Everyone older than you is an aunt or uncle or a grandmother or grandfather. As well, you do not have to be related by blood to be considered family: everyone is connected and related. If a person moved to another territory or was an orphan, the people there would adopt him or her into a specific minisiwin and recognize him or her as part of the family.

“Minisiwin – This means ‘family’. The root of this word is min - , which is found in the Cree word for ‘berries’ but also in a variety of other words, which suggests that its actual meaning is ‘clusters.’” PFM, Day 4, p. 21 (sidebar)

Explore the concepts of family and extended family. Have students write their own personal definition of ‘family’ in their **1.7 Miskanaw Journal**. Ask: what roles do each member of their family play? What gifts do each members of their family pass on to them?

Invite students to complete the **2.5 A Cluster of Berries: My Family** activity. Explain that they can define their family as they choose and are not restrained by conventional definitions.

Rocky Cree family culture bridged not only bloodlines but also time. Families kept their ancestors alive by visiting places they visited and made concerted efforts to honour and remember them.

“Pipon wants Mwakwa to understand not only that he must respect the connections he has to those who have gone to the other side, but also that he should know where he came from. His teaching comes from aniskotāpan. In Rocky Cree, aniskotāpan refers both to the tying of a knot to extend length or to pull things, as when you tie one toboggan behind another, and to a great-grandchild. PFM, Day 2, p. 17 (sidebar)

As an art activity, have students tie at least three knots in a length of rope. Off each knot hang a small circle of paper with a person’s name and a gift/teaching they have imparted. One knot must be the student, one knot must be blank to represent the future. See **2.6 Aniskotāpan: Linking the Past, the Present, the Future**.

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## A Celebration of a Rite of Passage

“Come, my child, come and stand beside your responsibility.” – Nōcokīsiw, Pīsim’s grandmother, PFM, Day 7, p. 40

Key concepts and Cree terms:

*Atimiskakiwin* are a series of formal ceremonies to recognize life passages in the community such as birth, child blessing, naming, and entry into adulthood.

*Pitokiwin* is the formal ceremony of entering-in, in which community members are recognized as adults by their community.

*Napew* is a recognized male family protector for each family cluster, carries in the family staff for ceremonies.

*Sāpōhtawan* is a ceremonial gathering hall made of tree poles tied together and covered with spruce branches

Practice the Cree pronunciation of these words and invite students to create illustrations of them to include in their **1.7 Miskanaw Journal**.

“Thank you, Creator. I recognize the path that has been chosen for me. I will carry my responsibility with dignity.” PFM, Day 7, p. 40

Most cultures around the world have ceremonies to recognize a person's entry into adulthood. In the Rocky Cree tradition, pitokiwin is attained with the guidance of the elders, and the formal acknowledgement of the whole community. In *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*, Pisim takes on her responsibility as an adult member of the community. Students may focus their attention on Day 7 of the book, observing and recording all the elements of the ceremony as it is described in the book.

Students may then be grouped together to work on planning and presenting a short dramatic role play or performance that enacts a coming-of-age ceremony or another important rite of passage in their future. This could be, for example, a ceremony for graduating from Grade 8, attending their first *Mamawawewin* or Pow Wow, a decision to go to high school, the publication of an essay, the winning of an athletic or academic prize, getting accepted into the hockey team, or getting one's driver license. They may use the suggestions in the **2.7 Planning a Celebration** to organize and record their group's ideas. When they feel they are ready to present their ceremony, they may invite another class, the whole school, or their families to participate in witnessing and sharing in the planned celebration. Students should take care to practice and use the key Cree terms through their planning and presenting.

#### TEACHER TIP

This teaching scenario may be reserved as a culminating activity after students have read the entire book and carried out some preliminary learning tasks related to Rocky Cree culture and language.

## **Module 2 Blackline Masters and Teacher Resources**

### **What's in a Name?**

2.1 Ceremonies and Celebrations: Word Splash

### **What is a Midwife?**

2.2 Otīnawāsō/Midwife: Past and Present

### **Atamiskakiwin - Becoming A Midwife**

2.3 Exploring Pīsim's Bag of Tools

2.4 Learning Process

### **Minisiwin – Family**

2.5 A Cluster of Berries: My Family

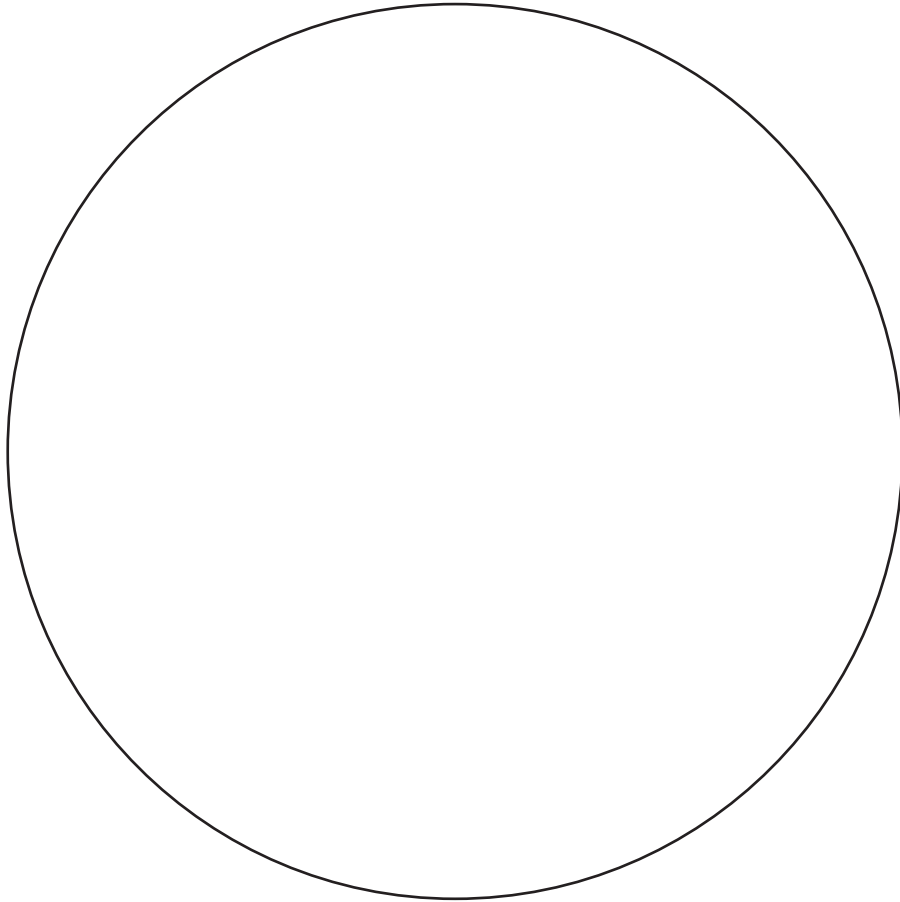
2.6 Aniskotāpan: Linking the Past, the Present, the Future

2.7 Planning a Celebration

## 2.1 Ceremonies and Celebrations: Word Splash

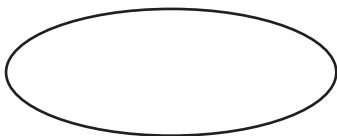
### Instructions:

In the circle below write several words or phrases that describe ceremonies and celebrations related to your birth or others (think of: stories, movies, books). Be creative!



Provide examples of how **two** of your words connect to the celebrations and ceremonies in *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*.

### WORDS



### EXAMPLES

## 2.2 Otīnawāsō/Midwife: Past and Present

### **Instructions:**

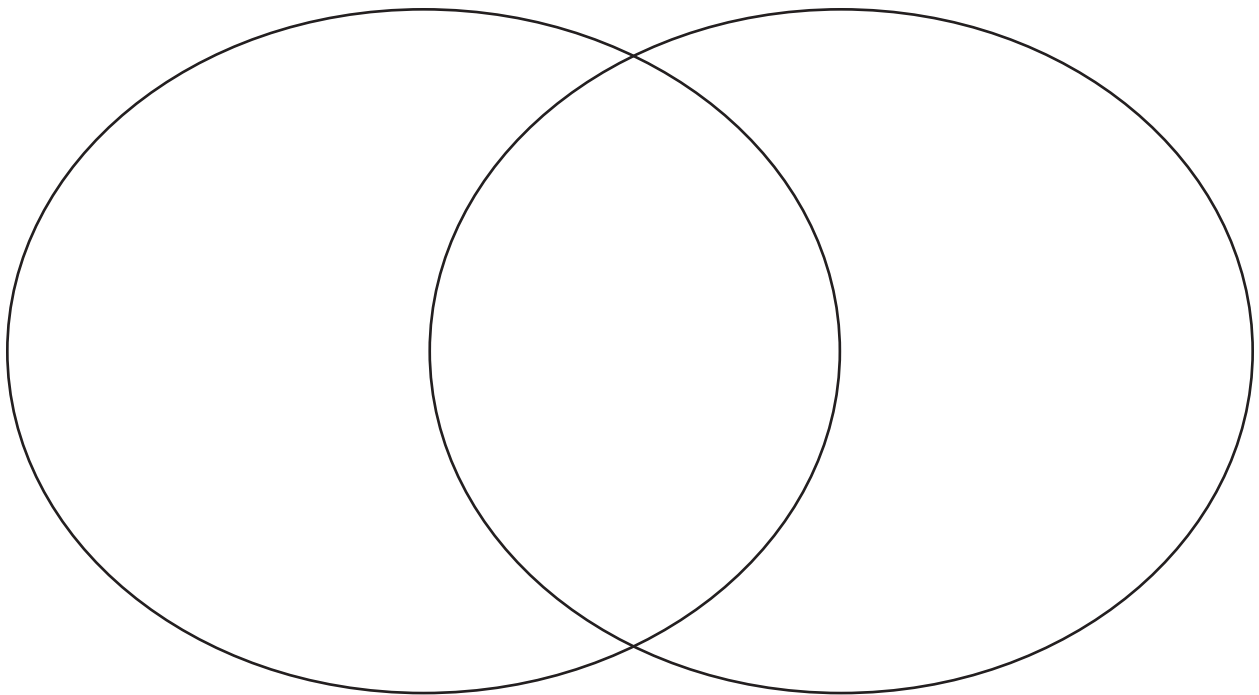
The word *midwife* comes from an old English word meaning “with woman”. Women have been the traditional birth helpers throughout history and midwives have existed for as long as babies have been born.

In Rocky Cree, *otīnawāsōwin* means ‘the gift of brining life into the world’. The person that helps the child into the world is called *otīnawāsō*. *Wāpamawasown* means ‘seeing the child’ as it is born.

Today, a midwife is a university trained health professional who helps healthy women during labour, delivery, and after the birth of their babies.

How have the roles of midwives changed over the centuries? How have they stayed the same?

Complete the Venn diagram.



## 2.3 Exploring Pīsim's Bag of Tools

### **Instructions:**

**On Day 7 of her journey, Pīsim is gifted with a bag of midwifery tools containing:**

a chert or moose bone awl	smoked hide
dry muskeg	rabbit fur
a clay pot	sinew
a basket of medicine tea	

1. Read Day 7 in *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw*. What are each of these tools used for?

2. Where do all these tools come from? What are they made out of? What does that tell us about Rocky Cree way of life and culture?

3. Draw Pīsim's bag midwife bag and tools.

## 2.4 Learning Process

Learning is a lifelong process and is part of the ongoing cycle of passing on knowledge to the next generation. In Rocky Cree culture, there are four phases in the learning process. Find and describe places in the story where Pīsim goes through each of these stages of learning. Then describe your own experiences in learning something challenging and new.

Phases of Learning	Pīsim's experience	Your experience
<b>Observation:</b> In this phase, the learner observes attentively and respectfully the teachings of a more knowledgeable person.	On Day 1 Pīsim is identified as "Nōcokīsiw's Observer." At 13 years old, "She was young, but – maybe – she was on her way to becoming a midwife." She had attended with her grandmother to a difficult birth for a woman at Pine Lake. Later her elder states "Our granddaughter Pīsim has been an Observer from the time she was eight winters."	
<b>Guided Practice:</b> In this phase the learner becomes a helper or novice, assisting and guided by a mentor.	On Day 6, p. 37, Nōcokīsiw, Pīsim's grandmother, acknowledges that "Pīsim has taken her place as my Helper. She is well on her way in her <i>Miskanaw</i> that has been defined for her." Pīsim has been taught by her elder how to arrange everything for the birth quickly and carefully.	
<b>Independent Practice:</b> In this phase, the learner accomplishes tasks independently.	Pīsim is called on because of the storm to take on her responsibility suddenly. On Day 5, p. 28, she says: "I have to deliver the baby.... I have to be the one to do it because nokhom, our grandmother, is not here. And you have to be my helper..." On Day 6, p. 37 her grandmother says that Pīsim has successfully delivered her first baby and will be acknowledged as an adult at the Spring Gathering.	
<b>Formal Recognition:</b> In this phase, the person is formally recognized in a ceremony that includes the whole community.	In the entering-in ceremony, Pīsim is acknowledged as an adult with a role to play in the community. On Day 7, p. 40, Nōcokīsiw hands her a ceremonial bag containing her midwifery tools. "The rest of the Moswak stood up to recognize her." Pīsim thanks the Creator and says, "I recognize the path that has been chosen for me. I will carry my responsibility with dignity."	



## 2.5 A Cluster of Berries: My Family

Instructions:

Family is the centre of Rocky Cree culture. Extended family – *wāhkotowin* – was an important part as well. Everyone older than you is an aunt or uncle or a grandmother or grandfather. As well, you do not have to be related by blood to be considered family: everyone is connected and related. If a person moved to another territory or was an orphan, the people there would adopt him or her into a specific *minisiwin* and recognize him or her as part of the family.

1. How do you define family?

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2. Who are the members of your family?

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3. In *Pīsim Finds her Miskanaw* we learn:

Minisiwin – This means ‘family’. The root of this word is min - , which is found in the Cree word for ‘berries’ but also in a variety of other words, which suggests that its actual meaning is ‘clusters.’” PFM, Day 4, p. 21 (sidebar)

On the following page fill in the berries with your family members. Draw vines to connect the berries and/or add more berries as needed.



## MY FAMILY

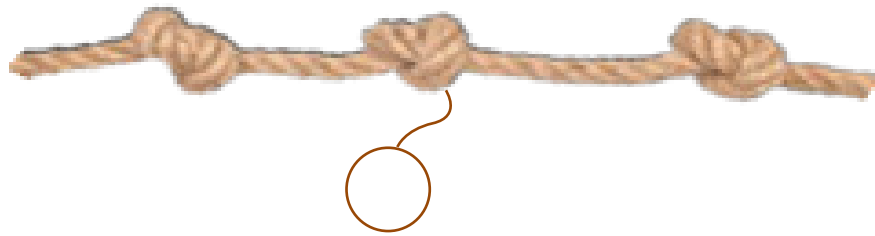


## 2.6 Aniskotāpan: Linking the Past, the Present, the Future

### **Instructions:**

On Day 2, p. 17 (sidebar) of Pīsim's journey she learns the importance of aniskotāpan:

"Pipon wants Mwakwa to understand not only that he must respect the connections he has to those who have gone to the other side, but also that he should know where he came from. His teaching comes from aniskotāpan. In Rocky Cree, *aniskotāpan* refers both to the tying of a knot to extend length or to pull things, as when you tie one toboggan behind another, and to a great-grandchild."



### **Activity:**

Cut out the circles on the next page.

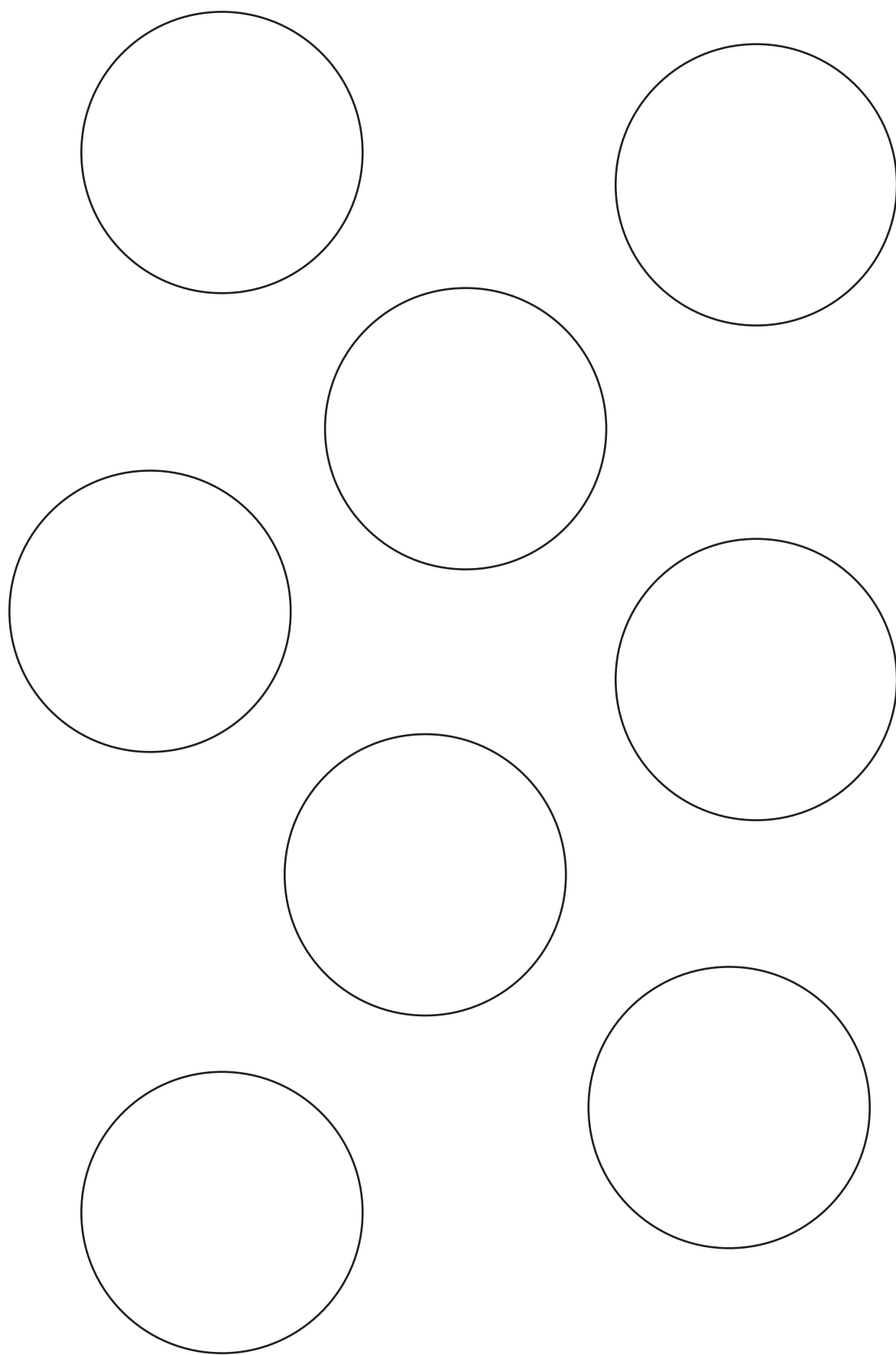
Write your name on one circle.

On another circle write one person's name from your family who has been your guide and helper through life (they may be here or passed on). You may add several people.

On another circle, write 'Future Family'. This will be the people who you guide and help.

Tie the same number of knots in the rope as you have circles. Using thread, tie each circle to a knot. There should be at least one circle before your name and one after.

Share your aniskotāpan story with a partner.



## 2.7 Planning a Ceremony

In this task, your group will study the traditional ceremony of Pitokiwin described on Day 7 of *Pisim Finds her Miskanaw*. You will then work together to plan a ceremony to recognize an important rite of passage for member(s) of your class. In your preparation, focus on the script of each participant and the order of events. Try to use simple symbolic elements made by group as costumes and props. Be realistic!

What rite of passage will be celebrated? Who are the persons being acknowledged?
Who will be responsible for which task? Who will play the key roles?
Ceremonial hall (place, decorations)
Time of the year season/moon, time of day
Role of the elders and the storyteller
Games and dancing (before and after ceremony)
Entrance of the family clusters
Finest clothing (meaningful symbols)
Prayers and songs
Ceremonial bag(s) for person(s) being recognized
Speeches or announcements
Acknowledgement by the whole community

## Module 3: Miskanaw or Life Journey



### ***Sipi nisitohtamowin: Enduring Understanding***

*“Miskanaw is the life long journey from birth to child to adult, a path along which you’re guided by others who help you recognize your purpose for being here and to develop the gifts for fulfilling that purpose.”*

PFM, Day 1, p. 5 (sidebar)

### **Key Concepts**

journeys (internal/external); living in harmony with the seasons; weather and climate; moons; material/non-material culture

### **Key Words**

Miskanaw means finding your path. The word is broken down as miska (find); naw (path).

Nīhīthow means being of four. The word is broken down as nīhi (four); thaw (winds).

### **Guiding Questions**

Why do people make journeys, today and in the past?

What kinds of risks or obstacles might people face in their journeys? How can they prepare to overcome these obstacles?

What can you do to pursue your own life journey?

What does it mean to live in harmony with the seasons? How do the seasons affect your own life journey?

How do the journeys of our ancestors compare to modern day journeys?

# Kiskinwahamakiwin: Teaching Strategies

“Miskanaw includes the career path, the language path, the genealogy path, the physical life path, the spiritual path, the thinking path, and the emotional path. All of these paths combine to make the whole person.” PFM, Day 1, p. 5 (sidebar)

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## Nihithow and the Life Journey

In Rocky Cree culture, finding your life journey means “walking on a good path” so as to take on your responsibility within the community. This learning path involves each person as a whole being of four (Nihithow): body, heart, mind, and spirit.

“Pisim is starting to recognize her path. She knows that she is nihithow, a being of four, which includes body, heart, spirit, and mind.” PFM, Day 1, p. 5 (sidebar)

In her life journey, Pisim uses her mind to solve problems, her heart to build relationships and express love, her hands to carry out physical tasks, and her spirit to pray and offer thanks for life, nature and her life purpose. Invite students to uncover Pisim’s learning in all four areas by indicating examples in a four-column chart such as the following:

Body	Mind	Heart	Spirit
She paddled as hard as she could to the top of one wave... Day 5, p. 26	Quickly and carefully she arranged everything just as she had been taught to do. Day 5, p. 28	Pisim’s heart swelled with pride as she looked at her minisiwin. Day 4, p. 20	Pisim prayed for a calm spirit as she prepared for the task. Day 5, p. 28

As students read the book, they will notice that Pisim makes a journey in self-knowledge and personal growth that parallels her physical journey of seven days through the waterways of Southern Indian Lake. Her inner journey is a self-exploration that helps her get to know herself better and define her gifts.

Invite the students to compare and contrast Pisim’s inner and outer journeys by completing the chart **3.1 Pisim’s Journey: Inner and Outer Exploration**.

### TEACHER TIP

Refer to the maps and the outline of Pisim’s Journey in the Foreword for additional background for this learning task.

Ask the students to silently contemplate their gifts and talents. In their **1.7 Miskanaw Journal**, they may reflect on discovering and refining their own learning path. Guide them to recognize how they are using heart, mind, body and spirit to find their *Miskanaw*, just as Pisim did.

## Living With the Cycle of the Seasons

Southern Indian Lake has been occupied by ancestors of the Cree for thousands of years. Being totally self-sufficient and self-governing, they hunted, trapped and fished, as they followed their seasonal rounds. They have always had an intimate knowledge of their environment and have survived by moving from area to area as conditions and the environment demanded. These movements were planned, drawing upon their knowledge of the environment to use the resources of the land efficiently. The resources utilized to maintain their livelihood were found in their homeland and were collected during their seasonal rounds.

– *Kayasochi Kikawenow, Our Mother From Long Ago*, p. 5

In traditional Rocky Cree culture, the cycle of the seasons dictated the activities and journeys of the people. Because the minisiwin or smaller family clusters were dispersed according to resource availability, the Rocky Cree travelled to larger seasonal gatherings to share announcements, trade, celebrate births and marriages, and participate in ceremonies.

### TEACHER TIP

Refer to the Teacher Backgrounder **3.2 Weather and Climate** for information on these concepts.

In *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*, the people are celebrating the Spring Gathering in the season of Good Travel, called Mithoskan.

Introduce students to the Rocky Cree calendar of the seasons using the circle chart *Six Seasons of the Rocky Cree* in the Foreword.

Practice pronouncing the Cree names for the seasons and divide students into six groups – one for each of the seasons – for the activities that follow.

Generate a discussion about why there are two “extra” seasons in the Rocky Cree calendar compared to the Western (Gregorian) calendar used today: break-up or Mithoskan in spring, and freeze-up or *Tākwākin* in fall. Draw attention to the importance of seasonal changes in a traditional culture living in a northern climate, with access to abundant waterways, fish, waterfowl, animals, trees and wild berries.

“Seasons’ beginnings and ends were marked by changes in nature (flora, fauna, temperature, precipitation.)” PFM, Day 1, p. 5 (sidebar)

In their seasonal groups, ask students to find examples of Rocky Cree lifestyle in harmony with the seasons. Encourage them look for the Rocky Cree perspective of the seasons, the moons, the climate and the day-to-day weather in the text and images in the book.

Draw students’ attention to examples such as: gathering eggs in “the season of the long evenings” on Day 1; the Robin’s song of gratitude on Day 1; the midday meal of boiled eggs and dried caribou meat from the spring hunt on Day 2; the seasonal flora and fauna at the beach on Day 4; the description of the storm on Day 5; the morning fog on Day 6; the description of the signs of the season at the Spring Gathering on Day 7. They will notice frequent descriptions of seasonal changes and weather such as:

“It was the season of the long evenings... This was the moon when the leaves began to bud.” PFM, Day 1, p. 5



"The grandmother gifted with interpreting the weather spoke, "The clouds tell me the morning will be calm. But," she cautioned, "the shadow on the clouds also tell me that there could be a sudden turn. Just in case, let's get ready for an early start." PFM, Day 5, p. 25

Students may then work in their seasonal groups to complete the chart **3.2 Observing Nature** through the Seasons, finding clues in the book about some of the traditional tasks of the Rocky Cree and the changes observed in nature over the seasons.

After completing the chart, each of the six seasonal groups may then present a wordless charade of one of the Cree cultural practices or activities that would have taken place in their assigned season, based on the information found in *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*.

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## Observing the Weather

"Foretelling the weather is a gift acquired through life-long learning. It is more than reading the wind and the clouds; it can also be the observation of animals' behavior. For example, if loons are calling when they are flying, it will be windy the next day."  
PFM, Day 5, p. 25 (sidebar)

Indigenous knowledge begins with attentive observations and experiences of natural conditions and changes. This knowledge is kept and shared by the Elders of the community through oral tradition. Modern education teaches that scientific thinking also begins with observation. Meteorology is the scientific study and forecasting of weather processes and phenomena based on observation and technology. See **3.2 Teacher Backgrounder: Weather and Climate** for an overview of terms.

Ask students to carry out their own observations of the weather and seasonal changes over the period of one week, using the Blackline Master **3.3. Looking at Weather and Seasons Today**.

Students may consult websites or newspapers to find and record a 7-day weather forecast, and then compare it with their observations of the actual weather conditions. They will also record any other changes that they observe in nature over the course of the week (geese in flight, a robin singing, leaves turning brown, days getting longer, etc.).

At the end of the week, students may share their observations and discuss the following questions as a group:

- How accurate do you think modern meteorology is in forecasting the weather?
- How do the cycles of nature influence our ways of life today?
- How do you think Indigenous knowledge can add to modern scientific meteorology?

Invite students to write a reflection in their **1.7 Miskanaw Journal** about the influence of seasonal changes on their lives today as compared to in traditional Rocky Cree culture.

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## The 13 Moons of the Rocky Cree

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The Rocky Cree calendar is based on the cycle of the moon while the western calendar is based on the sun. Like the seasons, the phases of the moon are cyclical. Five of the six seasons of the Rocky Cree have two full moons; *Tākwākin* or fall has three moons. Each moon is named descriptively for the changes observed in nature at that time of year.

Generate a discussion based on the Blackline master [3.4 The Rocky Cree Moons](#). Encourage students to consider these questions as they complete the chart:

- Why do you think the thirteen Cree moons are named as they are?
- How does the name of each moon describe what is observed in nature at that time?

Invite the seasonal groups of students to collaborate on an art project: each of the six groups will create a large poster illustrating each of the moons in their assigned season. Then ask students to label their moons according to the Cree name and arrange them seasonally around the room.

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## Examining Traditional Rocky Cree Culture

As the students gather information from the book about the traditional seasonal tasks of the Rocky Cree, they will notice that the story is supported all the way through with supplementary information in the margins. Referring to these documentary texts about Rocky Cree culture, discuss examples of *material culture* (physical objects, resources, spaces defined by culture) and *non-material culture* (beliefs, values, rules, practices, language). They may then record the elements of Rocky Cree culture that they have learned about in the book, using the chart [3.5 Material and Non-material Culture](#).

Their findings may be shared in a discussion about which elements of culture they see as being most important today, and in the past. Students will notice that the material and non-material expressions of culture are interdependent and cannot be separated in Rocky Cree culture.

Brainstorm a list of items of material culture in their own lives (cell phones, clothing, food, books) and non-material culture (music, languages, beliefs, customs). Discuss this question: *What does material culture today tell you about modern ways of life as compared to traditional ways of life?*

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## Preparation for a Journey

Discuss different types of journeys that the students have made in their lives, or that they would like to take. What kinds of preparation did they do?

*Pisim Finds her Miskanaw* is a journey of self-knowledge for the main character Pisim, but it is also a physical seasonal journey to the Spring Gathering that involves facing some risks and dangers. Generate a class discussion to gather ideas about these questions:

- *What is the purpose of the journey to the Spring Gathering?*
- *Which material items would be important to bring along for this journey?*

Encourage students to consider items that would be required for survival (food) and items that would be required for celebration and ceremony (best clothing). There is limited space in the canoes and typically Rocky Cree people would not take unnecessary items or items that can easily be found or made along the way.

Teachers may like to have students engage in a canoe packing activity to reinforce their learning. There are two ways to do this. One way is for teachers to use the BLM [3.6 Packing the Canoe](#) and have students fill in the chart. An answer key is also provided to aid teachers.

#### TEACHER TIP

Here's a way to use the picture book app in the classroom: play the Pack the Canoe Game!

The other way is to use the picture book app and play the Pack the Canoe game on it. The Pack the Canoe game is a simple click-and-drag game that invites readers to decide which of various items spread out on the shore of the lake should be packed into the canoe for the travellers as they set out on their five-day journey to the Spring Gathering of the people of Southern Indian Lake. The principle here is that there is limited space in the canoes and that Rocky Cree people undertaking long journeys would not typically take any items that could be easily found or made along the journey. Players choose three items from the available possibilities (these possibilities change each time you play) to see if they've chosen correctly. The game can be played repeatedly.

## Examining Traditional Rocky Cree Culture

After the students have completed their decision making about packing the canoe and verified their responses, they may engage in a sharing circle to discuss what this activity has revealed to them about the traditional values of Rocky Cree culture. They may begin by observing that the values of a culture are shown in the items they choose to conserve and the practices they keep. For example, in modern westernized cultures, many people cannot be parted from their electronic devices, shopping is a common social practice, and people are often judged by their accumulation of possessions. This is why the dominant culture is said to be a "consumer culture". In contrast to this, the traditional Rocky Cree culture was one of making or constructing. Their dwellings, their clothing, their food, their tools, their means of transportation were all produced by their own hands.

We can find evidence of the Rocky Cree worldview and values in the objects that are selected to pack in the canoe. Why did they include the medicine bundle, the finest clothing, and their hunting and fishing tools? These objects were often personalized with decorative elements. They were treated respectfully and treasured, as they held cultural meaning and history. The objects that conveyed traditional stories and knowledge and were often buried with the person who made or received them as gift, as we see in the burial site of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw.

## **Module 3 Blackline Masters and Teacher Resources**

### **Nihithow and the Life Journey**

- 3.1 Pīsim's Journey: Inner and Outer Exploration
- 3.2 Teacher Backgrounder: Weather and Climate

### **Living with the Cycle of the Seasons**

- 3.3 Observing Nature through the Seasons

### **Observing the Weather**

- 3.4 Looking at Weather and Seasons Today

### **The 13 Moons of the Rocky Cree**

- 3.5 The Rocky Cree Moons

### **Preparation for a Journey**

- 3.6 Packing the Canoe (with answer key)

### **Examining Traditional Rocky Cree Culture**


- 3.7 Material and Non-material Culture

### 3.1 Pīsim's Journey: Inner and Outer Exploration

Pīsim's journey has two paths. One is the physical path she and her family take through the waterways of Southern Indian Lake. One is a spiritual journey of self-exploration that leads her to discover her *Miskanaw*.

**On the chart below write about Pīsim's journeys.**

- On one side, write out Pīsim's trip with her family for the Spring Gathering. Where did she travel? What did she see? Who was she with?
- On the other side, write about Pīsim's inner journey that led her to be acknowledged as the helper of *otīnawāsōwin*. What did she do? How do you think she felt? What are the objects, people or places that are significant on this journey? Why or how are they significant?

		
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## 3.2 Teacher Backgrounder: Weather and Climate

**Climate** refers to long-term weather patterns of a region, over a period of many years, decades or centuries. Climate can change due to natural and human-made processes.

**Seasons** are predictable periods of time with some general characteristic changes in conditions. As they are dependent upon the relative positions of the Sun, Earth, and Moon, they have a cyclical or recurring nature.

**Weather**, on the other hand, changes daily due to complex interactions between energy from the Sun and the atmosphere, water systems, and landforms. Weather can be variable in a very short period of time.

**Meteorology** is a modern science that deals with forecasting weather conditions using observation and technology, so that humans can better plan our activities.

In Indigenous communities, elders keep and pass on knowledge about weather, climate, and seasonal changes. Their knowledge of environmental phenomena is based on many generations of attentive observation and experience in ways of life that depend on close interaction with the environment (land, water, air, flora, fauna). The Indigenous approach to observation is a more holistic approach than the modern western point of view: that is, it observes nature in all of its elements as an integrated and balanced whole, rather than analyzing natural phenomena as separate and discrete elements.

“Seasons ran parallel to, but independently of, the moon phases. Seasons’ beginnings and ends were marked by changes in nature (flora, fauna, temperature, precipitation). These usually roughly coincided with particular moon phases, but exceptions could occur.” PFM, Day 1, p. 5

### 3.3 Observing Nature through the Seasons

*Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* takes place in the season Mithoskāmin. As you read, find clues about the changes in nature and seasonal tasks for Mithoskāmin. Can you imagine the tasks and seasonal changes for the other five seasons based on the names of the seasons, the names of the moons, and any clues in the picture book?

Season/Moons	Traditional Tasks	Observations of Nature
<b><i>Sikwaan</i></b> ( <i>Rattling In</i> ) <b>Spring</b> March: <i>Eagle Moon</i> April: <i>Goose Moon</i>		
<b><i>Mithoskāmin</i></b> ( <i>Good Travel</i> ) <b>Break-up</b> May: <i>Frog Moon</i> June: <i>Egg Laying Moon</i>		
<b><i>Nipin</i></b> ( <i>Gifts from Water</i> ) <b>Summer</b> July: <i>Egg Hatching Moon</i> August: <i>Moulting Moon</i>		
<b><i>Tākwākin</i></b> ( <i>Adding Up</i> ) <b>Fall</b> September: <i>Flying Moon</i> ; <i>Getting Ready Moon</i> October: <i>Flying Back Moon</i>		
<b><i>Mikiskaw</i></b> ( <i>Plenty of Beads</i> ) <b>Freeze-up</b> November: <i>Freeze up Moon</i> December: <i>Hoar Frost Moon</i>		
<b><i>Pipon</i></b> ( <i>Snow Blanket</i> ) <b>Winter</b> January: <i>Elder Moon</i> February: <i>Wind Clearing Moon</i>		

### 3.3 Observing Nature through the Seasons (suggested responses)

Season/Moons	Traditional Tasks	Observations of Nature
<b><i>Sikwaan</i></b> ( <i>Rattling In</i> ) <b>Spring</b> March: <i>Eagle Moon</i> April: <i>Goose Moon</i>	Egg gathering, trapping beavers and muskrats	Eagles and geese return
<b><i>Mithoskāmin</i></b> ( <i>Good Travel</i> ) <b>Break-up</b> May: <i>Frog Moon</i> June: <i>Egg Laying Moon</i>	Egg gathering, harvest birch bark, collecting strawberries and moss berries; packing canoes for voyage to Spring Gathering; collecting birch sap, fishing for pike, pickerel; planting potatoes, turnips, tomatoes	Long evenings, robin singing, birds begin to return, leaves beginning to bud, ice has broken on the river to allow canoe travel, otter tracks, pin cherries in bloom, frog song, birds laying eggs
<b><i>Nipin</i></b> ( <i>Gifts from Water</i> ) <b>Summer</b> July: <i>Egg Hatching Moon</i> August: <i>Moulting Moon</i>	Fishing for whitefish, walleye, pike; Duck hunting, tending gardens; collecting roots and herbs	Birds hatching, young waterfowl ready to fly
<b><i>Tākwākin</i></b> ( <i>Adding Up</i> ) <b>Fall</b> September: <i>Flying Moon</i> ; <i>Getting Ready Moon</i> October: <i>Flying Back Moon</i>	Preparing fish for winter; moose hunting, preparing hides for mitts and moccasins Gathering low bush cranberries, blueberries, Saskatoon berries	Bull moose scrapes velvet from antlers as a sign of mating season; birds begin their flight south
<b><i>Mikiskaw</i></b> ( <i>Plenty of Beads</i> ) <b>Freeze-up</b> November: <i>Freeze up Moon</i> December: <i>Hoar Frost Moon</i>	River travel restricted due to freeze-up; hunting and trapping continues; Making snowshoes, preparing hides and making rawhide strips ( <i>amihkowapi</i> )	Lakes and rivers freeze; frost clings to leaves
<b><i>Pipon</i></b> ( <i>Snow Blanket</i> ) <b>Winter</b> January: <i>Elder Moon</i> February: <i>Wind Clearing Moon</i>	Winter hunting and trapping of beavers, fox, lynx; Ice fishing	Animals move around less, extreme cold causes trees to crackle; Great Moon in February

The Six Seasons of the Woodland Cree: A Lesson to Support Science 10. Duane Johnson, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation <https://www.stf.sk.ca/unit-plan/six-seasons-woodland-cree-lesson-support-science-10>



### 3.4 Looking at Weather and Seasons Today

Season: (Cree/English) \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Weather Forecast	Actual Weather Conditions (temperature, winds, precipitation)	Changes Noticed in Nature (flora, fauna, sun, moon, stars)	My Seasonal Tasks

### 3.5 The Rocky Cree Moons

“The moon bow was riding in the sky. This was the moon when leaves began to bud.”

PFM, Day 1, p. 5

One of the most predictable elements of the natural environment is the Moon. One month is the time it takes for the Moon to revolve around the Earth.

The phases of the Moon depend on its position in relation to the Sun and Earth. As the Moon makes its way around the Earth, we see the bright parts of the Moon’s surface at different angles. These are called phases of the Moon.

The Rocky Cree calendar gives a descriptive name to each of the 6 seasons and to each of the 13 moons in a yearly cycle. This story takes place in *Mithoskāmin – the Season of Good Travel*. Its moons are called the *Frog Moon* and the *Egg Laying Moon*.

Task: Your group has been assigned one of the six Rocky Cree Seasons. Together you will create an illustration of each of the moons in your Season based on what you have learned from *Pisim Finds her Miskanaw*. Do not forget to label your Month and Moons in Cree. Your moon drawings will be part of large wall display of the Rocky Cree calendar.

Rocky Cree Season	Conventional Season	Rocky Cree Moons – Calendar Month
<b>Sikwan</b> (Rattling in)	Spring	<i>Eagle Moon</i> – March <i>Goose Moon</i> – April
<b>Mithoskāmin</b> (Good Travel)	Break-up	<i>Frog Moon</i> – May <i>Egg Laying Moon</i> – June
<b>Nipin</b> (Gifts from Water)	Summer	<i>Egg Hatching Moon</i> – July <i>Moulting Moon</i> – August
<b>Tākwākin</b> (Adding-up)	Fall (Autumn)	<i>Flying Moon</i> – September <i>Getting Ready Moon</i> – September <i>Flying Back Moon</i> – October
<b>Mikiskaw</b> (Plenty of Beads)	Freeze-up	<i>Freeze-up Moon</i> – November <i>Hoar Frost Moon</i> – December
<b>Pipon</b> (Snow Blanket)	Winter	<i>Elder Moon</i> – January <i>Wind Clearing Moon</i> – February

### **3.6 Packing the Canoe**

To prepare for a canoe voyage, you need to decide which items to pack in the canoe and which items to leave behind. List each of the items in the table below, explaining why you would decide to take it along or leave it behind. You may also play a version of this game on the picture book app.

1. *Askihwak (clay pots)*
2. *Caribou or moose robes*
3. *Dream Catchers*
4. *Enough food for two days of travel:*
5. *Excess food*
6. *Excess fish oil*
7. *Finest clothing*
8. *Fire bag containing dried poashkan (fungus used as tinder)*
9. *Firewood*
10. *Hunting and fishing tools*
11. *Medicine bundle*
12. *Mikiwap (portable shelter)*
13. *Rabbit fur blankets*
14. *Spoons and ladles*

Take Along/Reason	Leave Behind/Reason	May take or leave

### **3.6 Packing the Canoe (Answer key)**

You may now check your answers against these provided by Rocky Cree Elders. What do these answers tell you about Rocky Cree culture and values?

#### **Objects that would be taken:**

**4. Enough food for two days of travel:** People would not need more than two days of food at a time because they would be hunting, gathering, and fishing as they travelled. This food would be carried in birch bark baskets and hide bags, and include dried caribou meat, dried fish, boiled eggs, and pimihkân. People would also carry jackfish bags of oil and medicine.

**7. Finest clothing:** Each person would have a set of fine, decorated clothing for ceremonial purposes, and they would take this clothing with them as they travelled.

**8. Fire bag containing dried *poashkan*:** (known in English as chaga), a fungus found on birch tree trunks, acts as tinder for starting fires and would be carried in a small askihk shaped like a bottle at the front of the canoe while still smouldering. The askihk would be held in a rawhide string bag to prevent burn injuries. By keeping the poashkan smouldering, the travellers would not have to take as long to start fire at the next stop on the journey.

**10. Hunting and fishing tools:** Hunting and fishing tools, such as spears, bows, and willow bark nets would be needed to replenish the food supply as people travelled. Tools used for making new containers, such as fiber bags made to use askihkwak and bone needles and scrapers, would also be taken. Tools themselves would often be more decorated than the objects made with them because tools were not as likely to be left behind or discarded.

**13. Rabbit fur blankets:** Rabbit blankets would be taken for warmth because they are lighter than caribou and moose robes.

**11. Medicine bundle:** Each minisiwin or family would have its own medicine bundle in which significant objects were stored. The container for the bundle would likely be made of hide, but could also be made out of loon or otter skin. The objects inside the bundle would be used to record and relate history in the form of stories.

#### **Objects that would not be taken:**

**1. Askihkwak:** The larger clay pots would be buried in the ground rather than carried on the journey because they are heavy and can be made from the clay at the next location.

**2. Caribou or moose robes:** Caribou or moose robes are too heavy for a canoe trip and would not be necessary in this season. Rabbit blankets are more appropriate because they are lighter, but still provide warmth.

**3. Dream catchers:** Dream catchers were often left to protect the camp site and food caches.

**6. Excess fish oil:** Surplus fish oil would be stored in cold places: buried under moss close to the permafrost layer of soil or placed in caves.

**5. Excess food:** Any excess food beyond the two days' worth needed for the journey would be buried in the ground and covered with ashes, so that animals could not smell it and dig it up.

**9. Firewood:** Firewood can always be found along the journey.

**12. Mikiwap:** The dwelling would be left behind because the poles would be too long to fit in the canoe, and new poles could be made from trees at the next location. Bark and moss could be found again to provide the covering. Some mikiwapa would be constructed by bending saplings, and these saplings would be left where they are rooted.

**Objects that could or could not be taken:**

**14. Spoons and ladles:** Smaller wooden spoons and ladles might be taken on the trip, but some larger ones could also be hung in the trees for future use at that camp.

### 3.7 Material and Non-material Culture

Throughout the story of the life journey of Pīsim, you learn about the *culture* or way of life of Rocky Cree people before the influence of European culture. As you read, note what you learn about the *material* and *non-material* culture of the Rocky Cree in the chart below.

<b>Material Culture</b> Physical things that are part of a culture and made by human beings (buildings, clothing, tools, food, transportation)	<b>Non-material Culture</b> Ideas, ways of life, beliefs, values that are part of a culture (languages, stories, practices, songs, prayers, values)
<b>Day 1</b>	
<b>Day 2</b>	
<b>Day 3</b>	
<b>Day 4</b>	
<b>Day 5</b>	
<b>Day 6</b>	
<b>Day 7</b>	

### 3.7 Material and Non-material Culture (suggested responses)

Material Culture Physical things that are part of a culture and made by human beings (buildings, clothing, tools, food, transportation)	Non-material Culture Ideas, ways of life, beliefs, values that are part of a culture (languages, stories, practices, songs, prayers, values)
<b>Day 1</b> Birch and willow baskets to carry eggs Clay pots of a round shape with rim Roasting fish Hunting tools and bow making Canoe building Egg gathering Camp layout Red pipestone beads from traders	<i>Miskanaw</i> finding a life path Places are named for important events Travel and trade Storytelling, oral tradition, Robin's Song Prayer, gratitude, stories of travel and endurance Stories of Europeans ( <i>Mihistowiwak</i> ) Reunions and gatherings; Cree language
<b>Day 2</b> Making clothing from rawhide Smoking meat and fish Making snowshoes lacings and rawhide bags Cooking	Large spring gathering for many families Place names and history; acknowledging ancestors to keep connected to them Gathering in a circle Places named for special events Paddling song for inspiration and rhythm
<b>Day 3</b> Canoes and paddles	Navigating the canoes through the channel Watching the sun set (respect for nature)
<b>Day 4</b> Packing canoes Pimihkân, smoked swan eggs, pounded fish Cradleboard, baby rattle	Feast songs Marking travel routes Naming places for special events Young boys' role as servers Gift giving Offerings
<b>Day 5</b> Making a lean-to tipaniwahikan Making a fire kotawan Rabbit blanket Dry moss for diapers How to paddle in a storm	Reading the weather Observing wind, clouds, animals Navigating the current Kinship terms and names (Cree language)
<b>Day 6</b> Tending the fire	Cree lullaby Offering thanks to the Creator Acknowledging a sacred place Stories about "little people" Paddling song Formal announcements Passing on stories and gifts Adoption practices
<b>Day 7</b> Clothing from tanned hides Porcupine quillwork, embroidery Beads from pincherry seeds, bone, pipestone, shell Rattles and hoof rhythm makers; drums Midwifery tools Copper, bead-making, European artifacts from trade; spruce bed	Lullaby, morning prayer, paddling song Certain animal skins have spiritual meaning Spring Gathering, dances, songs, ceremonies, rites of passage, prayers, gift giving, trading, dances, robin song Values – gratitude

## Module 4: Wawanaskiwin: Orienteering Oneself with the Land



### ***Sipi nisitohtamowin: Enduring Understanding***

*"We have made our living on this water and this land. There is so much freedom in this land; wherever we find it nice to camp, we camp. And we are always healthy. The vibrations of the land we step on remind us that we are alive. And this land gives us that life." PFM, Day 1, p. 7 (sidebar)*

### **Key Concepts**

health and lifestyle, water, environmental responsibility, simple tools, artifacts

### **Key words:**

Wawanaskiwin mean orienteering oneself with the land. The word is broken down as wawan (orienteering oneself); aski (land); win (mastery).

### **Guiding Questions:**

How has the healthy lifestyle of the traditional Cree culture been changed over time?

How do traditional concepts of environmental responsibility compare with those of today?

What are some differences between traditional Indigenous tools and modern tools?

What can buried artifacts tell us about traditional Rocky Cree culture?



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# Kiskinwahamakiwin: Teaching Strategies

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## The People Were Healthy and Strong

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“Long ago, my grandchildren, long ago, it was beautiful the earth, it was peaceful. The people were well, and we were healthy.” PFM, Day 1, p. 4 (sidebar)

Throughout the story of *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*, the author frequently mentions that the Rocky Cree people before European contact were proud, strong, and well. This was of course because they lived a healthy lifestyle in balance with the whole of nature: land, water, plants, animals, seasons, weather. Invite the students to skim through the book to find all the mentions of the healthy lifestyle of the traditional communities. The Rocky Cree lived in harmony with the seasonal cycles, using the natural resources of the land and water for food sources, medicine, materials to make tools, clothing, pots and baskets. Refer to *Where Does Pisim’s Story Take Place?* in the Foreword for a description of the Rocky Cree relationships to the land.

For example, on Day 2 the meal consists of freshly-gathered boiled eggs and dried caribou from the previous season. On Day 4, Pisim says that “She felt safe. The people are strong, she thought. The canoes are full of food – , smoked swan eggs, pounded fish.” On Day 7, after all the canoes made it through the rainstorm, “proud and strong, they approached their final landing.”

Students will also find mentions of regional berries (saskatoon, pincherry, raspberry, blueberry, gooseberry), fish (whitefish, jackfish, pickerel, sturgeon) and animals to trap or hunt (caribou, bear, wolf, wolverine, lynx, fox, martin, weasel, otter). They will note physical activities that correspond to the seasons, such as canoeing, gathering eggs, gathering birch bark, smoking meat and fish, smoking hides, building canoes.

In a group discussion, brainstorm all the elements that students know to be part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Following this, ask students to discover examples in the narrative and in the side notes of the book that describe the practices of the Rocky Cree that sustained their strength and wellness: nutrition, fresh foods, forms of exercise, enjoyment of nature, harmony with seasonal changes, community celebrations, sense of gratitude, making tools and clothes from natural materials, etc.

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## Water: The Lifeline of the Rocky Cree

Ask students to examine the maps of the Rocky Cree territory and to take note of the important bodies of water mentioned in the story. In particular, locate Southern Indian Lake and the Churchill River (*Misinipi*). Waterways were the seasonal travel routes for the Rocky Cree as well the sources of life to the fish and waterfowl of the region. They provided the Rocky Cree travel routes for seasonal moves to a new campsite, for trade, for community gatherings, and for fishing and hunting. In Pisim’s time, the Rocky Cree communities were self-sufficient and self-governing, living by seasonal hunting, trapping, and fishing, and moving from place to place as natural conditions required. They had trade networks with other Indigenous groups along the coast and to the east but no direct contact with Europeans.

Because the Cree people lived along and with waterways, they came to know the properties of water through the seasons. Water played a strong role in many Rocky Cree stories too, such as the humorous story told by Wāpistan on Day 1, p. 8 about twin boys from another camp who needed to be rescued

yet again from White Beaver Dam Lake: "Every year. When the ice is melting and it can no longer carry them..." On Day 3, Pisim is looking forward to paddling through the channel through the high rocks on the way to the next camp. Pisim also knew how to paddle through a time of storm, as we see in Day 5:

"Pisim remembered what she'd been taught about paddling in high waves. No matter how tired you are, you can't stop. If you stop, you'll be swamped. She paddled as hard as she could to the top of one wave and let the canoe slide down into the trough."  
PFM, Day 5, p. 26

How to paddle in large waves without swamping the canoe is something that is gained only by experience. If it is possible, arrange an on the water experience to help students experience handling a paddle in a canoe. Other students may be interested in conducting inquiry into the science of water movement and currents in relation to paddling a canoe by consulting a website such as: <https://adventure.howstuffworks.com/outdoor-activities/water-sports/canoeing4.htm> <http://owrc.com/rowing-bay/science-of-water-waves/>

### Water as a resource to exploit

In the history of the Rocky Cree territory, the traditional values related to water were changed by modern Canadian culture and technology. In the 1970's, the Manitoba Government constructed dams in the area in order to utilize the Misinipi as part of a project to develop hydroelectric power.

Invite students to examine Dimensions of Southern Indian Lake on Day 5, p. 25 (sidebar) of the picture book to visualize the extent of the lake. Record their visualizations in their **1.7 Miskanaw Journal**.

Explain to students Manitoba Hydro's Churchill River Diversion, constructed in 1976, to redirect the flow of the upper Churchill River (Misinipi) into the Nelson River. As a result of this project, flooding dramatically altered the Southern Indian Lake area. Discuss how the reduced flow of the river has had an impact on fur-bearing animals, shorebirds, waterfowl, and fish populations of the area, and also by implication, the Rocky Cree living in the area. See **4.1 Hydro Flooding and Community Impact Activity**. This activity includes a Teacher Backgrounder on the Churchill River Diversion.



Pre-flood Crow Point (HeLr-12). Photograph by Tim Jones, pre-1975, The Manitoba Museum.



Post-flood Nagami Bay, the burial site of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw, photographed in 1994, The Manitoba Museum.

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## Archaeology: Telling the Story with Artifacts

Archaeology is the scientific study of human life by looking at artifacts, the man-made objects that people who lived long ago have left behind. Archaeologists are the scientists who study artifacts. They are not historians. Historians study mostly written records. They are not paleontologists; they study fossils.

“In 1993, the remains of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw were found at Nagami Bay ... The story of her miskanaw, her life journey, was pieced together from her remains and her belongings.” PFM, Introduction, p. 2

Europeans had not yet arrived in the Rocky Cree territory of northern Manitoba at the time of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw’s death, but a few of their trade goods had. Some of the items buried with her were a hide scraper, biface knife, whetstone, and a bone awl. Instruct students to write the list of items in their **1.7 Miskanaw Journal** in a four column, four row table. Have them research and summarize what each item was made of, its use, and its likely origin (local or European).

‘There appear to be no surviving pieces of clothing from the time period and the area in this story. Surviving objects either come from later time periods, or from outside of north-central Manitoba.’ PFM, Day 7, p. 38 (sidebar)

How well archaeological remains survive is strongly affected by the materials they are made of and the environment in which they may lie for centuries before being discovered. The artifacts found with Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw were approximately 300 years old. Using a large wall map of Manitoba or Canada, point out the location where Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw was discovered. Lead a class discussion centred on the environment and the pros and cons regarding the decay or survival of artifacts. Instruct students to complete **4.2 What Will Survive?**

### Teacher Tip

In Grade 4 Science, students studied natural phenomena and human activities that cause significant changes in the landscape. Ask them to consider the impact of the modern approach to water on traditional ways of life and ecosystems. What do they think of the human transformation of natural water systems by building dams to develop hydroelectricity?

“European artifacts that reached Pīsim’s people would have come indirectly [and] would have included beads, knives, axes, hatchets, and other small tools...” PFM, Day 7, p. 42 (sidebar)

Archaeologists are like detectives. By looking at artifacts, they try to figure out how people lived long ago. Artifacts are objects made, modified, or used by humans. Depending on what they dig up, they can learn how people governed themselves, what art they created, their beliefs, their technology and inventions, who they traded with, and their daily life. Explore the science behind an archaeological dig and have the student complete **4.3 Shoebox Dig – Be an Archaeologist!**

Read aloud the following quote by archaeologist Jack W. Brink: “[Archaeology] comes with a great deal of responsibility. Archaeologists have to speak for the people of the past; to give a voice to those no longer able to tell their own stories. Ancient people may be anonymous, but they need not be unknown.” Lead a class discussion on the idea of responsibility. Instruct students to write a letter in their **1.7 Misknaow Journal** to archaeologists Kevin Brownlee and E. Leigh Syms posing several questions about the responsibilities of archaeologists to the past and the future.

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## Tools As Simple Machines

Some of the artifacts found with Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw were tools. Understanding how the tools work can add to the knowledge of how they may have been used in the past.

Many tools are simple machines. A simple machine is a device that makes work easier by changing the size or direction of an applied force. There are six different types of simple machines: an incline plane, a wedge, levers, gears, pulleys and wheels, and axles. This section will focus on wedges and levers as those are the tools mentioned in the book.

Ask prompting questions (if simple machines has been covered in the classroom already): Look through the book and identify the tools that were found near Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw. Are any of these tools examples of simple machines? What simple machines are represented?

### The Wedge

A wedge is a triangular shaped tool and is a portable incline plane. It can be used to separate two objects or portions of an object, lift up an object or hold an object in place. Examples of a wedge are: knives, axes, shovels, scrapers, nails arrow, adze.

*How does a wedge work?*

The wedge is very similar to the inclined plane but they have different purposes. The inclined plane transports heavy objects, while the wedge itself can move in order to move or lift objects. Therefore, the wedge is essentially an inclined plane in motion. When a wedge is moved, a forward force is converted into the outward or parting force used to separate or split material. Throughout history the wedge has been primarily utilized as a valuable cutting device. An axe is a classic example of how a wedge is used to make work easier. Can you imagine how hard it would be to cut down a tree or chop wood without an axe?

In addition to the axe, other familiar tools such as a knife, scraper and shovel all take advantage of the wedge in order to easily separate bound material. Can you think of other devices where the wedge is at work? Sometimes it is difficult to identify the wedge because of the many different appearances it can have. It is interesting, however, when we realize that the wedge can be found in as many unfamiliar places as well, such as the hull of a canoe, airplane wings, and even our front teeth!

The wedges found near Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw were a moose bone knife, awl, end scraper and adze. How did each of these tools work and how did they make work easier? Wedges are important today, look around your classrooms and school and see how many wedges you can find.

### The Lever

A lever is simply a beam or plank that is able to rotate on a pivot. Levers are made of four parts: the bar or beam, the fulcrum (pivot point), the effort (force) and the load.

There are three types of levers:

**Class 1** - In this type of lever the fulcrum is between the effort and the load. Examples are seesaws and crowbars.

[Insert picture]

**Class 2** - In this type the load is between the effort and the fulcrum. Examples are wheelbarrows.

[Insert picture]

**Class 3** - In this type the effort is between the load and the fulcrum. An example is a shovel.

[Insert picture]

One of the tools found near Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw was an adze. This tool can be used as a lever as well as a wedge. Ask: What class of lever would an adze be?

Instruct the students to complete the following in their Miskanaw Journal:

Draw an adze and label the fulcrum and effort.

(1st class)

One of the tools mentioned in the book is a canoe paddle. What type of lever would a canoe paddle be?

(2nd Class)

Draw a canoe paddle and label the fulcrum and effort.

One of the tools mentioned in the book is an apwanase used for roasting fish. What kind of lever would this tool be?

(3rd class)

Draw an apwanase and label the fulcrum and effort.

Beside each of the traditional tools draw another tool that you can think of that fits in the same lever class.

## Toponymy: The Naming of Places

Place names connect the present to the past by referencing important historical events and celebrations that have occurred at specific places. They may also name natural features and function as guides to travel, identifying their relationship to other places. People keep a place alive by stopping, eating, and camping there.

“Stories involve a range of purposes – the sharing of humour, technical information, moral lessons, origins, social norms, kinship patterns, history, and prophecy – embodying the experience of the people and their ways of knowing.” PFM, Day 1, p. 11 (sidebar)

Many Rocky Cree trappers and hunters were (and are) storytellers and have intimate knowledge of the land, lakes, and waterways. Their stories provide a glimpse into the past as well as valuable knowledge about the environment and sustainability. Traditional Rocky Cree place names are entry points for these stories. Have the students explore **4.4 How Place Name are Formed in Rocky Cree**. Once the students have written their stories, collect them and make a bulletin board display.

## Building a Shelter

The Rocky Cree were travellers and therefore used different kinds of structures for houses. Shelters were typically small, easy to set up and take down and move from place to place and constructed of materials from nature.

“That night Pīsim went to sleep comfortably in the mikiwāhp [birchbark dwelling with round roof], the dwelling she shared with her family.” PFM, Day 1, p. 10

Another common type of housing structure was a lean-to – a tipinawahikiwak. Lean-tos were built from free-standing beams of wood and were layered against a log or large rock. They were lashed together and covered in brush and hide, resulting in a slanted roof and an opening for entering or exiting. (Double lean-tos covered in hide and brush were also used). Animal hides, with the fur facing toward the interior of the shelter, provided the Rocky Cree with warmth in cooler seasons. Lean-tos typically would hold one or two families.

### TEACHER TIP

Draw students’ attention to the image of the lean-to on Day 5, p. 28–29.

The Rocky Cree built their shelters with expertise. Knowing where to construct the shelter was as important as knowing how to build it. Explain to the students what a lean-to is. Ask: If you had to build a lean-to in the forest, where would be the best place? Consider: wind direction, resources needed, landscape, etc. Have the students complete **4.5 Where Will I Build My Lean-To?** and explain to the class why they made the decisions they did.

As an extension activity, have the students build a lean-to using popsicle sticks as the timbers, Play-Doh as the rock, and paper or felt as the hide covering.

## Travel Markers: Finding Your Way

Rocky Cree story telling is always place-based or connected to the land. The Rocky Cree people made regular voyages based on available food sources, sometimes on foot – after freeze-up using snow-shoes and toboggans – and after break-up, mostly by canoe. Along these voyages it was important to mark and acknowledge places where important events occurred. The Rocky Cree also used the characteristic features of the landscape to mark routes for future travel:

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“Tall spruce trees in conspicuous places on travel routes might be deliberately stripped of their branches up to the top tuft. Once they were stripped, they would be referred to as ‘lobsticks.’ They marked travel routes.” PFM, Day 4, p. 21 (sidebar)

Ask students to consult the chart of Pīsim’s Journey on p. 8 of this Teacher’s Guide, and read aloud the descriptions of the landscape at these key points in the voyage, pronouncing their Cree names and matching them to their pictures in the book:

**Day 2 Mistahī wapahk (Big Narrows):** “This was the place where Pīsim’s family would meet with other families before going on to the Spring Gathering. The root of this word, mistahī, means “gigantic or huge”. The –hk ending indicates that the word is being used to describe a place. In other words, the area was a large encampment where many families gathered, and this name captures this use,” p. 15 (sidebar).

**Day 3 Āpīcīwāpāsīhk (Little Narrows):** “This was one of Pīsim’s favourite places. She found the high rocks exhilarating. She determined to come back that evening to see the sun setting on them,” p. 19.

**Day 5 Wapīcīwanōhk (Hole in the Wall):** “When people approach this place from the water, it looks like a solid rock wall. As they come close to the wall, however, a small narrows becomes visible, which allows people to pass through,” p. 25 (sidebar).

Invite students to share a description of one of their own “favourite places” with the class, after describing it and photographing or illustrating it in their Miskanaw Journal.

### *Grounding a story in place*

“Conspicuous features, such as distinctive rocks, grounded the stories of the people in the land. Such features were considered ancestors, which meant they had strong spiritual powers...” PFM, Day 4, Marking Travel Routes

Place students in groups of 4 to prepare an oral telling of the story of the birth of the child Pīponasiw. As storytellers they may imagine themselves to be in a time long after the story of Pīsim, taking on the identity of Pīponasiw as an elder, or a descendant of Pīsim. Guide them to use details of the place Pīponasiw was born in their story. Have them explore the images and descriptions on pp. 28–29 and pp. 32–33 to help them. Student groups may use the Blackline master **4.5 Telling a story from kayas (the distant past)** to guide their preparation before sharing the story.

## **Module 4 Blackline Masters and Teacher Resources**

### **Water: The Lifeline of the Rocky Cree**

4.1 Hydro Flooding and Community Impact Activity

### **Archaeology: Telling The Story With Artifacts**

4.2 What Will Survive?

4.3 Shoebox Dig – Be an Archaeologist!

### **Toponymy: The Naming of Places**

4.4 How Place Names are Formed in Rocky Cree

### **Building A Shelter**

4.5 Where Will I Build My Lean-To?

### **Travel Markers: Finding Your Way**

4.6 Telling a Story from *kayas* (the distant past)



## 4.1 Hydro Flooding and Community Impact Activity

### **Materials:**

The Churchill River Diversion: History Backgrounder (see below); talking stick or object; stakeholder name tags; tape (to stick tags on shirts)

The inspiration behind the *Pisim* book and story cycle was the discovery of the remains of a 17th century Rocky Cree woman at Nagami Bay by two South Indian Lake fishermen. The archaeological recovery and study of her remains and the material objects buried with her inspired storyteller William Dumas to tell her story so that Rocky Cree and all young people could learn about the traditional ways of his people. Her body was discovered due to the erosion of the banks where she was buried, erosion caused by the flooding of the area by Manitoba Hydro.

Using the Hydro Backgrounder below, teach students about the history of the flooding of Southern Indian Lake. Perhaps write notes on the whiteboard so that students can use them once they are divided into groups. Once you have done this, the goal is to hold a meeting in which each of the four stakeholder groups described below have the opportunity to share its viewpoints with the other stakeholders. Divide the full group into four and assign each group to represent a different stakeholder group. Each group member should be given a name tag that represents their group. Give each group the chance to meet and develop talking points, using the guidelines below, then begin the town hall meeting.

Before you begin the meeting, as a group brainstorm about how you will keep the discussion respectful and flowing. Do you want to sit in a circle? Use a talking stick? How do you decide who goes first? Who intervenes if someone goes on for too long or gets too loud? Establish the expectations and make them clear to all before you begin.

Information on the stakeholder groups:

**South Indian Lake fishers/hunters/trappers looking to maintain their way of life.** You have had your way of life since time immemorial altered by the environmental changes caused by Hydro flooding. Begin by telling the whole group how your way of life has been altered and what you would like to see changed in the future. Address each of the other three stakeholder groups directly after you make your general statement: what would you say to your fellow community members wanting to work for Hydro? To Hydro executives who are responsible to make sure Manitoba gets hydroelectricity but who also want to make a profit? To the average Manitoban who wants electricity and likely never thinks about how Hydro flooding has impacted you?

**South Indian Lake individuals looking for work in the hydro-based job-economy.** You too have had your way of life altered but are now seeking to get a good job in the hydro-based economy. Begin by telling the group what your main issues are. What might you say to the hunters and fishers of your community? To the Manitoba Hydro executives? To the average Manitoban?

**Manitoba Hydro executives responsible for generating and providing hydroelectric power in the province.** Dams have to go somewhere, and you need to make a profit according to the directives you've been given by the provincial government. What do you say to the hunters and fishers of South Indian Lake? To the members of the community who would like to work for you or already do? To the average Manitoban?

**Average Manitobans.** As average people living in Manitoba, likely in an urban area, describe how important electricity is to your everyday life. Now that you know something about hydro flooding, how do you feel about experiences of the South Indian Lake community? Is this surprising information for you? What would you like to say to the community? To Manitoba Hydro?

## The Churchill River Diversion: History Backgrounder

Manitoba Hydro has been building dams in northern Manitoba with minimal consent from Indigenous communities since the 1920s, when the Great Falls Dam was built on the Winnipeg River. By the 1970s, Hydro had plans for two new major projects: the Churchill River Diversion and Lake Winnipeg Regulation projects. When the construction for these projects began, five First Nations communities that would be affected came together and formed the Northern Flood Committee. Although the committee was entirely opposed to the Hydro developments, they eventually agreed to the Northern Flood Agreement (NFA), a negotiated agreement, which allowed the Hydro projects to proceed.

The history of the Churchill River Diversion, and the various acts, licences, and agreements that surround it are typical of Canadian governmental treatment of Indigenous rights and interests. Rather than honouring the 1973 licence, the Manitoba government in 1986 gave written permission for the “Augmented Flow Program”, which allowed Hydro to flood Southern Indian Lake by an extra half-foot, as well as draw-down the lake to a new maximum of 4.5-foot over a 12-month period.

The Churchill River Diversion transformed Southern Indian Lake from a series of basins into a reservoir. It has raised water levels significantly, and also has increased yearly fluctuations and affected fish movement and water current patterns. The community of South Indian Lake was physically displaced due to this development, being forced to move away from their homes and relocate according to plans created by Manitoba Hydro. This has caused social upheaval and unrest, not to mention extreme mental and emotional stress for most members of the community. Additionally, although the plan promised new job prospects for community members (as labourers and utility workers, tradespeople and technicians, storekeepers), most positions occupied by Cree individuals are low paid.

The environmental changes to Southern Indian Lake have essentially wiped out the entire fishing industry in the South Indian Lake community. Prior to the Churchill River Diversion, the whitefish fishery on Southern Indian Lake was the second largest in North America. The changing water levels have also caused erosion on the lake and also along the Churchill River, as well as farther down on the Nelson River. These rivers were traditionally routes that hunters travelled to track animals. Now Cree hunters and trappers struggle to use the rivers in the winter because the flooding and retreating water levels have created dangerous ice pockets. In the summer, there has been a concerning increase in floating debris in Southern Indian Lake, which is both an environmental concern, as well as dangerous for boaters.

Modern society relies on electricity for everything it does, and hydroelectricity is a major source of energy in a country like Canada. Hydropower converts flowing water into electricity without depleting the water in the process and is considered clean and renewable, especially in comparison to fossil fuels. Hydroelectric dams need to be built somewhere and physical factors such as sufficient water flow and geological formations are considered as are human factors such as the communities that will be impacted. As the case of Southern Indian Lake reveals, Indigenous lands and people in rural communities seem to have less importance than mainstream Canada and urban Canadians. Canada’s treatment of Indigenous peoples lies at the heart of this topic as well, as this is a familiar story played out in other parts of northern Manitoba.

## Resources:

Ducharme, Steve. "Fighting for a fishery: the Churchill River Diversion swamped lucrative whitefish fishery." *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 12, 2013.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/fighting-for-a-fishery-235187641.html>

Kirby, Molly. "Concerns Arise regarding Manitoba Hydro and South Indian Lake." *Thompson Citizen*, June 19, 2015.

<https://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/concerns-arise-regarding-manitoba-hydro-and-south-indian-lake-1.1972633>

Kulchyski, Peter. "Flooded and Forgotten: Hydro development makes battleground of northern Manitoba." *Briar Patch*, Feb. 28, 2012.

<https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/flooded-and-forgotten>

## **4.2 What Will Survive?**

### **Instructions:**

How well archaeological remains survive is strongly affected by the materials they are made of and the environment in which they may lie for centuries before being discovered. Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw/Pīsim was discovered in 1993 and was estimated to be about 300 years old, having lived during the late 1600's. Along with her body, several artifacts were found.

Archaeologists divide remains into two categories: organic and inorganic.

- Organic remains were living or once living. Examples include human, animal, and plant remains and objects and features made of plants and animals (food, paper, wood, leather). These tend to decay unless preserved in an airtight environment. At most archeological sites, fragile artifacts and organic remains are lost to us forever.
- Inorganic remains were items that were never living. They survive well in relatively airless conditions, although they too can break down when exposed to the elements. Examples of inorganic remains include clay, stone, cement, plastic, glass, and metal. Inorganic remains survive better, although they too can rust, tarnish, or otherwise break down in unstable conditions.

### ***Will it survive?***

Below is a list of items from *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw*. Think like an archaeologist and determine if each of the items below would survive 300+ years to be uncovered in a dig. You will find clues about what each object is made of in the book. Start digging!

Item	Look in <i>Pīsim Finds Her Misknow on...</i>	What is the item made out of?	Is it organic or inorganic?	Will it survive?
Askihk/Clay Pot	Day 1			
Bola	Day 2			
Clothing	Day 2/Day 7			
Brass button	Day 7			
Glass beads	Day 7			
Kwakwāywat/ Birch Basket	Day 1			
Metal chisel, knife, axe	Day 7			
Rattle	Day 7			

## **4.3 Shoebox Dig – Be an Archaeologist!**

### **Overview:**

In this activity, students will become archaeologists on a small scale and uncover artifacts in a shoebox. Students excavate in teams, uncover layer(s), record their findings, and assess the importance of recording and cataloging finds.

The dig teaches the basics of archaeology, the logic of horizontal excavation, the nature of stratigraphy, and the importance of keeping records and preserving the context of finds. The artifacts available through the Six Seasons project are 3D models of artifacts that have been and could be found in Northern Manitoba and that are representative of Rocky Cree culture. You could also use other small objects (suggestions below) but don't overcrowd the boxes! The Six Season project also can supply a poster of the real artifacts to compare for size and colour. The students can scan the QR Code beside each of the artifacts on the poster by using their iPad (QR Reader apps are free to download) to explore more about the artifacts. A hard copy of a booklet with artifact information can be provided should the classroom not have access to an iPad to use. Please use the following website for artifact information: <https://sites.google.com/view/archaeologyboxdig/home-page>.

### **Preparation:**

You will need to acquire one sturdy shoebox (or a larger clear plastic box) for every four to seven students. Each box will be filled with sand or dirt. If you wish to have two or three different layers to show stratigraphy, layers can be composed of sand, soil, birdseed, or other ingredients to create different colours and textures and to help students recognize changes in strata as they excavate (clear plastic boxes are especially useful if you choose to use layers). Each layer should be thick enough to be identified by students before they dig through it accidentally. Bury artifacts at different depths and in different areas of the box. The shoebox should be divided into four quadrants using string taped across the top edge. Label one side LEFT or WEST.

You should plan for 2–3 lessons. The first lesson should set up the basics of archaeology (tying in Pīsim's story as necessary), and the ensuing lessons should go over the basics of archaeological tools and digging, roles of team members, and the excavating and cataloging of findings.

### **Materials for a three-layer dig:**

- One shoe box or plastic box for each group of students
- Potting soil, sand and bird seed for layering
- Artifacts to be buried in each layer
- Heavy string, such as jute, to divide the box into quadrants
- Tape
- A piece of plastic or a table cloth to work on

### **Possible artifacts:**

- 3D models provided by Six Seasons project
- Coins
- Miniature plastic doll dinnerware
- Popcorn

- Small plastic bags
- Beads
- Fake “gems”
- Dried pasta
- Marbles

### Excavation tools:

- Spoons and paintbrushes
- Containers for excavated dirt
- Measuring tape
- Small sieves or strainers
- Small plastic or paper bags to hold each of the excavated artifacts
- Markers to label the bags
- Pencils and record sheets

### Small Group Procedure:

After the class discussion, break students into archaeological teams of 4 to 7. There are three assigned roles that students will take on in their groups.

1. **Digger** – this student digs for the artifacts – there can be up to 4 per group
  - They will dig in their assigned quadrants looking for artifacts. They can place the dirt they scoop in the sieve to see if they’ve discovered any artifacts
  - They will give any artifacts to the recorder and examiner
2. **Recorder** – this student takes notes in the group’s field log, makes sketches of the artifacts, takes measurements and labels the artifacts – there can be up to 2 per group
  - The recorder will note where the artifact was excavated on their catalogue sheet and measure the distance from the left hand side and from the bottom of the box. They should be consistent in how they measure for all of their artifacts.
  - After the examiner has identified the object, the recorder will sketch the artifact and include a scale of how big it is on their sketch.
  - They will include any notes about their artifact like the colour, size, what they think the object is, the colour-texture of the layer, and where it was found. If you have multiple layers, you can encourage your students to discuss what layer it was from.
3. **Examiner** – this student identifies and cleans the artifacts. They can help the recorder with identifying information about the object.
  - The examiner can bring any Six Seasons artifact up to the poster provided by the Six Seasons Project to identify what artifact was found. The student can use their iPad to scan the QR code to explore more information, examples and videos of the artifact, or go through the artifact booklet.
  - This person will also label the bag that holds their artifact after the recorder has recorded all necessary information. They will have to number their artifacts based on the order they were excavated.

## Activity Overview

Students should rotate jobs so that all students have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the simulation.

1. Provide general information on archaeology and on the archaeological find of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw.
2. Prepare the shoe boxes.
3. Review the jobs for each archaeological team member and how each excavation tool should be used.
4. Have students begin excavation. As students find artifacts ensure that each team member is following protocol.
5. Each artifact should be cataloged by the recorder in their field log.
6. Once the site has been excavated, have students discuss their findings amongst each team. Each team should provide an artifact name and number. They should indicate what layer and quadrant it was located, provide a sketch and notes on possible time period it was from as well as possible ideas and uses of the artifact.

## Assessment/Journal Entry:

- Distribute copies of 'Sketch of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw' (provided on p. 95).
- Instruct the students to study the image and write in their Miskanaw Journal the importance of cataloging findings in an archaeological dig.



### 4.3 Shoebox Dig – Be an Archaeologist!

Excavation Team Members: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Artifact:</b>	<b>Location/Quadrant:</b> (mark an X)  <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); margin-right: 10px;">LEFT/WEST</div> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> <td style="width: 50px; height: 50px;"></td> </tr> </table> </div>					<b>Number:</b>
<b>Layer (circle one):</b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; padding: 5px;"> <span><b>A-Top</b></span> <span><b>B-Middle</b></span> <span><b>C-Bottom</b></span> </div>					
<b>Artifact Sketch:</b>						
<b>Artifact Notes:</b>						

### 4.3 Shoebox Dig – Be an Archaeologist!

#### SKETCH OF KAYĀSŌHCI KIKĀWINAW

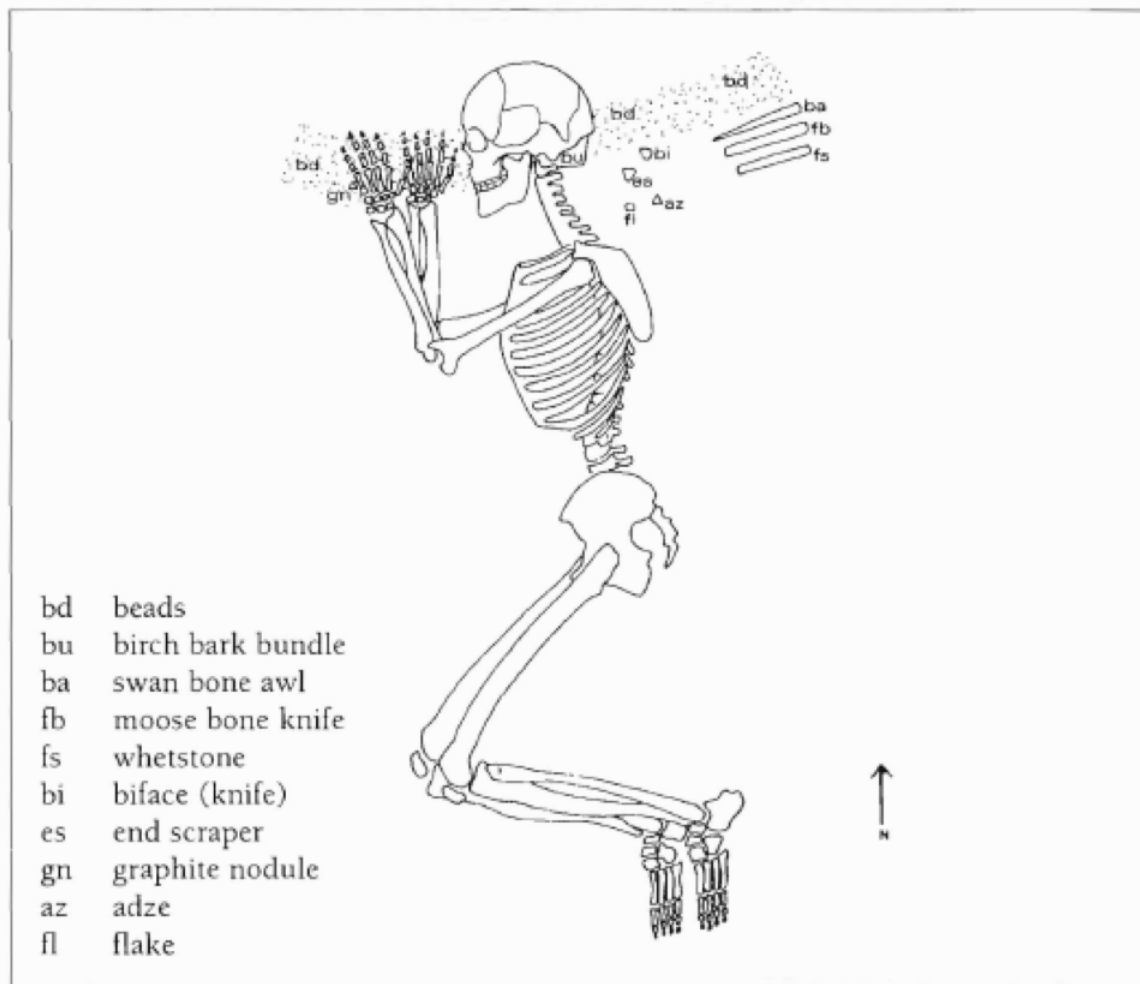


Figure 5. Schematic drawing of the Nagami Bay woman showing how she had been laid out and the locations of her various belongings. Illustrated by Shirley Levacy.

Source: KAYASOCHI KIKAWENOW: Our Mother from Long Ago An Early Cree Woman and Her Personal Belongings from Nagami Bay, Southern Indian Lake. Kevin Brownlee & Dr. E. Leigh Syms, 1999.

## **4.4 How Place Names are Formed in Rocky Cree**

Place names connect the present to the past by referencing important historical events and celebrations that have occurred at specific places. They may also name natural features and function as guides to travel, identifying their relationship to other places. People keep a place alive by stopping, eating, and camping there. Place names can be the cue to a story. PFM, Day 1, p. 7 (sidebar)

### **Instructions:**

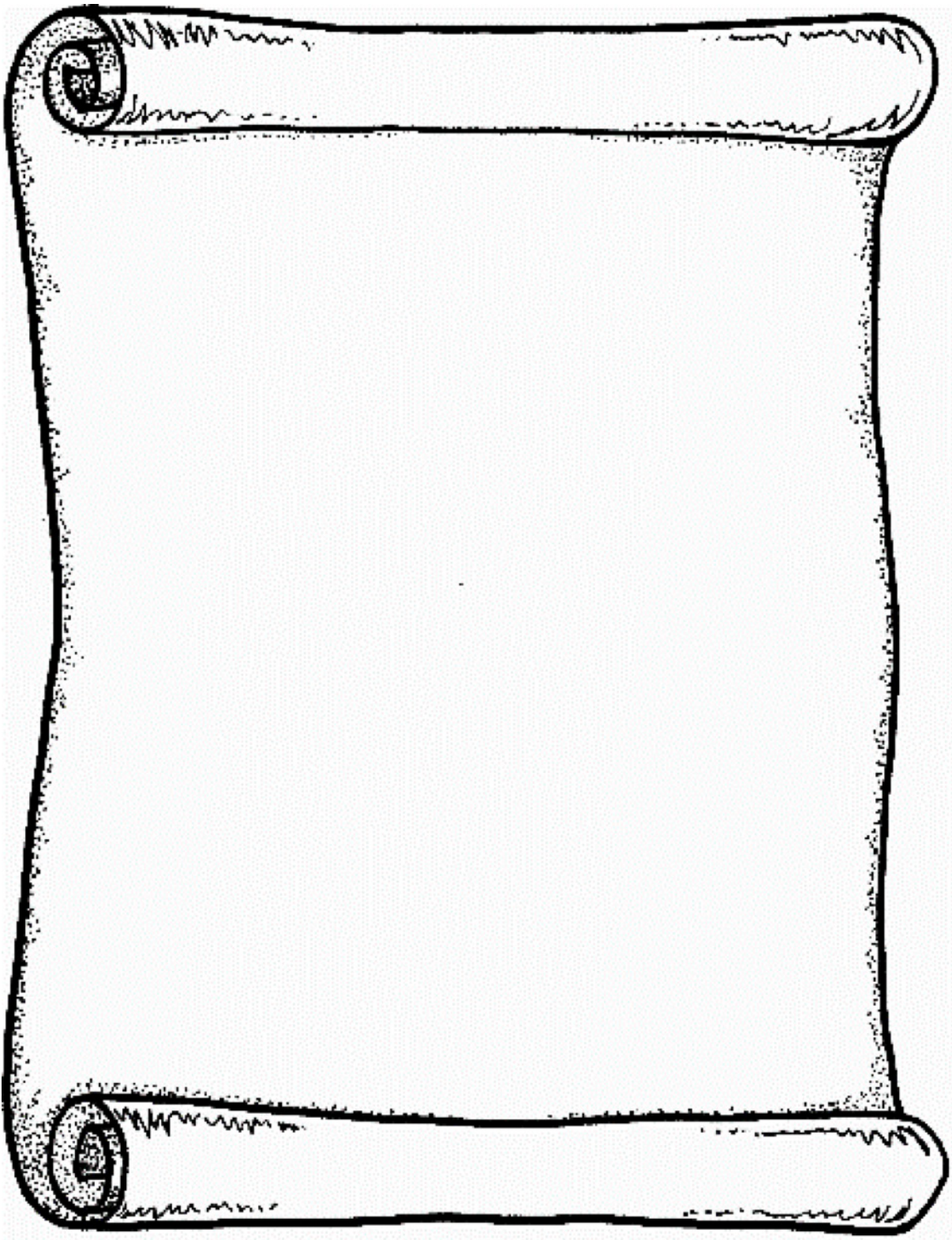
There are many place names listed throughout *Pīsim Find Her Miskanaw*. For example:

- Onihcāwikinisihk - 'Place where you raise your children'
- Āpisiwāpāsihk - 'Little Narrows'
- Mistahī wapahk - 'Big Narrows'

Choose one of the place names from the book and write a story using the place name as an inspiration.

Write your place name story on the following template. Add colour and illustrations to bring your story to life.

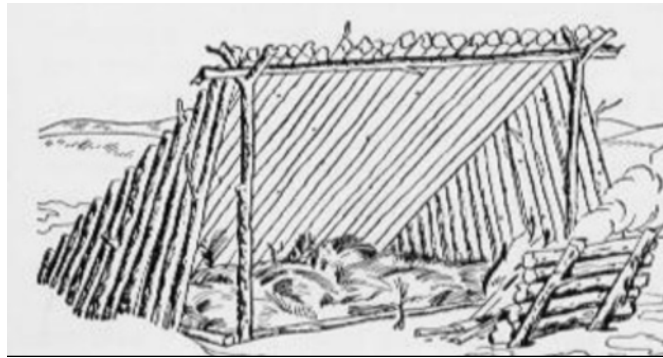
#### 4.4 How Place Names are Formed in Rocky Cree



## 4.5 Where Will I Build My Lean-To?

The Rocky Cree were travellers and therefore used different kinds of structures for houses. In *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* we learn that *mikiwāhp* means 'a birchbark dwelling with a round roof'. Shelters were typically small, easy to set up and take down and move from place to place and constructed of materials from nature. Another common type of housing structure was a lean-to or *tipinawahikiwak*.

Lean-tos were built from free-standing beams of wood and were layered against a log or large rock. They were tied together and covered in brush and hide, resulting in a slanted roof and an opening for entering or exiting. Knowing *where* to construct the shelter was as important as knowing how to build it. Here is an example:



Source: [http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp\\_groups/fp\\_subarctic2.html](http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_subarctic2.html)

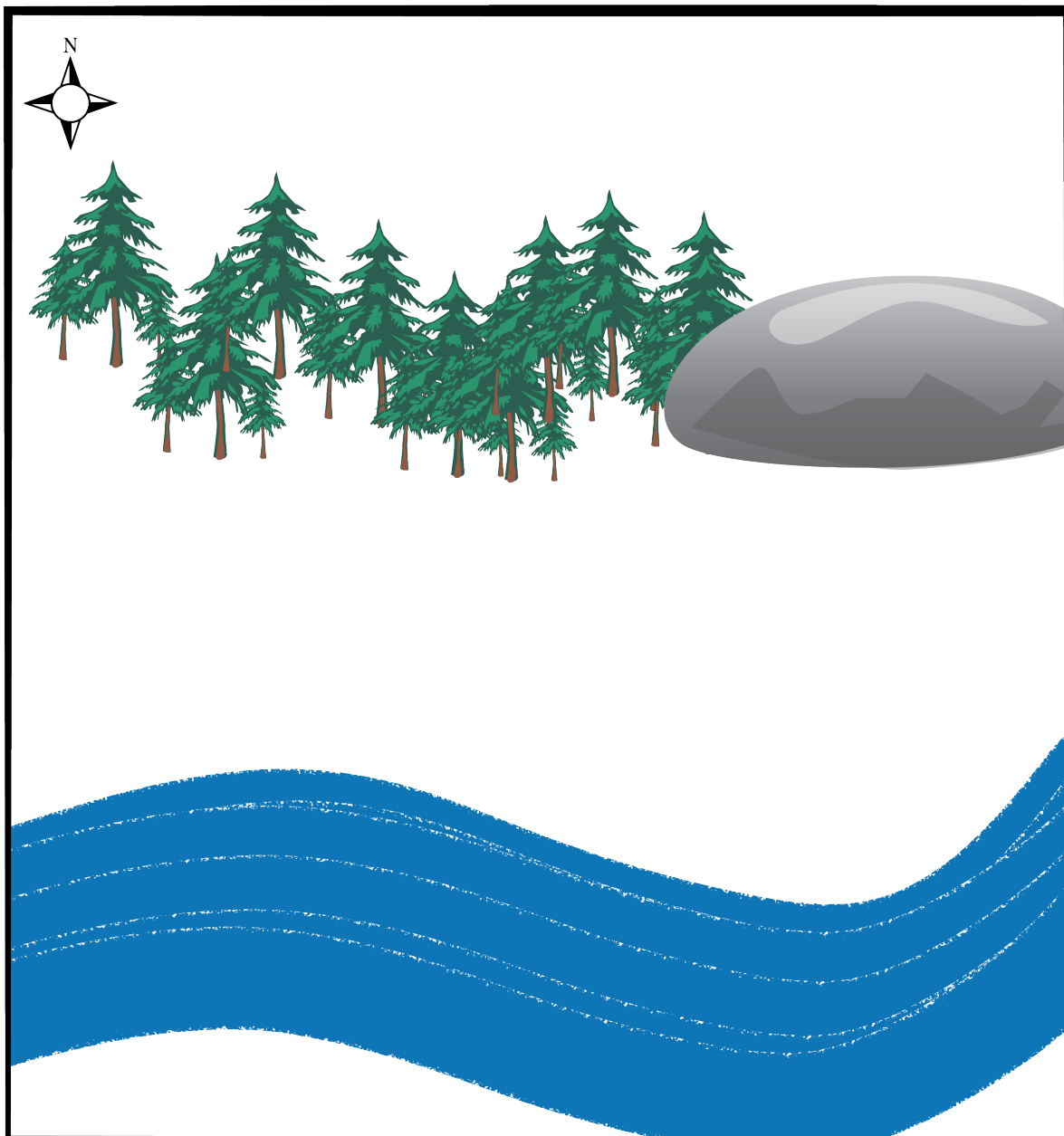
### **Instructions:**

Study the picture on the following page. Pay attention to the physical features (river, rock face, trees). Note the directional indicator.

**Imagine:** You are Rocky Cree and are travelling. It is spring. The winds typically blow from the northwest. Where is the best place to build your lean-to?

1. On the map, draw your lean-to.
2. Why did you place it there? Provide two reasons.
3. Draw your fire. Where did you draw it in relation to your lean-to? Why?

## 4.5 Where Will I Build My Lean-To?



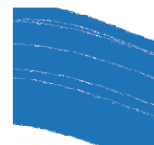
**Key:**



**Forest**



**Rock Cut**



**River**



## **4.6 Telling a Story from Kayās (the Distant Past)**

*“Nikik said, “Let’s go offer thanks to the Creator.” Nikik and Pīsim made an offering to the lake. This sacred place now had special meaning to them, because it was here that they had helped life into the world.” PFM, Day 6, p. 32*

**Imagine** that you are standing – many generations later – at the sacred place by the lake, where Nikik and Pīsim made a special offering of gratitude to recognize the birth of the child Pīponasiw. Look at the images on pp. 28–29 and 32–33 of the picture book. Think of the sounds and sights of paddling through the rainstorm. Imagine the words and expressions of Kāmisakāt, Nikik, Mwakwa and Pīsim as they assist in the birth of the child. What was each person doing? What did they say? How did they feel?

**Prepare** and practice an oral story to share with the class about the voyage, the rainstorm, the birth of the baby boy, the recognition of the child Pīponasiw, and the acceptance of Pīsim as a midwife in her community.

**Work together** in a group of four to decide who will tell which part of the story, each in your own style. Decide on the identity of each storyteller:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Conclude** your story by reciting together the prayer of gratitude offered for the birth on Day 6, in Cree if you can. See p. 33 (sidebar).

**Share** your story with the larger group, explaining to the listeners its purpose and its origins.

## Module 5: Acimowina: The Power of Storytelling



### ***Sipi nisitohtamowin: Enduring Understanding***

*"Storytellers and their stories within oral traditions shape and reveal personal and groups identities; preserve and transmit memories, legends, and values; carry news among camps; build community; and sustain links between past and present by providing teachings whose meanings guide and inspire the people." PFM, Day 1, p. 11 (sidebar)*

### **Key Concepts**

Oral tradition, narrative, setting, point of view, story plot, mood, tone, imagination, place names, types of stories

### **Key words:**

Acimowina means storytelling. It is broken down as aci (cognitive understanding positive or negative); mo (feeding); wina (many).

### **Guiding Questions:**

How is storytelling an integral part of Rocky Cree culture?

What characteristics make a good storyteller?

How is song an important part of oral tradition?

What is the role of imagination and creativity in storytelling?

What are the different types of stories in Rocky Cree culture and what are their purposes?



# Kiskinwahamakiwin: Teaching Strategies

“Tansi, Piponasiw, I am kimosōm, your grandfather. I carry the stories and history of our family minisiwin. I will pass on those stories to you.” PFM, Day 6, p. 36

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## Oral Tradition and Storytelling

Storytelling is an integral part of Rocky Cree culture. Like all Indigenous cultures, the Rocky Cree have passed on knowledge from generation to generation through oral tradition, including storytelling. Storytelling is the basis for holistic learning, relationship building, and experiential and land-based learning.

Engage students in an all-class discussion of how oral stories might be written down. Lead the discussion to include the *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw*. Guide students to think about what it means to write down their oral stories. Have them focus on the form they may use: dramatic, anecdotal, poetic, short story, journalistic.

Invite students to choose a form and a perspective (first-person or third-person) and write a short piece in their [1.7 Miskanaw Journal](#) about a trip they have taken.

“To add to the excitement, Wāpistan, the travelling storyteller who hadn’t been seen for a couple of years, had arrived in the middle of the day.” PFM, Day 1, p. 8

Wāpistan is the group’s storyteller. Ask the students: What themes do Wāpistan’s stories focus on during Day 1? What characteristics make a good story? What are ‘the gifts’ (the attributes) of a good storyteller? Have them record their thoughts in their [1.7 Miskanaw Journal](#).

“Each storyteller has his or her own distinct style, using conventions that are determined by the time of year, the nature of the event, and the gifts of the teller.” PFM, Day 1, p. 11 (sidebar)

Explain that once a story is written, writers need to consider four key components: the role of writer, the audience, the format, and the topic. Explain to students that they are going to structure their writing around these elements using the RAFT strategy. See: [5.1 Using a RAFT to Explore Mithistowīwak](#).

“This story chronicles a week in the life of Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw when she was just thirteen winters. Pīsim is Kayāsōhci Kikāwinaw.” PFM, Introduction, p. 2

Explore the narrative form of *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw* by introducing students to the narrative point of view (the perspective from which the events in the story are observed and recounted). To determine the point of view, ask: who is telling the story? Explain that the book has a frame narrative or a frame story. Invite students to complete the [5.2 Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw: Narrative Frame](#).

## Oral Tradition and Song

Oral tradition can be transmitted in a number of different forms, storytelling being the most widespread. Stories carry a community's core beliefs, values, memories, and history. Stories may also be captured and shared in the form of song.

Song was traditionally a primary way of communicating with the Creator. It had a defined purpose – asking for aid or guidance, honouring the living or dead, blessing a journey or the land, and giving thanks.

"It was the season of the long evenings. The sun had passed the day. The robin sang, 'Kinanāskomitin, opimācihiwew kāpimacihiyin. I thank you, my Creator, for giving me life.'" PFM, Day 1, p. 5

Draw the students' attention to the opening illustration on Day 1 and the robin's song which acknowledges the Creator and thanks the Creator "for giving me life." Brainstorm songs where giving thanks or gratitude is the main theme. Capture students' ideas and thoughts on chart paper. Instruct students to copy the graphic in their 1.7 Miskanaw Journal.

"They could hear grandfather Pipon praying. When the prayer was done, there was a short silence, and then the family began to sing. 'Kiskisitōtāwin nāsipini. Ayāmihīstamāwin. Remember me when you go down to the water. Say a prayer for me" PFM, Day 1, p. 6

Invite students to explore other sources of inspiration for song-making in Rocky Cree culture. Consult the lullaby on Day 6, p. 30 and the paddling song on Day 6, p. 34, which works with vocables to reveal how the paddle and the rhythm of the waves move in concert. Have them record their research in their **1.7 Miskanaw Journal**.

"Songs come to people in many ways. Sometimes they arise from the moods they are experiencing from within or from without." PFM, Day 4, p. 22

To deepen student appreciation for 'inner moods', dreams, and dreams helpers (pawākanak) as points of inspiration in song-making and the way in which the sounds from the natural world (wind, water, animals, birds) can become part of the melody and rhythm, have the students complete **5.3 Nature as Inspiration** and create a song based on inspiration from the natural world.

There are several songs along Pisim's journey: Opening Prayer Song, Robin's Song, Lullaby, and Paddling Song. Explore these songs and have the student create a storyboard using **5.4 Creating a Storyboard Using Song**.

## Imagination: Bringing the Story to Life

Storytelling is a universal human experience because stories are how we give meaning and significance to our lives. Stories are brought to life, either in storytelling or on paper, with descriptive lan-

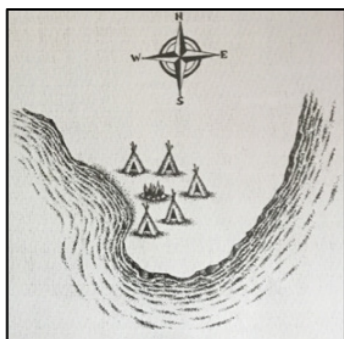
guage, three-dimensional characters, dramatic moments, humour, and passion. A story that is presented with enough detail and feeling can stir the emotions and hopes of the reader or receiver. In short, stories are built on the imagination of the receiver.

“Stories grow with the individual, revealing meanings as the individual engages in a lifelong process of sitting with elders and learning to listen.” PFM, Day 1, p. 11

Write Storytelling ----- Imagination ----- Creativity on the whiteboard. Ask students to write the words in their **1.7 Miskanaw Journal**. Have them respond to the following questions: How are the three words related? Reorder the words. Does their relationship change? If you had to add one more word, what would it be? Explain.

“Long ago, my grandchildren, long ago, it was beautiful the earth, it was peaceful. The people were well, and we were healthy.” PFM, Day 1, p. 4 (sidebar)

*Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* is a picture book replete with art and imagery to help guide students’ imagination. Typically, in picture books, the illustrations are as important as (or even more important than) the words in telling the story. Invite the students to explore the book’s visual culture by completing a visual thinking strategy. See: **5.5 Teacher Background: Visual Thinking Strategies**.



A diorama is a wonderful tool for storytelling. (The word diorama comes from Greek roots di (through) + orama (that which is seen, a sight). The word literally means: “a small-scale replica of a scene”. Instruct students to create a diorama of the campsite experiences along the journey in the book or of the Spring Gathering itself. Consult **5.6 Creating a Diorama** as a guide.

“The camp was always set up by the water, often in a wapahk, which means a little protected cove on the point.” PFM, Day 1, p. 8

Objects can be powerful literary tools. (Pretty much every object in a museum has a story to tell!) Researching the life of an object helps students understand the complex array of characteristics (history, significance, ownership, culture of owner, etc.) that an object contains. Have students research an object featured in the book using **5.7 Object – Life Story**.

“Askihk – The clay pottery of the Rocky Cree people was distinguished by its shape: a small rim curved outward, low shoulders, and punctuates, or small holes decorating the rim.” PFM, Day 1, p. 7 (sidebar)

## Types of Stories

Like all Indigenous nations, the Rocky Cree people are connected to their land and their own history. Their sacred rituals mirror an understanding of the universe and their stories explain the multifaceted richness of their culture, beliefs, and values.

“Stories about mīmīkwīsiwak are common among Cree people ... According to legends, mīmīkwīsiwak are small beings who look like humans. PFM, Day 6, p. 33

Invite students to visualize and record in their **1.7 Misknaow Journal** the dream visions, dream, worlds, and related imageries found in the book. For example, on Day 6, Nikik and Pīsim make an offering to honour the birth of the baby, and afterwards, Pīsim thinks she hears the Mīmīkwīsiwak, the little people, similar to leprechauns in Irish legend and culture.

“Acimowina, popular stories, may be told at any time. Ācathohkan, mist-of-time/sacred stories, are told during specific seasons, particularly during the winter months. Storytelling takes place at events like spring or summer gathering, feast, festivals, cultural reunions, contests, naming ceremonies.” PFM, Day 1, p. 11 (sidebar)

In the past, the Rocky Cree used fictional tales and real-life accounts to pass on traditional knowledge. Seasonal gatherings were organized during very specific times of the year, when the most members of the community could gather, in order to pass on this knowledge to the greatest number of people. Have students explore different types of stories by completing the **5.8 Types of Stories: Scavenger Hunt**.

## **Module 5 Blackline Masters and Teacher Resources**

### **Oral Tradition and Storytelling**

- 5.1 Using a RAFT to Explore Mithistowiwak
- 5.2 Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw: Narrative Frame

### **Oral Tradition and Song**

- 5.3 Nature as Inspiration
- 5.4 Creating a Storyboard Using Song

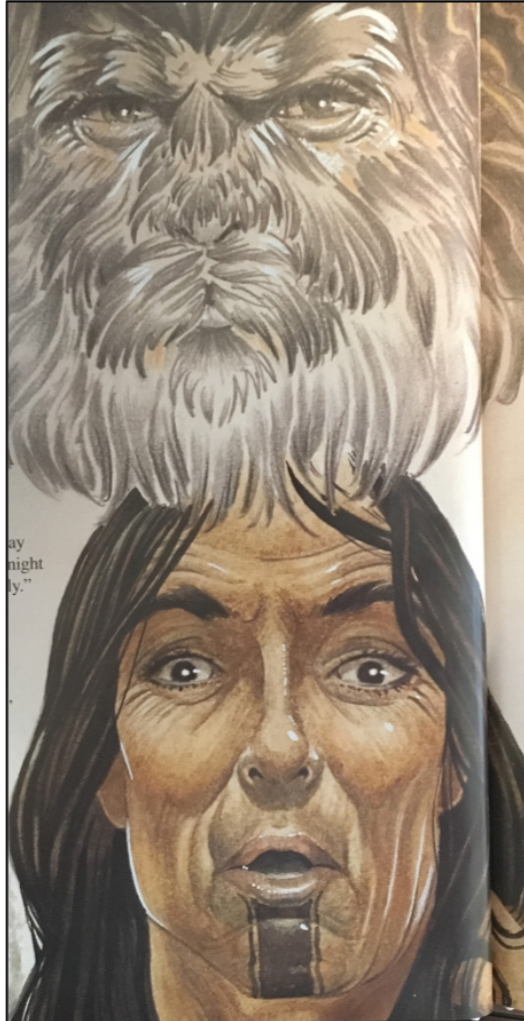
### **Imagination: Bringing the Story to Life**

- 5.5 Teacher Backgrounder: Visual Thinking Strategies (repeat this BLM here from Module 1)
- 5.6 Creating a Diorama
- 5.7 Object – Life Story

### **Types of Stories**

- 5.8 Types of Stories: Scavenger Hunt

## 5.1 Using a RAFT to Explore Mithistowīwak



### Instructions:

All writers need to consider key things when they are crafting or relaying a story: the role of the writer, the audience, the format, and the topic. We can use the acronym R – A – F – T to help us remember.

**Role** of the writer: Who are you as the writer? A midwife? A teenager? A baby about to be born? An Elder in the community?

**Audience:** To whom are you writing? Yourself? A family member? An adopted sister? Your class?

**Format:** In what format are you writing? A diary entry? A newspaper? A love letter? A narrative?

**Topic:** What are you writing about? What is your main point?

### *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw:*

On Day 1, Pīsim and her family are joined by Wāpistan, 'the storyteller'. Wāpistan brings updates and news about other camps and family groups and about the Mithistowīwak, the 'hairy-faced' strangers.

### *Your task:*

Write a short piece about the Mithistowīwak. Use Wāpistan's story and other elements in the book as your inspiration. Complete your writing on the following template.

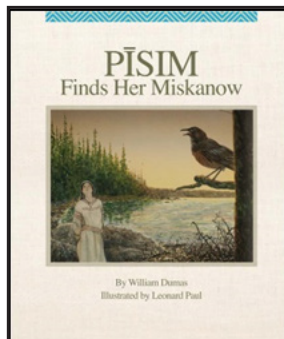


## 5.2 *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw*: Narrative Frame

### Instructions:

*Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw* has a frame narrative or a frame story. A frame story is a story within another story. The outer narrative – the first story that readers encounter – wraps around and provides a backstory to the inner narrative.

The frame story provides the reader with context about the main narrative. The frame story can appear at the beginning, middle, or end of the story.



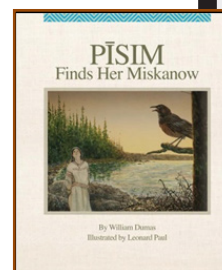
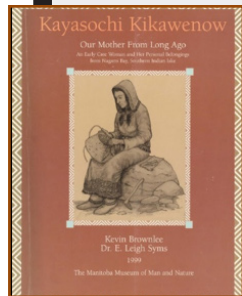
1. Where in *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw* do we find the frame narrative: at the beginning, middle, or end of the story?

2. Why do you think the author, William Dumas, placed the frame narrative where he did? How does this add to the book's overall structure as well as its visual/artistic impact?

3. Who and what does the frame narrative introduce?

4. Use the frame template to summarize *Pīsim Finds Her Miskanaw*'s narrative frame. Summarize the outer narrative on the outside frame and the inner narrative on the inside section.





## 5.3 Nature as Inspiration

### Instructions:

On Day 4 of Pīsim's journey we learn about the *pawākanak*:

People also dream their songs, which come from their pawākanak or dream helpers. The words or sounds that came to people often imitated the sounds of the wind, the water, the animals and birds, which then suggested the rhythm or melody of the song." PFM, Day 4, p. 22 (sidebar)

*Your task:*

Create a song for one of the seven days of Pīsim's journey. The steps are:

*Determine the tone and mood*

- **Step 1:** Choose a day in Pīsim's journey. Carefully consider the day's events and tone. In literature, tone is the author's attitude toward the work, events, characters, or the reader/audience.
- **Step 2:** Once you've chosen a day, think about the mood. The mood is the feeling created when listening to or reading the text. When we read, we react and have feelings about the characters or setting based on the text or illustrations.

*Look to nature for inspiration*

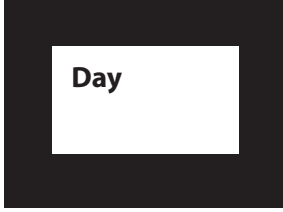
- **Step 3:** Now that you've established your tone and mood, choose a source of inspiration for your song. What sounds in nature best reflect the tone/mood: water, wind, animals, birds?

*Choose an instrument*

- **Step 4:** Rocky Cree music was brought to life by instruments such as drums, rattles, and hoof rhythm makers. See PFM p. 41 (sidebar). Choose one that you think best reflects tone and mood of your song.

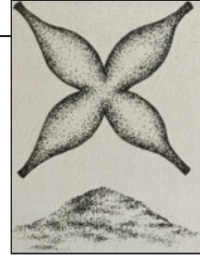
*Present your song*

- **Step 5:** Complete the organizer. Write your responses in the squares. Share with your classmates!



**Choose a word/s to describe the day's tone.** Some adjectives are: formal, informal, serious, humorous, amused, angry, playful, neutral, satirical, gloomy, conciliatory, sad, resigned, cheerful, ironic, clear, detailed, imploring, suspicious, witty...

**Choose a word/s to describe the day's mood.** Some adjectives are: fictional, imaginary, fanciful, idealistic, romantic, realistic, optimistic, pessimistic, gloomy, mournful, sorrowful...



**Choose a source of inspiration from nature:** water, wind, animals, birds

**Choose an instrument:** drum, rattle, hoof rhythm maker



**Summary.** How does your song reflect the mood and tone of your day? Describe how nature was the source for the mood and tone of your song. Explain why you chose the instrument you did.

## 5.4 Creating a Storyboard Using Song

### Instructions:

Storyboards are a set of sequential drawings to tell a story. A storyboard consists of many “frames,” with each frame representing a particular scene in the story. The linear direction of the cells is perfect for storytelling because they explain plot visually. You could think of a storyboard as an illustrated flow chart.

Your task:

- Step 1: Choose one of the songs featured in *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*
- Step 2: Using the template, create a storyboard based on the song and your interpretation.
- Step 3: Draw a scene in each rectangle that brings the song to life
- Step 4: Add the text and song lyrics under each rectangle that corresponds with the scene
- Step 5: Add notes about point of view, setting, sounds, and mood for each scene.

### Journey Song, sung by Pipon, p. 6

*Kiskisitôtāwin nāsipīni. Ayāmihistamawin.*

Remember me when you go down to the water. Say a prayer for me.

### Robin's Song, p. 5

*Kinanāskomitin, opimācihiwiw kāpimacihiyin.*

I thank you, my Creator, for giving me life.

### Lullaby, p. 30

*Tanipaw nipipim* – My baby will sleep.

*Tapāwamiw nipipim* – She or he will have a dream.

*Ahpō itoki onitawihiw* – Maybe she or he will be a healer.

### Paddling Song, p. 34

*Kiskisitôtāwin nāsipīni. Ayāmihistamawin*

Remember me when you go down to the water. Say a prayer for me

*Nimosōm kipīmiskaw ōma sipi*

My grandfather paddled this river

*Īspīcikamathik kipīmiskawak*

The whole length of the body of water they paddled

*Ita imithāwsinthik ikota kīkāpisiwak*

Where it was nice was where they camped

*Tātow ihtakoskīcik kīnanapathithīw aski*

Every step they took the ground vibrated

Frame 1	Frame 2
Text/Lyrics	Text/Lyrics
Notes	Notes
Frame 3	Frame 4
Text/Lyrics	Text/Lyrics
Notes	Notes
Frame 5	Frame 6
Text/Lyrics	Text/Lyrics
Notes	Notes
Frame 7	Frame 8
Text/Lyrics	Text/Lyrics
Notes	Notes

## 5.5 Teacher Backgrounder: Visual Thinking Strategies

*Visual literacy involves learning to interpret images by analyzing how they are designed and presented to communicate ideas and feelings. It includes asking questions about the author's intended message and evaluating his or her decisions about how to best convey this message.*

These types of guiding questions may be used to prompt students to enrich the details of their observations of images.

### **See**

Observe the physical details in the image: persons, objects, location, size, relation, and the perspective or angle from which they are seen.

Describe the colours in the scene: tones, textures, effects of light and shadow.

What is happening in this picture?

What is closest to you, furthest away?

### **Think**

What is the subject? Does the image depict people, a place or an event?

What stands out the most in this image? What makes it stand out to you?

What visual clues help you understand who the people are, when and where it takes place?

Describe the motion in the image. Is there a lot of energy, or does it feel still? What visual clues support this?

Describe the framing of the image. What is included in the image, and what may have been left out by the artist?

### **Wonder**

Describe the style of this image. Is it photographic, abstract, expressive?

What words would you use to describe this image? Why?

Describe the sounds suggested by this image.

What message do you think this image communicates? Why do you think this?

Describe your feelings about the scene: what mood does it create?

Why do you think the artist chose to depict this scene of the story? Would you have chosen a different scene?

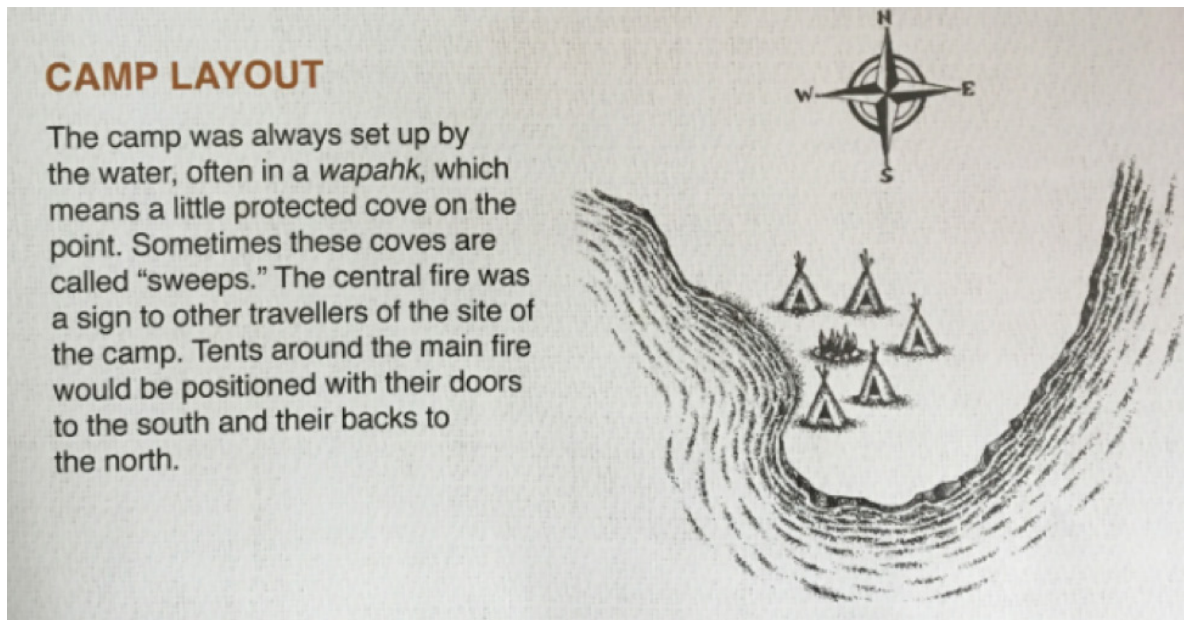
## 5.6 Creating a Diorama

### Instructions:

A diorama is a three-dimensional scene. It is a miniature display.

In this activity, you will create a diorama based on one of the campsite experiences along Pisim's journey. You may also choose the Spring Gathering itself.

All you need is a box of some type – shoe boxes are ideal – some paper, scissors, glue, and basic art supplies such as markers or crayons.



When you're finished, be prepared to explain how your diorama reflects the campsite experience you chose.

Have fun, be creative, and use your imagination!

## 5.7 Object – Life Story

### Instructions:

Everything has a story – even objects.

In this activity, you will write a life story for an object featured in *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*.

### You may choose from:

- Objects related to the Rocky Cree :
  - Askihk – clay pot
  - Kwakwāywat – birch basket
  - Nīpīsīwat – willow basket
  - Watapīwat – root basket
  - Maskosīwat – reed basket
  - Mikiwāhp – birchbark dwelling
  - Canoe
  - Baby rattle
  - Tihkinakan
  - Loom
  - Clothing
  - Rattle or rhythm maker
  - Awl
  - Any one of the hunting tools: snare, trap, deadfall, spear, bow and arrow, sling, net, bola
- Objects related to Europeans that the Rocky Cree would have obtained from trade:
  - Ice chisel
  - Knife
  - Axe
  - Kettle
  - Cooking utensils
  - Mirror
  - Brass bell
  - Glass beads
  - Nails
  - Belt buckle

Write a life story for the object and prepare a presentation. Include images of your object. Focus on the following features:

- Origin and use (including history of use over time)
- Age
- location;
- properties (i.e., colour, shape, texture)
- condition
- ownership (and history of that ownership over time, if relevant)





## **5.8 Types of Stories: Scavenger Hunt**

### **Instructions:**

There are many wonderful stories uncovered on the pages of *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw*. Your task is to explore the *different types of stories*.

### **For example:**

- Acimowina: popular stories
- Tapacimowin: secondhand accounts
- Kayās acimowina: historical accounts
- Kiskiwihihiwina: prophecies
- Ācathohkana: mist of time stories

### *Your task:*

Read through *Pisim Finds Her Miskanaw* and find an example of a type of story. For each story indicate the day, the storyteller, type of story, the events surrounding where the story was told, and a brief synopsis of the story. Complete your scavenger hunt on the organizer.

Day:

Storyteller:

Type of Story:

Events:

Story Synopsis:



Day:

Storyteller:

Type of Story:

Events:

Story Synopsis:

Day:

Storyteller:

Type of Story:

Events:

Story Synopsis:

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# Appendix

## Curriculum Connections

### Social Studies

SS

#### Grade 4 Social Studies

##### Cluster 4: History of Manitoba

- Give examples of Aboriginal contributions to the history of Manitoba
- Recognize that their identities are connected to the history of their Aboriginal community

##### Cluster 5: Canada's North

- Give examples of Aboriginal languages, cultures, and communities in the North
- Locate on a map and describe physical features of the northern territory studied
- Identify natural resources in the North
- Give examples of changes to place names in the northern territory studied
- Give examples of stories and traditions of the northern territory studied
- Describe changes in ways of life in the last century in the northern territory studied
- Value the contributions of the North to the Canadian community.

#### Grade 5 Social Studies

##### Cluster 1: First Peoples

- Value oral tradition as an important source of knowledge about First Peoples
- Locate on a map of North America the traditional territories of First Peoples
- Describe practices and beliefs that reflected First Peoples' connections with the land and the natural environment
- Describe characteristics of diverse First Peoples cultures before contact with Europeans
- Relate First Peoples' stories of their pre-contact and early contact with Europeans
- Compare types of leadership in diverse First Peoples communities
- Describe various ways in which First Peoples communities interacted with each other

##### Cluster 2: Early European Colonization

- Relate stories of European explorers and traders in their search for new lands or the Northwest Passage
- Identify factors that influenced the movement and settlement of Europeans in early Canada (natural environment, fur trade, military posts)
- Give examples of the impact of interactions between First Peoples and European explorers, colonists, and missionaries
- Compare First Peoples' and European approaches to natural resource use in early Canada
- Appreciate the contributions of First Peoples to the development of Canada

- Be willing to consider diverse approaches to resource and land use

### **Cluster 3: Fur Trade**

- Describe factors that led to the development and expansion of the fur trade into the west and north of Canada
- Give examples of ways in which the fur trade operations were influenced by the land
- Describe the historical significance of Canadian place names
- Appreciate the significance of the land and natural resources in the development of Canada
- Give examples of the impact of interactions between First Peoples and European traders and settlers
- Describe how the fur trade was dependent on the men and women of the First Nations and Métis Nation

## **Grade 6 Social Studies**

### **Cluster 1: Building a Nation**

- Give reasons for the establishment of treaties and reserves and describe their impact on individuals, families, and communities
- Value the diverse stories and perspectives that comprise the history of Canada
- Appreciate the efforts of people in early Canada to overcome environmental hardships

### **Cluster 3: Shaping Contemporary Canada**

- Identify changes and developments regarding Aboriginal rights in Canada from 1867 to the present
- Value their First Nation, Inuit, or Métis language, heritage, and culture
- Give examples of ways in which industry and technology have changed life in Canada since 1945

### **Cluster 4: Canada Today**

- Describe factors that shape personal and national identities and explain how they may coexist
- Identify First Nations, Inuit, and Métis perspectives regarding self-determination.

## **Science**

## **S**

## **Grade 4 Science**

### **Cluster 1: Habitats and communities**

- Investigate alternate explanations of plant or animal adaptations based on traditional knowledge from a variety of cultures
- Recognize and appreciate how traditional knowledge contributes to our understanding of plant and animal populations and interactions.

### **Cluster 4: Rocks minerals and erosion**

- Investigate and describe ways in which soil erosion is controlled or minimized in their community and in communities around the world.

- Describe effects of wind, water, and ice on the landscape
- Identify natural phenomena and human activities that cause significant changes in the landscape.

## Grade 5 Science

### Cluster 1: Maintaining a healthy body

- Describe the types of nutrients in foods and their function in maintaining a healthy body
- Identify and describe factors necessary to maintain a healthy body.
- Explain how human health may be affected by lifestyle choices and natural- and human-caused environmental factors.

### Cluster 2: Properties of and changes in substances

- Use appropriate vocabulary related to their investigations of properties of, and changes in, substances (characteristic, property, substance, matter, volume, state, solid, liquid, gas, reversible and nonreversible changes, physical change, chemical change, chemical product, raw material)

### Cluster 3: Forces and Simple Machines

- Identify and describe types of simple machines. Include: levers, wheel and axle, pulley, gear, inclined plane, screw, wedge. Describe the advantage of using simple machines to move or lift a given load.

### Cluster 4: Weather and Climate

- Describe how weather conditions may affect the activities of humans and other animals
- investigate various ways of predicting weather, and evaluate their usefulness (e.g., traditional knowledge and observations of the natural environment)
- Describe the key features of a variety of weather phenomena.
- Provide examples of severe weather forecasts and describe preparations for ensuring personal safety during severe weather and related natural disasters.
- Differentiate between weather and climate. Weather includes the atmospheric conditions existing at a particular time and place; climate describes the long-term weather trend of a particular region.
- Identify factors that influence weather and climate in Manitoba and across Canada and describe their impacts.

## Grade 6 Science

### The Solar System

- Explain, using models and simulations, how the Earth's rotation causes the cycle of day and night, and how the Earth's tilt of axis and revolution cause the yearly cycle of seasons
- Explain how the relative positions of the Earth, moon, and Sun are responsible for moon phases and eclipses
- Identify and describe how people from various cultures, past and present, apply astronomy in daily life
- Identify points of reference in the night sky and recognize that the apparent movement of celestial objects is regular, predictable, and related to the Earth's rotation and revolution.

## English Language Arts

ELA

### General Learning Outcomes:

- Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.
- Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, literary, and media texts.
- Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to manage ideas and information. Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to enhance the clarity and artistry of communication.
- Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to celebrate and build community.

## Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (Rocky Cree)

RC

### General Learning Outcomes in Rocky Cree culture and language learning:

- Students will use the Rocky Cree language effectively and competently in listening, viewing, speaking, reading, representing, and writing.
- Students will develop and use strategies to enhance the effectiveness of learning and communication in the Rocky Cree language.
- Students will use the Rocky Cree language in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes at home, at school, and within and outside the community.
- Students will explore and value cultural and linguistic diversity and gain intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be respectful and contributing members of society.

## Arts Education (Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Dance)

A

### General Learning Outcomes:

- Students connect the arts (visual arts, drama, music, dance) to contexts of time, place, and community, and develop understanding of how the arts reflect and influence culture and identity.
- Students individually and collaboratively generate, develop, and communicate ideas in creating original works (visual arts, drama, music, dance) for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students demonstrate understanding of and facility with artistic elements, principles, and forms (visual arts, drama, music, dance).
- Students analyze, reflect on, and construct meaning in response to art (visual arts, drama, music, dance) created by themselves and others.

## Physical Health/Health Education

H

### General Learning Outcomes:

- Movement: The student will demonstrate competency in selected movement skills, and knowledge of movement development and physical activities with respect to different types of learning experiences, environments, and cultures.

- **Fitness Management:** The student will demonstrate the ability to develop and follow a personal fitness plan for lifelong physical activity and well-being.
- **Safety:** The student will demonstrate safe and responsible behaviours to manage risks and prevent injuries in physical activity participation and for daily living.
- **Personal and Social Management:** The student will demonstrate the ability to develop self-understanding, to make health-enhancing decisions, to work cooperatively and fairly with others, and to build positive relationships with others.
- **Healthy Lifestyle Practices:** The student will demonstrate the ability to make informed decisions for healthy living relating to personal hygiene, active living, healthy nutritional practices, substance use and abuse, and human sexuality.

Note: These learning outcomes will be particularly relevant in the planning of any land-based learning activities

## Career Development Education

CD

### Preparation for career-life planning in Middle Years:

- Students will reflect on their values, interests, abilities and gifts.
- Students will practice setting goals and planning actions to attain their goals.







