

THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE #1

Subject/topic

History, Art, Geography, Language

Overview/focus questions

Why were the Métis recognized as the “Flower Beadwork People”?

Developed by

Chandrelle Marshall

Time

120 minutes (2 learning blocks)

Grade level

Grades 2-5

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Identify why the Métis were called the “Flower Beadwork people.”
- Learn the names of three colours in Michif.
- Learn how to count from one to eight in Michif.
- Learn how to bead.
- Model the Métis values of perseverance and generosity.

Materials Needed

- *The Flower Beadwork People* by Sherry Farrell Racette
- Michif Terms teacher card
- *Métis beading* video
- Blank 8” X 11” paper, one per student
- Pencils, crayons or markers
- Elastic thread or sinew
- Coloured beads
- Self-threading needles, one per student
- Felt sheet, one per student

Lesson Description

Teacher preparation and background information:

In Canada, there are three recognized groups of Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The Métis Nation are self-defining people from a specific region (mainly the Canadian western prairies but also parts of British Columbia, Ontario, Northwest Territories, North Dakota, and Montana) with a unique culture, language, and history. The Métis are those who self-identify as Métis and are descended from Indigenous and European/Euro-Canadian people, and who acknowledge the conscious choice of their ancestors to identify as Métis because of a common history and past.

The official language of the Métis Nation is Michif, though there are other languages spoken by the Métis as well. Michif is spoken in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, as well as Montana and North Dakota. Dating to the late 18th century, Michif is a hybrid language that blends together different languages, most commonly English, French and Cree.

Michif is an oral language and, until very recently, had not been written down. There is no standardized orthography, and spelling will vary depending on the speaker and region, as words are spelled phonetically. When learning Michif, the focus is not so much on the spelling and the writing of the words, as on the speaking. There are also other Michif languages, including French Michif and Northern Michif. As such, teachers will see words spelled in numerous ways throughout the lesson plans and videos in the Future of Michif project. The Michif primarily referred to and used in these lesson plans and through the online dictionaries and apps is known as Michif or Heritage Michif; however, you will see other spellings and pronunciations.

You will also hear some speakers in the videos use the term “Michif” to describe a people, and not only a language. The Michif are Métis who speak Michif, versus other languages spoken by the Métis, such as Cree or French.

Teachers should watch the *Métis Beading* video prior to the lesson to learn how to create a beaded bracelet, for information on Michif vocabulary, and to see a modeling of the lesson.

Student activities:

Minds on: The teacher will guide students through a picture walk and share traditional Métis floral beading and embroidery.

Action: Students will draw and bead a flower bracelet while focusing on colours and numbers in Michif, and the value of perseverance.

Conclusion: Students will learn and demonstrate the Métis value of generosity.

THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE #1

- Containers for storage

Optional:

- *Taanishi Books Emergent Reader Series* by Angie Caron and Wilfred Burton
- Document camera
- Computer
- Projector

Connection to the Canadian Geography Learning Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Geographic perspective
- Interrelationships
- Spatial significance

Inquiry Process

- Communicate
- Reflect and respond

Geospatial Skills

- Foundational elements

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

1. Complete a picture walk using *The Flower Beadwork People*, reading aloud pages 12 and 13. Familiarize students with the images in the book and ask some activation questions such as: Have you seen this style of artwork before? What do you think is going on in these pictures?
2. Share traditional and contemporary beadwork and embroidery and identify the floral patterns and colours in Michif (see this modeled in the first half of the *Métis Material Culture* video. This can be used as background information for the teacher and used with students if the teacher does not have pieces of their own that show floral beadwork and embroidery).
3. Ask students to share their thoughts about what they see while studying the beadwork and embroidery. Possible discussion questions include:
 - What colours do you see? Can you name them in Michif?
 - Do you notice any repeating patterns? Can you describe them in Michif?
 - What objects do you see in the examples? Why do you think they are there?
 - How do the floral shapes differ from beadwork to embroidery?

Action

1. Have students select three colours in Michif (see attached Michif Terms teacher card) that they would like to use for their bracelet.
2. Model for students an example of the template of a bracelet, as demonstrated in the video *Métis Material Culture*. Name, title, draw and colour the pattern. The pattern used in the video is eight beads for the vine, seven for the flower, and one for the center of the flower; please note, these numbers are flexible and you can change them.
3. Have students create a template for their work on a piece of white paper (as modeled in the video).
4. Have students prepare their supplies:
 - a small container to store beads
 - a piece of felt to place beads on
 - a self-threading needle (if using)
 - a piece of elastic thread or sinew approximately 12 inches (30 centimeters) in length
 - beads (including one stopper bead of a colour different than those the student chose)
5. Model for students how to thread their needle (if using). The following steps are modeled in the video. Some students will need assistance and safety guidelines surrounding needle use.

THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE #1

6. Have students thread their needle or prepare their self-threading needles.
7. Model how to put on a stopper bead.
8. Have students put on their stopper beads (a different colour than the beads in their pattern).
9. Model for students how to bead their pattern. Count in Michif (see attached Michif Terms teacher card) and speak to the value of perseverance. Using a document camera or projector allows the teacher to model for a larger group of students, as well as to show a close up of how to create the flower.
10. Have students create their bracelet and explain perseverance. Possible discussion questions surrounding the value of perseverance:
 - What does the term perseverance mean to you?
 - Can you think of an example of a situation in which you have persevered?
 - How are you persevering in this project?
11. Tie the bracelet in a knot.
12. Have students clean up their materials.

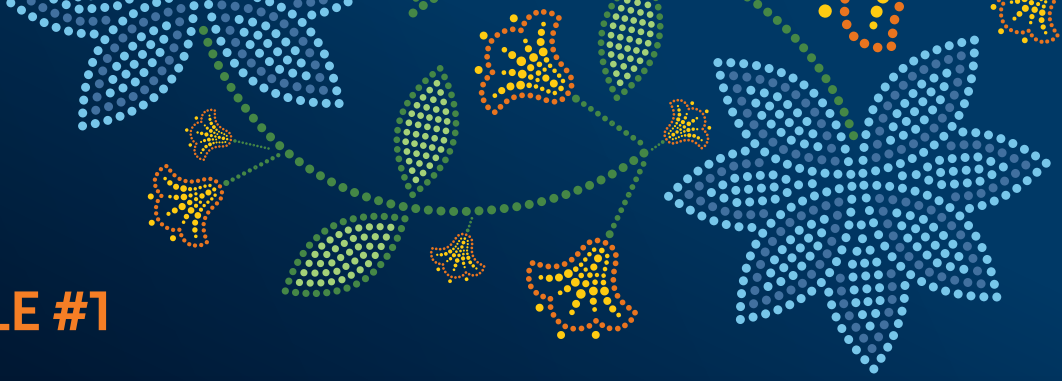
Conclusion and Consolidation

1. Acknowledge the hard work and perseverance the students put into their bracelets.
2. Share with students the Métis value of generosity. Métis are generous people; they believe in sharing and giving to others.
3. Have students give their bracelet to a person they care about (e.g., Kookhoom (Grandma), Mooshmoom (Grandpa), Maamaa (Mom), Paapaa (Dad), aen naamii (friend)). Possible discussion questions surrounding the value of generosity:
 - When we give someone a gift, how do we feel? How does the other person feel?
 - Why is generosity important to us and to others?
 - Why is generosity important to a community?
 - Can you think of a time when you have been generous?

Extend your geographical thinking

- Research the history of trade between non-Indigenous people and Métis in Canada throughout history.
- Examine examples of beadwork and Indigenous art, and the locations from which they originate.
- Create a vocabulary wall of Michif terms. Use the Michif To Go or Heritage Michif To Go apps (linked in Additional Resources) to learn more terms and

THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE #1



phrases in Michif.

- Investigate the cultural, political, and geographical history of the Métis Nation.
- Explore the history and development of the Michif language.
- Invite Métis Elders and artists to speak to students.

Modifications

- The teacher can thread needles for students if self-threading needles are not available.
- The size of beads, type of elastic, and needle size can be adjusted to suit students' needs.
- Sinew (which does not require a needle) can be used.
- Supplies (number of beads, pre-cut sinew or thread with stopper beads attached) can be prepared for students prior to beginning the activity.
- Students can work in pairs to assist one another.
- Older students can be invited into the classroom to assist younger students.
- Teachers can offer one-on-one support for students who require assistance.
- Extension: students can explore painting and pointillism.

Assessment Opportunities

- Assess students' templates.
- Assess students' ability to name the three colours they are using in the bracelet in Michif.
- Assess the students' ability to count from one to eight in Michif.
- Does the student show perseverance with their beading project?
Example:
 - If their beads fall off, can they regroup and try again?
 - If their needle comes off, can they rethread independently?
- Assess the completion of the product and the students' ability to follow directions.

Sources and Additional resources

- *The Flower Beadwork People* by Sherry Farrell Racette
- *Taanishi Book Series* by Angie Caron and Wilfred Burton
- *Gabriel Dumont Institute Michif Dictionary*
- *Expressing Our Heritage Metis Artistic Designs Resource Manual* by Cheryl Troupe
- *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada - Métis*
- *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture - Beadwork*
- *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture - Embroidery*
- Michif To Go app (Google Play) and the Heritage Michif To Go app (App Store)
- Beads:
 - *Twig & Squirrel's Wild Goods*
 - *His Bead Store*