LESSON 10 – TOTEM POLE

POLE RAISING FEAST

1. Grade Level: Grade 4/5 (can be modified for Primary and Intermediate)

2. Activity: Create two large–scale paper totem poles to raise in the classroom at their Play Feast. Students will experience the process of raising a totem pole by planning and organizing a Play Feast to end their unit of study.

3. Estimated Time: 5 periods

4. Prescribed Learning Outcomes:

Art

- Creative Processes
  - A3 create images that show the use of the following visual elements and principles of design, alone and in combination, to produce a variety of effects; form, contrast, emphasis
  - A5 create 2D and 3D images that: express personal identity, respond to or reflect aspects of art from a variety of historical and cultural contexts, communicate ideas, experiences and stories
- Exhibition and Response
  - D3 demonstrate the ability to work cooperatively to develop a group display

RESOURCES REQUIRED

Section of Website containing relevant information, photographs and film clips:

- Potlatch

Blackline Masters:

- BLM 10A – Blank Totem Pole Template by Kelsey Nelson
- BLM 10B – Totem Pole Template by Kelsey Nelson

Film Clips:

- Potlatch Means to Give
- Why We Potlatch

Other Materials:

- Large white roll out paper
- Paint
- Overhead projector

NEW WORDS

Totem Pole – shows the supernatural ancestors of a family. Carving of a wood log on which various figures representing the supernatural ancestors of a family appear on top of each other.

Play Feast – play feasts are where people learn how to host feasts.

PERIOD 1

Throughout the last several lessons, we have learned about the oral history, traditions and ceremonies of the Kwakwaka'wakw who live at the north end of Vancouver Island and adjacent mainland. We have learned about "maya'xala"– to treat someone or something well, the closest word that defines maya'xala in the English language is "respect". It is respect for all living things: human, animals, nature, everything. The belief that all things are connected and how our history tells of supernatural beings who sometimes helped and even possessed community members. The way the Kwakwaka'wakw shared their family history is through the songs and dances in ceremonies such as a potlatch. To complete our Unit, we will host our own celebration where we will share what we have learned and also share gifts with our guests like the Kwakwaka'wakw do in their potlatches.

Important to remember when hosting an event:

a) Welcome your guests as they arrive and show them to their seats.

b) Once everyone is seated then one student welcomes all guests and gives a short explanation of what the class has worked on over the past few weeks.

c) When pole-raising and speeches are completed students are to serve guests and a most important teaching is that as hosts you always make sure your guests have something to eat and drink first and then hosts (class members) get to eat and drink.

1. Review with the class the reason for Potlatching or Feasting. (Potlatching was introduced in Lesson 1)

2. Discuss with the class that they will be planning and organizing a "Play Feast" to raise two totem poles in the classroom (8 ft. pole made of paper)

3. Explain that the feast will also be an opportunity to share what was learned in the "Potlatch Collection" unit of study.

PLANNING THE FEAST

Planning and organizing the feast:

- First set a date that will consider the guests' and hosts' availability.
- Discuss the things that will be needed to host your feast (food, displays, traditional Kwakwaka'wakw music, completed poles, invitations etc...) and be sure that each class member is assigned a task.
- Send out invitations, be sure to include the 5W's and have one of the students create art on invitation.

PERIOD 2/3

- The figures on the pole are a Bear holding a copper and a Thunderbird. The figures found on totem poles show a family's history. They represent supernatural beings who at the beginning of time helped the family's first ancestors in some way.
- Look for Bear and Thunderbird masks in the Virtual Tour for inspiration.
- Divide the class into two even groups to prepare the two poles that will be raised in the classroom BLM 10B.
- BLM 10B can be enlarged using an over–head projector.
- Tape the large white paper on the wall to the scale you would like your classroom totem pole to be. (6–8 ft height)
- Project the poles onto a large-scale paper and outline.
- Paint the totem poles, adding colours and designs, and let dry.
- Use tape or tacks to secure pole to the wall.
- You might want to cover the poles with another sheet of paper once they are on the wall. You can then do a "dramatic reveal" of the poles for the guests at your celebration.