POSITIVE CULTURAL TEACHINGS
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UNIT OUTLINE

GOALS: Students will increase their knowledge of:

- Tribal stories and teachings that promote healthy values.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Identify and describe how tribal teachings promote healthy values.
- Demonstrate methods for applying these teachings to self and relationships.

METHODS: The teaching/learning methods include:

1. Brainstorming
2. Small Group Problem Solving and Consensus Building
3. Classroom Discussion
4. Lecture
5. Role Playing
6. Puppetry
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LESSONS: Lessons include:

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A. Worksheets/Group Study Guides  ITEM
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   2. Tribal Teachings Role Playing Guide  V#2

B. Lecture Notes/Transparencies
   1. Circle of Life  V/T# 1
   2. Values  V/T#2
   3. Respect  V/T#3
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   5. Sharing  V/T#5
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ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:  Page
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   4. Kindness Poster  9
   5. Sharing Poster  10
   6. Honesty Poster  11
   7. Blue Sky Family Puppets (Optional)
   8. Storybook
THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

WHAT YOU DO TO OTHERS COMES BACK TO YOU

If you are kind, others will be kind to you
If you respect others, they will respect you
If you share, you will always have what you need
If you are honest, other people will be honest with you
NAME OF ACTIVITY: Introduction to Tribal Teachings

UNIT: Positive Cultural Teachings Unit

LEVEL: 7-12

TIME REQUIRED: 45 minutes

When the student has completed this activity, he/she will be able to:

OBJECTIVE:

- Identify and describe how tribal teachings promote healthy values.
- Demonstrate methods for applying these teachings to self and relationships.

RESOURCES:

- Circle of Life (V/T#1)
- Values (V/T#2), Respect (V/T#3),
- Kindness (V/T#4),
- Sharing (V/T#5), and Honesty (V/T#6)

PROCEDURE:

- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to examine the values illustrated in tribal stories and teachings and to how these values can be applied in everyday life.
- Present lecture materials on Circle of Life and Values. Encourage students to ask questions as you present the materials.
- When you have completed the lecture ask the class to discuss the following questions:
  - Can you think of examples of how what you do to others comes back to you? Describe as many as you can.
  - Do you think that people live by these values today? Explain why or why not.
  - Do you think these values are relevant for today? Explain why or why not.

CLOSURE:

- Explain that the stories in this book can be read and re-read and each time a new lesson or idea can be learned. Encourage the students to think of other creative ways to use this collection.
HONESTY IS...

Telling the Truth
Not Taking Things That Don’t Belong To You

RESPECT IS...

Taking Someone’s Social Restrictions
Showing Someone That They Are Special And Imporant
Hearing the Messages People Need To Send To Us
We Need To Feel That We Are Wanted And Important
We Need To Be Able To Have Our Own Opinions
We Can Have Differences In Opinion As Long As We Show Respect
We Can Show Respect By Being Kind
We Can Show Respect By Being Polite
We Can Show Respect By Being Smart

SHARING IS...

Using Your Clothes
Using Your Toys With Others
Telling Others How You Feel Or What You Think
Respecting Other’s Feelings

We Are Kind When We Help Others
We Are Kind When We Are Polite
We Are Kind When We Care About Others

KINDNESS IS...

We Are Kind When We Help Others
We Are Kind When We Are Polite
We Are Kind When We Show Others We Care About Them
RESPECT Is...

Thinking Someone Is Special And Important
Showing Someone That They Are Special And Important
Everyone Deserves Respect Because Everyone Is Special
We Need To All Respect Ourselves
We Need To Believe We Are Special And Important
We Can Show Others That We Respect Them By Listening To Their Ideas
We Can Show Others That We Respect Them By Being Kind
Kindness Is The Action Part Of Respect

Most of the time when we think of respect we think of people respecting one another.

However, the plants, animals, earth, and sky also should be respected because we receive our food, houses, clothing, water, and heat from them which means that they are very important.
KINDNESS IS....

We Are Kind When We Help Others
We Are Kind When We Are Polite
We Are Kind When We Show Others We Care About Them
SHARING IS...

Giving Things To Others
Giving Your Time To Others
Telling Others How You Feel Or What You Think
Receiving Things From Others
Receiving Help From Others
Listening To Others When They Talk About How They Feel Or What They Think

Most of the time when we think of sharing, we think of people sharing with one another.
However, the plants, animals, earth, and sky, also share with people, since we receive our food, houses, clothing, water and heat from them.

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HONESTY Is...

Telling The Truth
Not Taking Things That Don’t Belong To You
NAME OF ACTIVITY: Reading and Discussing Teachings

UNIT: Positive Cultural Teachings Unit

LEVEL: 7-12

TIME REQUIRED: 45 minutes

When the student has completed this activity, he/she will be able to:

OBJECTIVE:
- Identify and describe how tribal teachings promote healthy values.
- Demonstrate methods for applying these teachings to self and relationships.

RESOURCES:
- Tribal Teachings Discussion Guide (V#1)

PROCEDURES:
- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to examine the values illustrated in Tribal stories and teachings and how these values can be applied in everyday life.
- Ask students to form Talking Circles. Distribute the Tribal Teachings Discussion Guide, one for each group. Remind the messenger that he/she is responsible for completing the guide and reporting to the whole class.
- Ask each group to select a story/teaching' they want to examine. Ask students to read the story and collectively complete the guide.
- Ask the messengers to present a summary of their groups' ideas.
- When the messengers have given their reports ask the class to discuss the following questions:
  - How would the school environment be different if everyone practiced the value(s) illustrated in this teaching?
  - How would your family, community or the world be different if everyone practiced the value(s)?

CLOSURE: Explain that the stories in this book can be read and re-read and each time a new lesson or idea can be learned. Encourage the students to think of other creative ways to use this collection.
V# 1

TRIBAL TEACHINGS DISCUSSION GUIDE

DIRECTIONS: Each group selects a story and collectively answers the questions; the messenger records the responses.

SELECT A STORY TO EXAMINE: ONE PER GROUP

1. What values are demonstrated in the story?

2. Identify examples of how the value(s) can be applied to your relationships to:

   Your Friends:

   Your Family:

   Your School:

   Your Community:

3. Identify how the value(s) illustrated in this story can be applied to decisions about the use of alcohol and drugs.
NAME OF ACTIVITY: Role Playing Teachings

UNIT: Positive Cultural Teachings Unit

LEVEL: 7-12

TIME REQUIRED: 45 minutes

When the student has completed this activity, he/she will be able to:

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify and describe how tribal teachings promote healthy values.
- Demonstrate methods for applying these teachings to self and relationships.

RESOURCES:

- Role Playing Guide (V#2)

PROCEDURE:

- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to examine the values illustrated in Tribal stories and teachings and how these values can be applied in everyday life.
- Ask the students to form Talking Circles. Distribute the Tribal Role-Playing Guide, one for each group. Ask each group to select a messenger who will complete the guide.
- Ask each group to select a story/teaching they want to role play. Ask students to read the story and collectively complete the guide to plan their role play.
- Each group then has an opportunity to role play their story for the rest of the class or for a class of younger children.

CLOSURE: Explain that the stories in this book can be read and re-read and each time a new lesson or idea can be learned. Encourage the students to think of other creative ways to use this collection. This lesson could also be used, to plan and conduct a puppet show, using the Blue-Sky Family and/or other puppets.
V#2

TRIBAL TEACHINGS ROLE PLAY GUIDE

DIRECTIONS: Each group selects a story and collectively answers the questions; the messenger records the responses.

SELECT A STORY TO EXAMINE: ONE PER GROUP

1. Identify and describe the role of each main character.
   a
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.

2. Assign a role for each group member to play.

3. Each student writes a brief script for their character.

4. Practice the role play.

5. Develop at least two discussion questions for the class to be asked when you have completed your role play.
THE FIRST OJIBWA MAN

This is a story that the elders of our village told us about how the plants offered to share their gifts with the Native American people.

Many years ago, long before our village was here, the first Ojibwa man was alone on the earth with the plants and animals. He walked through the forest and talked to the Great Spirit as he walked, saying, "Oh, I am so lonely. I don’t have any friends and I would like to have some!"

As he walked through the forest, the trees began to talk to him. They said, "We are your friends, we have many gifts for you." The first tree that talked to the Ojibwa man said, "I am Wigwas, the birch tree. You can use my bark to make many useful things, like baskets to carry things and a canoe to travel in." As the Ojibwa man walked on, the 'pine tree called out, 'I have a gift for you and I am your friend. You can use my pitch. When you make that canoe, you can use my pitch to seal the seams so it will be waterproof. You can also use my pitch for medicine. These gifts you are welcome to have."
Next the hickory tree said, "I am your friend, too, and I have a gift to share. I have nuts for food so you can come and harvest the nuts from the tree." The basswood tree was also willing to share. Basswood called out, 'You can use my bark for your houses and my inner bark for your twine so you can sew your baskets together. I am also willing to share."

And so, Ojibwa man walked through the forest and all the trees offered their friendship and their gifts to him. By the time he came to the edge of the forest he had received many gifts from the trees. He knew he had made many new friends and had many things to share with the other Ojibwa people who were not born yet.

The first Ojibwa man did share these things with the people, and they made use of them in their daily lives, while always remembering to thank the trees for their wonderful gifts. So—children, always remember—that the trees are our friends and they have been very generous in sharing their gifts with us.
THE BOYS FIRST DEER

When I was a young boy, a long time ago, I longed to be old enough to hunt with my father. Finally, the day arrived. I had prepared for this day by learning about the special relationship that we have with the animals and plants. Although we take their lives so we might live, we do it with respect and honor. We pray for their spirit so they will live on and only their body will die.
On the morning of my first hunt, I placed tobacco on the ground and asked the Great Spirit to help me to be a good hunter so I can help feed my family and village.

That morning, we walked far into the forest and finally stopped at a grassy clearing where the deer were known to feed. I sat quietly waiting. The other hunters were nearby, but only I was left to watch this clearing. Then I saw a beautiful, big deer walking into the clearing. He looked so strong and proud, I felt myself shaking. I looked into the deer's eyes and he looked into mine and we both stood still in silence.

Then, without thinking, I called out to the deer. -I said, "Deer, I am hungry. Give me your body so I can help feed my family." The deer raised his head and walked closer. I placed tobacco on the ground in front of me and said a silent prayer for the spirit of the deer. As I did this, the deer walked even closer until he was only a short distance from where I stood. I raised my bow and shot him.

The other hunters heard my voice and were entering the clearing. When they saw the deer, they began to celebrate, since this was the first deer I had killed. We brought the deer back to the village and presented it to my mother, who prepared it for a feast. We invited everyone in the village to come and share the meat. Everyone came and I was now accepted as a hunter that my family and village could depend on for food. *When the feast was finished, we gathered and the pipe was smoked and people shared stories of hunting and animals.

I decided not to tell the story of how I shot the deer at the feast. Later, I told my father, and he said the Great Spirit had spoken to me through the deer, to remind me of the special way that the animals share with us and to help me remember to honor and respect them for the special gifts they share. As I grew older and attended feasts for the young men in our village. I told this story many times to share this lesson with them.
This is another story that the elders in our village told about Wenabozho, the Great teacher and helper of the Native American people.

Long ago, Wenabozho lived in our village with Nokomis, his grandmother. At that time, Wenabozho and Nokomis did not have fire to keep them warm or to cook their food. One day he asked Nokomis, "Do you know where there are people who have fire?" Nokomis said, "There are some people that live across the lake and they have fire. There is an old man and his two
young granddaughters who live over there. He is always busy making fishing nets and his
daughter helps him. They guard the fire very carefully."

Wenabozho said, 'Well, I'm going to change myself into a rabbit and go over there. I
think I'll go down to the lake where the girls come for water every day. When they come to dig
a hole in the ice to get their water, I'm going to be there." It was the spring of the year, so
Wenabozho walked carefully on the ice to the place where the girls came down for water and
they found the little rabbit. They thought he was so cute they decided to take him home with
them. One of the girls picked up the little rabbit and when they had filled their water pails, they
started home. The girls laughed and played with the little rabbit as they walked home. As they
neared their home their grandfather scolded them and said, "You should be careful because
sometimes spirits (munido) can take the form of animals and come into our camp to take
something from us."

Since Wenabozho was actually the rabbit, he was listening to everything and he
thought, "I sure hope these girls put me next to the fire and I hope the fire sparks and I can
catch some of it. Then I'll have the fire." Just as Wenabozho was thinking this, the girls looked at
the rabbit and saw that he was shivering. They felt sorry for him and put him next to the fire in
their lodge to warm up. Wenabozho was right where he wanted to be, next to the fire. He
thought to himself, "I sure hope a spark flies out from the fire." Just as he thought that, a spark
flew out from the fire and landed on his fur, so he ran out of the lodge and back across the ice
to his grandmother's house. He yelled as he approached her house, "I've got the fire!" When he
entered Nokomis' house, she quickly took some of the fire and lit the wood she had prepared to
keep the fire burning. She then put out the rest of the fire on the rabbit's fur and the little
rabbit quickly changed himself back to Wenabozho.

Wenabozho and Nokomis had fire from that time on and they shared it with other
Indian people in our village and everywhere. Wenabozho told the people to remember this
story. In this part of the country, rabbits are white in the winter and brown in the spring. When
the people see a rabbit turn brown in the spring, that's because he scorched it when he brought
the fire to his grandmother. That is to remind us of how the rabbits helped Wenabozho bring
fire to the Indian people. The rabbits and Wenabozho have been kind and helpful to the Indian
people.
THE WOODPECKER

In the days of long ago, Wenabozho often walked over all of North America. He listened to the troubles of the people and liked to help them whenever he could.

One day he went to a wigwam where an old woman lived. Now, because Wenabozho had unusual power, he could change himself so that he looked like a very old man. He had long,
white hair. He was weak and old. Of course, the old woman did not know him. "I am very hungry. I have fasted for many days," said Wenabozho to the old woman. 'Will you give me some food? I cannot stand any longer. I must sit down." He seated himself by the fire.

The old woman got corn that had been pounded into meal. She made a tiny cake and put it on the fire.

You may have the cake if you will wait until it bakes," she replied. The old man said, "I will gladly wait, for I am very hungry."

In a few minutes the cake was baked. When the old woman saw it she was very surprised. "I thought, it would be, a little one," she said to herself. "I will not give him such a big cake."

She put the cake away. Then she turned to the old man and said, "I will have to bake another cake. You may have it if you care to wait until it is baked."

"I will wait," said Wenabozho again. Then the old woman took a still smaller portion of meal and stirred up another cake. When that cake was baked, it was even bigger than the first one.

"It is so large that I shall keep it for the ceremonial feast," the old woman thought to herself. "I will not give you this cake, but if you will wait, I will bake another one." "I will wait," replied Wenabozho.

Then the old woman took still a smaller portion of meal. In fact, the amount scarcely covered the palm of her hand. When she took this cake from the fire, it was the largest one that she had baked. The old woman did not know that Wenabozho's magic had made each cake larger than the others. She couldn't understand why the, last cake should be so very large.

"I shall not give away the largest cake I ever baked!" Then she said to her guest, "I have no food for you Go find it in the forest. You can find it in the bark of the trees."

Wenabozho was angry when he heard the old woman's words. Rising to his feet, he said with great earnestness. "An old woman should be good and kind, but you are cruel, selfish and greedy. From now on you must go out into the forest and hunt for food in the bark of the trees."
Then Wenabozho stamped his foot and snapped his fingers. The old woman grew smaller and smaller. Finally, she looked like a little bird. Her dress was changed into glossy black feathers. Her apron became white feathers that covered the underpart of her body.

Wenabozho gave her a hat of red feathers for her head and neck. Soon black wings sprouted on each side of her body. Then with a flutter of her wings, she arose from the earth and flew away to the woods. Ever since, she has lived in the forest. All day long, she must run up and down the trunks of trees in search of food. Because of her stiff, spiny tail feather, she can climb or rest on the trunk. With her chisel-like beak, she pecks and drills into the hard bark for insects.

If you listen, you can still hear the selfish old woman tap, tap, tap. Today we call her the red-headed woodpecker.
THE WILD ROSES

This is another story where Wenabozho teaches the Anishinabe a lesson. When I was young like you, the elders in our village told us this story to teach us to respect the earth’s plants and to never be greedy, by taking more than we needed.
The people in the village have always been very aware of the importance of the plants, trees, flowers and the medicines that grew at their feet. One spring, long ago, the people noticed that everything was starting to blossom, but there weren’t any wild roses. The people wondered what happened to the roses. The children were especially concerned because they liked to smell the roses and play in the fields where they grew.
The people decided to have a big meeting. They invited everyone in the village. They asked the mothers, fathers, grandmas and grandpas, the children and the animals. When everyone arrived, the people and animals talked about the missing wild roses. They were all concerned because they had always had so many wild roses around them. They thought that spring and summer would never be the same without the wild roses.

They asked for a volunteer to go and find a wild rose plant and bring it back so they could ask the plant what happened. The hummingbird volunteered. She said, "I'll go and bring it back, because I can fly fast and I can travel a long way." So, they agreed to let the hummingbird go. They say she was gone for four days and finally she came back with a wild rose.
All people came to the meeting place and the medicine man, a person with the special ability to talk to plants, talked to the wild rose. The rose said, "The rabbits have been greedy and they ate almost all of us." When the people heard this, they were angry. One of the people grabbed the rabbit by the ears and held him up and slapped his face. Everyone was amazed to see that the rabbit's ears stretched to be very long and the rabbit's nose was cut. Before this time, rabbits had very small ears.

Now, Wenabozho had been watching all of this and he decided to say something because he did not approve of the people hitting the rabbit, even though he had done something wrong. He said to the rabbit, "From now on, you will have long ears and you will keep that cut above your mouth to remind you not to be greedy and selfish and not caring about the needs of others." Wenabozho also decided that from then on, the wild roses would have thorns to protect them. The little rabbits never forgot that they shouldn't overeat or take advantage of plants.
THE SEA GULL'S KINDNESS

When we were children, the elders often told stories about Wenabozho. Wenabozho is a great teacher, he is able to do many things that people cannot do because sometimes he is human and sometimes he is a spirit. He has taught the Anishinabe people many things. In this story, he will teach us something about how he returned a kind act with kindness.

On this day, Wenabozho was riding in his birch bark canoe with his friend, Atchitamo, the little squirrel. They were out on the lake when a big fish, the sturgeon, came out of the water and swallowed Wenabozho, Atchitamo, and the whole canoe.

Wenabozho and Atchitamo found themselves inside the sturgeon's belly and they didn't know how they were going to escape, so they looked around at everything they could see. Wenabozho happened to look up and he saw something moving. He said to his friend, "Atchitamo, you know that's the fish's heart." Wenabozho took his bow and arrow and he shot at the heart and then the big fish died, and it washed ashore.
But, Wenabozho and the little squirrel were still trapped inside, and they couldn't get out. Wenabozho thought for a while and he decided to try calling the birds to come and help them escape. He called Gi-ishk, the sea gull, to come and help. He asked Gi-ishk to eat some of the fish. The sea gull came and made a hole big enough for Wenabozho and the little squirrel to escape.

Wenabozho told the sea gull, "You have been very kind. To repay you for your kindness, you will always have fish to eat and you will never be hungry." And that is how Wenabozho repaid the sea gull's kindness. Try to remember this story the next time someone is kind to you.
THE FIRST SNOWSHOES

This is another story the elders in our village told us when we were children. This is a love story. When we love someone we always try to be kind and helpful.

Long ago in our village, there was a beautiful young woman named Laughing Eyes. She was the daughter of a wise, respected man. There were two young men who loved her and they both wanted to marry her. Her father didn't know at first how he would decide which young man he would present his daughter to. Finally, after much thought, he told the village, "I will send a message to the village far to the north, and when the message is prepared, 'both young men will start out at the same time. The one who delivers the message and returns first will win her affection.'"

When Laughing Eyes heard this, she was very worried because the young man she loved, Ozawa, wasn't as strong as the other young man. That night she had a dream. In her dream it was winter and there was, deep snow on the ground. She saw birds of every kind walking around in the snow. Some of the birds were sinking deeply into the snow and had great difficulty walking. Others, like the duck with its webbed feet, could walk right on top of the snow. The next morning, she thought about what her dream was telling her.
The next day she went out in the woods and cut some small trees and brought them back. One of the trees was an ironwood tree. She bent the ironwood into the shape of the snowshoe that we see today. She took the other branches and wove them in and out between the outer edges. When she was done, she went to see Ozawa and gave these shoes to him. She said, "I want you to try these when you come to deep snow on your journey. You won't sink into the snow and you won't have difficulty walking." Ozawa wasn't too excited about these new shoes. He thought to himself, "They look like very-strange moccasins." But since they were a gift, he accepted them and promised to try them out in the deep snow.

When the day of the journey came, Ozawa put the snowshoes on his back and started out. He didn't use them at first, but soon he came to an area where the snow was very deep. Ozawa took the snowshoes from his back and put them on. He started out over the snow and found he could walk right on top of it. He was able to move almost as fast as he could in the spring with these new shoes. As a result, he arrived at the northern village in only two days, rather than the four or five days which it often took to travel this distance in the winter. The other young man was far behind, still sinking into the snow with every step.

Ozawa delivered the message to the village and the people were excited about the new shoes he was wearing. The women looked at them carefully and went home to make these shoes for everyone. When Ozawa's rival arrived at the village the people told him that Ozawa had already been there three days before and he was wearing wings on his feet. Ozawa was first to return to our village and he was able to many Laughing Eyes. All the people in the village joined in celebrating at the wedding and feast.

This is the story of the first snowshoes. But it also shows us how being kind to the persons you love and doing kind things for them is a good thing that brings Joy to both people and to others. In this case, it brought the snowshoes to Indian people.
THE LADY'S SLIPPERS

Many years ago, in our village, we had a very bad winter and many people became ill. So many people required medicine that there was none left, and many people died.

In those days, we did not have cars, so a trip to the next village in the cold of winter was not a good idea. A strong and swift runner volunteered to go to the next village to seek medicine for all the sick and dying people, but like so many others, he became ill and could not go. His wife worried that he might die so she left the village in his place without telling anyone that she was going. She knew they would not allow her to venture into the cold alone.

As she started out, all she thought of was her sick husband and others in the village who were suffering. These thoughts of others gave her strength to move over snow drifts and through the cold wind without feeling its cold bite.

The next morning, the people in the village heard a voice calling from the woods. When they went to look, they found the young woman lying in the snow. Her feet were swollen and
bleeding from the frostbite, but there were medicines in her bundle for her husband and all the others who were sick. The men carried her back to the village and wrapped her feet in warm skins.

The winter passed and many of the sick recovered. This young woman was honored by the other people in the village for her devotion to her husband and the entire village. She lived a long and full life and when she died, the first lady slippers grew where she was buried. Now, when you see this beautiful flower in the spring, remember the kindness and devotion of this young woman.
This is another story that our elders told us when we were children. This story taught us to be kind to one another.

In the springtime, the people in our village made maple sugar, just as we still do today. Each year the people would begin by thanking the Great Spirit and the earth for the maple sugar. They gave thanks to the Great Spirit and the earth for all the food and other things that they needed to live.
Maple sugar time was a busy time. The people in our village moved from the village to the place where they harvested the sap from the maple trees and boiled it into syrup and sugar. The place where they lived during maple sugar time was called the sugar camp or sugar bush. The whole family lived there in the woods so they could be close to the trees. This was a happy time for the people because the weather was turning warm after the long winter.

When the family was living in the sugar camp, the parents told the children not to go too far into the woods because they might get lost. The children helped make the maple sugar and worked along with the whole family: parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. But the children also had some time for playing.
One day one of the little boys wandered off into the woods and was lost. When his older brother noticed that he was gone from where he had been playing, he went to look for him. He looked all over for a long time, but he couldn't find his little brother. Finally, he climbed up a tree so he could see around him for a greater distance. When he got to the top of the tree he called out, "Shime'! Shimel Where are you?" (Shime', meaning younger brother or younger sister.) There was no answer.

He had searched all afternoon and looked everywhere he could think of, but still he had not found his little brother. The Great Spirit was watching this boy as he searched, and as he watched he felt sorry for him because he was so sad and worried. Because the Great Spirit is kind and compassionate, he decided to change the boy into a bird so he could fly from place to place looking for his little brother.

In the springtime you can hear this bird. He has a sad call as he continues to look for his little brother. You can hear him whistling, "Shime', Shime'." When you hear this bird, remember the boy who sadly searches for his little brother and think of how fortunate you are to have a little brother or sister.
THE BUTTERFLY

When we were children, we often played in the fields and woods around the village. One of our favorite activities was watching the butterflies. Sometimes we would follow them from place to place just to see what they do and where they go. We all thought that the butterflies were so pretty and colorful. They made us happy. Sometimes I would imagine that I was a butterfly as I danced from place to place in the sunshine.

One day while we were playing, one of the boys decided to catch one of the butterflies. He chased one, a very beautiful one, and caught it in his hands. As he held it by the wings it tried to get free, but he held on. Finally, he pulled its wings off and killed this beautiful little friend.
One of the elders in the village had been watching this and he came over to us. He told the boy, in a sad and serious voice, "When you pulled the wings from this butterfly, you took some of the happiness away from all the children. Butterflies are like children and bring happiness and playfulness to the world." After saying, this he walked away.

We all looked at the boy who had killed the butterfly. We were all angry with him and left him to play by himself. Later that day, I saw the elder who had spoken with us and I told him we were all angry with the boy and had decided not to play with him. He said, "This boy is to be pitied for what he has done. If children are mean to each other and tease or pick on someone, that's the same thing as tearing the wings from the butterfly. Just as it hurts the butterfly to have its wings pulled off, that is how much a child can be hurt in their heart if others are mean to them. Try to forgive."

Later that year, I learned that the parents of this boy had a feast to offer an apology for what their son had done. The elder must have talked with the boy's parents out of concern for the boy.
THE FOUR HILLS OF LIFE

One morning Grandpa Blue Sky woke from a dream. He was so excited about this dream; he woke me up to tell me about it. "Grandpa, would you tell the children about your dream?"

Grandpa said, "I would be happy to. In my dream I was walking far from the village and came upon a valley. I looked out over this deep, wide valley and I saw four great hills in the distance: As I walked closer, I could see the first hill.

"On the first hill, I saw many babies and small children. They were climbing the hill and as they climbed to the top and down the other side, they grew older until, at the foot of the second hill, they were young boys and girls about 8 or 9 years old. I saw myself on the hill as I was when I was a baby and young boy, about your age. I climbed up to the top and down the first hill along with the other children. At first, we climbed in silence with only a few cries from the babies, who were tired or hungry. As we grew older, we played games chasing and running as we climbed. As I began the second hill, I was a boy about 10 years old."
"On the second hill there were many children about my age. As we climbed, we played games of racing, wrestling, swimming, and worked carrying wood, picking berries, hunting and fishing. The girls and boys were happy as they climbed to the top and down the other side. Once again, as we climbed, we grew older. When I started to climb the third hill, I was a young man."
"As I climbed the third hill. I did not hear as much laughter and the other men and women, climbing with me, worked as they climbed. We moved forward hunting, fishing, making tools, cooking, and making clothing and medicines.
"Sometimes people would argue or become sick. As I climbed down the hill, I walked slowly because I was becoming an old man.

"Finally, I began to climb the fourth hill. I was an old man and had lived a long time. Although I had grown wise in all these years, my body was tired, and I could not move as fast as I did on the other hills. I was guided on my way by my wisdom, which shown like a bright light around me.

"As I reached the top of the hill, it took great effort for me to walk, but I felt peaceful and happy as I looked back over the hills of my life. Before I reached the bottom of the fourth hill, I fell to the ground and my body became part of the earth and all that I had taken from the earth was given back."
THE ROBIN

Many years ago, the elders in our village told this story about a father who wanted his young son to be a great warrior and leader among his people.

Long ago, a young man named Menomin and a woman named Wabigwan were married. They were very much in love and longed to have a son to raise and bring Joy into their lives. After many years, they finally had a baby boy.

Menomin wanted his son to become a great warrior, so he made him work hard to be the best at everything. He wanted him to be the best swimmer, wrestler, runner, and shooter in the
village. To please his father, this young boy worked hard. Although he was a small boy, not as big as the others his age, he amazed the entire village with his speed and strength.

The boy did well in all these things to please his father, but he knew in his heart that he would never be the great warrior his father wanted him to be. He knew that he would rather listen to the songs of the birds and the songs of the singers and to dance to the beat of the drum. Secretly, he wanted to make his people happy through music and song. He did not want to be a great warrior.

When it came time for Menomin's son to seek a vision to guide him in his life, his father took him to the place where he would stay alone and fast for four days. At the end of the fourth day,
his father returned for him, but the boy had not received a vision. His father was determined that his son would have a vision, so after waiting a year, his father sent him on a second vision quest. Still, the boy did not receive a vision. Five years and five vision quests passed, and the boy still did not have a vision. At first, Menomin said nothing about his son’s lack of a vision, but he became angry and felt that his son was a failure. His son also began to feel like a failure.

In the spring of the sixth year, Menomin took his son for the sixth time to seek a vision. He left him alone to fast for four days. When his father returned at the end of the fourth day with food for his son, he saw that the entrance to the lodge was open and he felt that something was wrong. There was only silence and the lodge was empty. Menomin began to search for his son. He called out, but there was no reply.
He searched all day, but his son could not be found. When night came, Menomin gave up his search. As he walked home, he wept for his lost son. As he walked, a little bird with a black head and an orange chest followed Menomin. Flying from tree to tree, the bird traveled with Menomin all the way home, singing as he went. Near Menomin's home, the bird made a nest and everyday this little bird would sing songs.

For weeks Menomin returned to search the place where he had left his son. Each time the little bird with the black head and orange chest would go with him. Menomin was thankful to the little bird for bringing even a little joy to his sadness.

Many years later when Menomin was old, he again returned to the place where he had lost his son. He sat down and leaned against a tree and fell asleep. As he slept, he had a dream. His son stood beside him and said, "Father, I'm glad to see you. I've waited a long time to see you here. I'm glad we met because now I can tell you that I love you. Since that day when I received my vision, I have been sad for you. When I was a boy, I loved you and tried to make you happy, but I could not. You, too, loved me and tried to make me happy, but you could not.

"In my vision quest, I asked for the ability to please you and, at the same time, bring happiness to our people and peace to myself. During my vision, I was enveloped by a brilliant orange light as blinding as the sun. At the same time, I was filled with song and music which touched my spirit. When I opened my eyes, I was soaring in the skies. On the day of my vision I saw you come. I heard you call, and I followed as you searched for me. I answered your call, but you didn't hear me. I saw your sorrow and I was glad at last that my singing could bring you some peace and happiness. Now father, as a bird I shall continue to live nearby. As "Pitici" the robin, I shall make you and all the people happy."

Menomin woke up. For the first time in years he did not feel sad. He felt joy and as he thought about what had happened to his son, he realized he had learned some important lessons. He learned that parents should love their children for what they are, not what they can do. He learned that it's not wise to interfere with another person's purpose or vision. These have been important lessons for all the people in our village and we have all tried to respect the dreams, visions, and talents of each individual.
THE BOY IN THE MOON

When I was a young girl about your age, the elders in my village told me this story. They said many years ago when they were young, the elders told them never to stare at the moon. If they did, Grandmother Moon, the spirit in the moon, might think they are lonely and looking for someone to take care of them. Grandmother Moon is such a kind and loving mother that when she sees a young boy or girl looking up into the sky, she will take them to live with her. The children all listened to their elders and did not stare at the moon.

There was one boy in the village who was very curious. He had been told not to stare at the moon; but he always wondered what would really happen if he did. One night his parents asked him to go and get some water from the creek. The moon was full that night and as the boy started down the path, he kept wondering what might happen if he looked at the moon. Finally, he was so curious that he set the pails down and looked up at the moon and stared for a
long time. Nothing happened so he picked up his pails again and continued to stare as he walked. As he walked, a strange feeling came over him and he suddenly began to fly into the sky toward the moon.

When the boy did not return, his parents went to look for him, but he was gone and never found. The boy's parents felt sad and worried about their son, so they went to a wise elder and asked where their son had gone. The wise elder told them that Grandmother Moon had blessed their son and taken the little boy to live with her on the moon. She probably thought he needed someone to care for him and, being the kind and loving mother that she is, she brought him up to the moon to be with her. If you look into the sky at the moon, you can see this little boy and his pails. Next time you see the moon, look for him, but don't stare for too long.
Many years ago, Wenabozho walked over all of North America. One evening just before dark, as he walked through the woods, he saw a group of Indians dancing near the shore of a beautiful lake. So, he walked over to them. It was dark by the time he arrived, so he could not see very clearly.

He asked them where they were from and what their names were. But they wouldn't answer him. So Wenabozho started dancing among them. He danced and danced. "You think you are a good dancer," he said. "I'm Wenabozho and I am the best dancer anywhere," but they still said nothing. So Wenabozho said, "I'll tell you what, let's have a contest; we're going to see who's really best." He started dancing hard and danced and danced. But the others could bend farther and farther, they danced harder and harder, bending and moving in ways Wenabozho could not. Wenabozho danced and danced, but he couldn't keep up with them. He finally fell over and went to sleep. He just couldn't figure out why he couldn't dance faster and longer than the others. When he woke up it was daylight, he looked around and saw that he had been dancing with the bulrushes. Those tall slender plants that grow along the lake and the wind that blew them were the dancers who out-danced him.

Wenabozho learned something from this. He found he bragged too much, he bragged about himself. Sometimes we think we're so great, we brag so much that we look very foolish.

WENABOZHO AND THE BULRUSHES WORKSHEET
1. If you were dancing and someone came up to you and said, "I'm Wenabozho and I'm the best dancer anywhere," how would you feel? What would you think of Wenabozho or anyone else who said this?

2. Why couldn't Wenabozho keep up with the other dancers?

3. What can we learn from this story?
Once many years ago in our village, the people had grown a great crop of corn. Instead of giving thanks, the people thought they must be very special and great gardeners to have grown so much corn. They became wasteful. Some ate so much corn they became sick. Others let the extra corn rot or gave it to the dogs. The children used the cornstalks as sticks to fight one another and threw them in the mud when they were done.

When much of the corn was gone, the village began to send more hunters to hunt the deer, elk and moose that were so abundant. But soon the hunters found that something had changed. Even the finest hunters could not kill a single animal. The people began to grow hungry and they worried about what they had done to offend the animals and how they might correct it. They called on their leaders to find the solution. As time passed, the people grew hungrier and the hunters continued to fail to bring food to the village.

One day, an elder was walking alone near the village, wondering what was to become of the people. As he walked, he came upon a clearing in the woods. He saw a grassy meadow with a mound in the center and on the mound stood a birch bark lodge.
When he approached the lodge, he heard cries and groans coming from within. When he walked in, he saw a sickly and miserable looking man stretched out on a dirty and worn hide.

The man spoke to him. "See what a terrible condition you have placed me in. The people have insulted me, their best friend, in the most ungrateful manner. They dragged me about in the mud and dirt. They allowed the dogs to tear my clothing. They ill-treated me in every possible way. This is the cause of their own misfortune and their present want. What the people do to the rest of us in this creation comes back to them. I am glad you have come and seen me in this terrible condition. I have no water, no clothes, not even a leaf to protect me from the cold. Weeds and wild plants grow in my garden. Tell the people this."

The elder was sad and promised to hurry back to the village and tell the others how the Spirit of the Corn has suffered. He told the others about the sad way he had found the good Spirit of the Corn and how their greed and carelessness had caused all their problems.

Somehow the people survived that winter and when spring came, they found what little corn was left and planted it and took good care of their friend the corn from that day on.
WENABOZHO AND HIS REFLECTION

One day as Wenabozho walked along the shore of a lake, he looked over in the water and he saw his reflection. He looked and thought, "Oh, what a nice man, so strong and good looking." He looked and looked and kept bragging to himself and looking into the water. He bent over farther and farther, to get a better look at himself, until he fell headfirst into the water.
Beboon and Ziigwan

An old man was sitting alone in his lodge, by the side of a frozen stream. It was the close of winter, and his fire was almost out. He was very cold. His hair was white with age. Day after day passed as he sat alone and heard nothing but the sounds of the wind, sweeping before him in the new fallen snow.

One day, as his fire was just dying, a handsome young man approached and entered his lodge. His eyes sparkled, and a smile played upon his lips. He walked with a light step. His forehead was bound with a wreath of sweetgrass.
“Ah, my son” said the old man, “I am happy to see you. Come in. Come, tell me of your adventures, and what strange lands you have been to see. Let us pass the night together. I will tell you of my life and adventures, and what I can perform. You shall do the same, and we will amuse ourselves.”

He then drew from his sac an old pipe, and having filled it with tobacco, he handed it to his guest. When this ceremony was concluded they began to speak.

“I blow my breath,” said the old man “and snow covers the land. The leaves fall from the trees at my command, and my breath blows them away. The birds get up from the water and fly to a distant land. The streams stand still, and the water becomes stiff and hard as clear stone.”

“I breathe,” said the young man, “and flowers spring up all over the plains. I shake my head,” said the young man “and warm showers of rain fall upon the earth. The plants lift up their heads out of the earth, like the eyes of children filled with delight. My voice recalls the birds. The warmth of my breath unlocks the streams. Music fills the groves wherever I walk, and nature rejoices.”

At length the sun began to rise. A gentle warmth came over the place. The tongue of the old man became silent. The robin and the bluebird began to sing on the top of the lodge. The stream began to murmur by the door, and the smell of growing herbs and flowers came softly on the breeze.

Daylight fully revealed to the young man the character of the old man. When he looked upon him, he had the icy image of Beboon. Streams began to flow from his eyes. As the sun increased, he grew smaller and smaller and finally Beboon had melted completely away. Nothing remained on the place of his lodge fire but a small white flower, with a pink border.
THE DEER

Many years ago, before the coming of the Europeans, an Indian man was out hunting deer with this bow and arrow in the woods. He was very tired, so he sat down next to a tree and fell asleep. When he woke up, he saw two deer standing very close to him. He tried to pick up his bow and arrow, but he couldn't move his arms. Just then one of the deer said, "Come with us." He wondered why he could understand what the deer said. The deer walked over to a nearby creek. The man was able to get up and walk over to the creek close to the deer. When he looked down into his reflection in the water, he saw that he had changed into a deer. So, he went with them.

He went through the life of the deer, through hard winters, and happy summers. He was the father of young deer. He listened to the council of the deer elders and attended ceremonies with the deer. Sometimes the deer would be killed by Indians and they would feel bad to lose their family members or friends, but they also realized that they died to feed the Indian people who hunted them. It's all part of the great laws of nature. When an animal is killed to help feed another, and tobacco is offered, its spirit is born again, and life goes on.

After many years among the deer, one of his children, a deer, was killed. But his spirit did not live on. The Indian who had killed the young deer did not give thanks to the Great Spirit, as was the custom. When he realized this, the deer felt bad and went out into the woods and laid down and cried and cried. As he cried, he fell asleep. When he woke he saw two Native American’s. He was going to run away before they shot him, but before he could get up one of the Indians said, "Who are you? Where are you going?" He wondered how he could understand the humans. He looked down and saw that he was a human being again.

He went back to the village with those who found him and told them that he had been a deer. He had lived with them and had learned many things. He learned how the animals, the fish, the beaver, the deer, the moose and others feel when we kill
them; they die for us so we can live. The Great Spirit gave the Indian something the animals
don't have tobacco. When the life of an animal is taken, tobacco should be given so, that the
animal's spirit is thanked and will live on. Nothing is wasted. Every part of the animal is to be
used. He told them all of these things. He then taught them different deer dances and
ceremonies, so they could learn to give thanks for all things that they have.
THE STURGEON

Many years ago, there was a young boy who would go down to the river every day. He would fish sometimes and other times he would just sit beside the water. One day an Indian came out of the water and told his brother to come with him. "Come with me, come into the water." He went closer to look and then walked into the water and turned into a fish, a sturgeon. The Indian who had spoken to him had also turned into a fish and said, "I'll take you around the lake and show you how our brothers, the fish, live." So, he took him around the world of the fish in what is now Lake Superior. After more than a year, the young man returned to the place where he had entered the water and became a human again. When he returned to his village, he told his people many things about the life of the fish, but most important, he taught them to respect and give thanks for the fish who give their lives to feed the Anishinaabe. He taught them to put tobacco into the water when the fish are caught.
CRANE CLAN

In the days when the world was young, many, many years ago, the Great Spirit ordered a crane to fly down from the sky to find a good place for the people to live. The mighty crane began its flight downward from the skies. As it reached the clouds, it uttered a loud call that echoed from one end of the earth to the other. Everyone, including the spirits always floating in the sky, heard this mighty echo maker.

When the crane left the clouds and flew closer to earth, it saw the Great Lakes. Again, it called to announce its coming. Garroo, garroo-oo! It flew over the water, looking for a good place to land. Finally, it chose a hill overlooking St. Mary's River, near where the town of Sault Sainte Marie, in Michigan now stands. There the waters of Lake Superior meet the waters of Lake Huron in many rushing waterfalls.

The crane settled there for a time, watching the fish that crowded the clear waters and the snowwhite foam of the waterfalls. This will be my home, it thought. Happy with its choice of a camp site, the crane called out again. Garroo, garroo-ool. The bear, the catfish, the loon, the moose and the marten answered the call. They came and settled there, too. Soon the place was filled with people. Those who settled close to the crane were known as the Crane Clan. Those who lived near the bear were the Bear Clan. Those settling near the catfish belonged now to the Catfish Clan.

They lived happily together for a long time. Then the crane decided to move westward. Exploring, it flew over the waters of Lake Superior and landed on a point of land on the northwest shore. Again, the crane uttered its loud call, garroo, garroo-oo, happy with the new camp site and the abundant fish in the clear waters of this great lake. Immediately the voice of the loon answered. The crane was overjoyed to hear the familiar call. The loon had evidently followed it. To make sure, the crane asked, "Is it you, Loon, that answered my call?" "It is I," the loon replied.

The crane complimented the loon. "Your voice is like a chant to me," it said. "Henceforth, I appoint you to speak for me in councils." Because of this legend, the Crane Clan claim their ancestors were the first to settle in the region of Sault Sainte Marie. They always speak first in Ojibwa councils. The Loon Clan, because they answered the crane's call, speak second. Today, there are more than twenty clans among the Ojibwa. The oldest clans, of course, come. first -- the Crane, the Loon, the Bear, the Catfish, the Moose, and the Marten. Then come the Wolf, the Heron, the Reindeer, the Pike, the Lynx, the Eagle, the Rattlesnake, the Black Duck, the Goose, the Sucker, the Sturgeon, the Whitefish, the Beaver, the Gull and the Hawk.
THE VOICE IN THE WOODS

When I was young, the elders told us many stories. One of my favorite stories is one that my grandmother used to tell me so I would be honest and not take anything that didn't belong to me.
Many years ago, during the warm summer days, the children in our village would go to swim at a nearby beach. To get to the beach, they would go down a path to the lake. Along this path there was a big old oak tree.

One day when the children passed this tree, they heard a voice in the woods, and the voice was saying, "Anindi da toyoon." As the children listened, they said to each other; 'What is he saying?' Nobody knew, so they listened, and they heard him again, saying, "Anindi da toyoon." They were really puzzled, so they called out, "Who are you?" But nobody answered. So, the children went down to the beach to swim.

Each time the children went down that trail, when they came to the old oak tree, they would hear that voice again calling, "Anindi da toyoon." They didn't know what that voice was saying, but each time they went down the path they would stop and listen to the voice.

One day their grandpa came to visit them. He was an old and wise man who knew many things that the children didn't know. The children told their grandpa about the voice they heard along the path. Since the children didn't know what the voice was saying, they asked their grandpa to walk down to the beach with them to hear the voice on the path. So, grandpa went along, and they walked down the path together.

When they came to the old oak tree, they stopped and listened, and sure enough, they could hear the voice, "Anindi da toyoon." Their grandpa listened and the voice called out again, "Anindi da toyoon," and grandpa said, "Hiya Ambe sa da na ki da wa atone ga odiniman." What the voice was saying, according to their grandpa, was, "Where shall I put it? Where shall I put it?" And then when their grandpa heard that, he replied, "Go and put it where you found it."

After their grandpa answered the voice, the children never heard this voice call out again, "Anindi da toyoon." Their grandpa told them that they should never take anything that doesn't belong to them. Otherwise, when they grow old and die, their spirits will be wandering around in the woods calling, "Anindi da toyoon."

I hope you will remember this story and never take anything that doesn't belong to you. I have always remembered this story and it has helped me to be an honest person. After all, I don't want my voice to be down in the woods crying, "Anindi da toyoon."
THE DOOR WITHOUT A LOCK

Many years ago, when we were children, when our family went away from home to visit friends or relatives or to work, my father would always put a stick against our door to let the other people in the village know we were not home. Everyone in the village did this when their whole family was going away. When a stick was laid against a door, we all knew that people were not home and we did not stop to see them.

No one's house had a lock on the door. Everyone knew that you should not go into someone's house when they were gone. It just didn't happen. Even if someone in the village tried to steal; they would have been caught right away because someone would have seen them. People in the village helped each other and looked after each other.

Today we live in a big city rather than the village we grew up in. We lock our doors when we are away from home and when we are home. We even have an extra lock on the door. Sometimes I feel sad that people cannot trust one another anymore. Maybe if we all try to live the way our elders did, we will all be happier and safer.
THE RABBIT AND THE OWL

This is another story our elders taught us about Wenabozho. They told us this story to show what can happen when we play tricks on others. In the wintertime, Wenabozho worked hard to stay alive. He spent the cold and snowy days in search of food. When summer came and the forests were filled with food, Wenabozho was sometimes overcome with laziness and tried to find the most food for the least amount of work.

One hot summer day, Wenabozho was walking through the forest when he began to feel very hungry. He had been traveling all day and he wondered what he could have for supper. He went to a stream to spear a fish but, to his surprise, there were no fish in the stream. The truth was, of course, that the fish were feeling the heat, too, and had swum down to the bottom of the stream where the water was cooler.

Since he could not catch a fish, Wenabozho decided he would go look for berries. But the berries grew on bushes where the sun could shine on them and were dried up from the heat, so he could not eat them.

Wenabozho thought to himself, 'This is a difficult place to hunt for food. I suppose I'll have to find a bee's nest and eat honey.' Wenabozho walked back through the woods until he came to a tree that had a beehive in it. He climbed up and looked inside, but the bees were also feeling the hot weather and they were resting instead of gathering honey. There was no honey at all in the tree, and when the bees discovered that Wenabozho was looking at them, they came after him and drove him away.

When he was far enough from the tree to feel safe, Wenabozho realized that he was hungrier than he had ever been. He thought for a while and then decided to play a trick on the animals. Off he went, calling to the animals and birds as he walked through the forest. He called, "Come, my brothers and sisters. Come and have a meeting with me in the middle of the forest. I have something important to tell you." All the animals and birds knew Wenabozho to be honest and they trusted him, so they came to hear what he had to say.

When all the birds and animals had arrived, Wenabozho said, "Now brothers and sisters, it's important for you to sit with your backs to me while I sing you a new song. It's a magic song and it will be wonderful if all of you can learn it so you can sing it at home, and it will bring you all great happiness. But this one is such a special song that you must not watch me as I sing it or else you will not be able to remember the words."

All the animals did as Wenabozho said. They sat with their backs to him and listened carefully as he sang. Even the wise Owl sat with his back to Wenabozho. However, Owl was cautious and, although he sat with his back to Wenabozho, he kept moving his eyes from side to side, hoping to catch a glimpse of him as he sang.
The Owl rolled his eyes as far back as he could. He could not see what Wenabozho was doing. At length, his curiosity got the best of him and he turned his head ever so slightly. His eyes opened wide and he could hardly believe what he saw. There was Wenabozho, picking up Rabbit in both hands as if he were going to kill him! Owl let out such a squeal of fear that all the other birds and animals ran off in all directions, screaming and howling as loud as they could.

This, of course, surprised Wenabozho and he quickly raised his arms to reach out and catch some of the animals. He moved so quickly that he forgot he was holding Rabbit. His arms moved with such strength and speed that he pulled Rabbit all out of shape. Instead of short ears and four short legs, Rabbit suddenly had two long ears and two long back legs. But the frightened Rabbit did not stop to think about his ears or hind legs. He wiggled and wiggled until he had freed himself, and hopped away into the woods, happy to be alive. Because of this, from that day on; rabbits have long ears and long hind legs and must jump and hop wherever they go.

Owl was anxious to get away, but he was not able to move fast enough. As soon as Rabbit was free, Wenabozho came after Owl. When he caught him, he fixed his eyes so they could stare
straight ahead. Wenabozho said, "I'll teach you to interfere with my plans. Forever, all owls will have eyes like yours. They may look straight ahead, but if they wish to look from side to side, they will have to turn their whole head."

When the other animals heard what Wenabozho had done to Owl, they felt sad about it. Owl felt so sad and foolish that he hid deep in the woods and only appears in the evenings when the sun has gone down. This is why even today owls only come out at night.
IT RESTS IN YOUR HANDS

The elders in our village often told us this story to teach us about being honest. Long ago there was a young boy who was always into mischief. He was always playing tricks on the other children and would often do mean things to the little animals and plants. One day, as this boy was playing, he saw a little bird hopping from place to place on the ground. The boy caught the bird in his hands and held it lightly.

Just as the boy caught the bird, one of the village elders walked by. He called to the boy, "Come here and show me what you have in your hands." The boy walked toward the elder with the bird. As he came closer, the boy said, "I have a little bird in my hands, but before you can see it,
you must guess if it is alive or dead. The elder thought for a while and then said, "If I say the bird is alive, you will crush it, so it is dead when you open your hands. If I say the bird is dead; you will open your hands and the bird will fly away, so I say it rests with you. You must decide whether this little bird will live or die."
THE CIRCLE OF LIFE STORY

When I was a young boy about your age the elders in our village always told us to be good to others because what we did to others would come back to us. When I was young, I didn’t really understand this, but as I grew older, I saw that this was true.

When I was a boy I never stole-anything. I believed what the elders told me, so I thought that if I stole something, someone might take something that I valued from me. Even when I grew up, I always remembered what the elders taught and I never took something that did not belong to me, not even a little thing.

I have lived in many places in my life where my friends and neighbors had things stolen from them, but no one has ever stolen anything from me. It is often hard for young people to understand this when you see something that someone else has, like a new bicycle, and you want it, taking it seems easy. But it is not as easy as it seems. It is always a good idea to think about how you would feel if you were the girl or boy who will no longer have a bicycle. Remember that life goes in a circle and what you do to others comes back to you.
TOBACCO

Long ago the Anishinaabe were given tobacco by the Great Spirit. This is the story of how that came to be and what the purpose of tobacco is.

Many years ago, Wenabozho walked over all of North America. When he came to the land of the Anishinaabe he saw a wigwam. Inside the wigwam a group of Indians were meeting. He entered and took a bundle from the pack he carried and put it down. He took tobacco out of the bundle and said, 'This is the most important thing you will ever have.' The others asked, 'What is it?' He said, 'This is asemaa, this is tobacco. This is what the Great Spirit has given you from the earth so you can pray and talk to the Great Spirit. Also from the earth, the Great Spirit has given you the pipe,' and he gave them a pipe. He told the Anishinaabe that when they smoke their pipe, turn it in the four directions, and to the sky and earth, and when the smoke goes up from the pipe it will carry their prayer to the Great Spirit.
THE RIVER OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Many years ago among the Anishinaabe, there was, an old woman who was well over one hundred years old. Among the Anishinaabe, then as now, the visions of elders were listened to as visions of things to come. Many, many years ago, in her visions, her dreams, this old woman saw the great island of the Anishinaabe, the continent of North America, and running through this land was a great river flowing everywhere in the land of the Anishinaabe. This river was the river of alcohol and drugs. In her vision the old woman saw many Indian people falling into and drowning in this river of alcohol and drugs. When the old woman spoke of her vision many people heard about the sad things to come of the deaths of many Anishinaabe who will drown in the river of alcohol and drugs and yet they continued to use the alcohol and drugs brought to the Anishinaabe by the Europeans. Today this river is still flowing; the vision of this old woman was a great and true vision. How many more of the Anishinaabe will drown in it? Will you?
WHY ANIMALS DON'T DRINK

Wenabozho is a hero and a teacher in the Ojibwa culture. This is a story that is told by Wenabozho. The story contains a message to be learned this is how the Ojibwa people taught their young during the winter months.

The Great Spirit told all the animals to gather by twos in the woods for a big meeting. Every animal was there. They all went to the meeting wondering what the Great Spirit wanted to tell them.
Along the path came a rabbit stumbling to this great meeting. All the other animals looked to see the rabbit. He was singing and staggering as he approached the meeting. The rabbit acted very strange. The fox asked the rabbit where he had been and told him, his family and children were lonely and worried about him; they hadn't seen him for a long time. The rabbit said, "I don't care anymore about being like a rabbit and I feel better than ever."

Then the rabbit told the fox why he felt good and of his venture to town where he drank alcohol. He was having so much fun he lost track of time; this was why he had been gone so long. The fox replied, "Your family and children worried about you and want you home." The rabbit laughed and kicked the fox in the leg, then the fox struck the rabbit and sent him tumbling. The fox, much stronger, could have killed the rabbit easily, but didn't. Still laughing at the fox, the rabbit seemed not to care. All the other animals looked and stared at the rabbit, who acted so strange.

The lynx said to the rabbit, "Why do you walk on two legs and talk so different when the Great Spirit gave us four legs and our own language? It sounds like you don't care about your family and children. What has happened to you?" The rabbit said, "I was in town drinking and learned to walk, talk and have fun in a different way." Then he kicked the lynx and said; "You're always picking on me and I'm not afraid of you, either." The lynx, then startled, slapped the rabbit on the head and sent him flying. He, too, could have killed the rabbit instantly, but didn't. The other animals did not understand where the rabbit received his false courage to attack the animals that could have easily killed him. The other animals were stunned by the peculiar behavior of the rabbit and began to wonder why he acted in this manner.

The rabbit ridiculed, made fun of, and laughed at the other animals for preparing for winter, gathering food, building shelters and caring for their families when they could be in town having fun like him. The rabbit said, "I'm going back to town." As the rabbit walked away, he passed behind a large tree, then he changed himself back into Wenabozho. All the animals looked surprised. Wenabozho told them this is why there is a great meeting. To show the animals what could happen if they drink.

Wenabozho looked at the bear and said, "Remember the time the humans captured you and put you in a circus, tied you up and gave you alcohol to drink?" The bear put his head down. Wenabozho went on to talk to the animals of how we were given a language to speak of our own, four legs to walk on, a way of life of our own to follow that code of conduct by which we live. To do anything differently is disrespectful to the way of life that the Creator has given us. When we drink alcohol we act differently, we get false courage, it becomes a way of life, and we neglect our responsibilities to ourselves as well as to others. This is why animals don't drink! Our brothers, the Anishinaabe, don't drink for the same reasons!
THE ROAD OF ALCOHOL

This is a story of an Indian elder who is still living today. It is a true story about something that happened to him. There was a young Indian boy who was raised by his grandmother. He never spoke English. When he was a young man, his grandmother told him that there was going to be a time in his life when he would have problems, he would lose interest in everything, he would be struck. She also told him that when this happened, he should go into the woods and fast and pray until he was free of these problems. As this young man grew older, he began to use alcohol and he developed problems as a result. He began hurting himself and his family. Everything went wrong for him. After much suffering for everyone, he finally had enough. He decided to go into the woods to fast and pray as his grandmother had suggested. He ate no food and drank no water for days and received a vision. In his vision, he was walking down a road and came to a huge boulder, as big as a mountain. He tried to walk around it, but even after walking for two days he could not. Finally, in his dream, he received a pipe. He was told to smoke it and it would help him now and in life. After he smoked the pipe, he blew on the rock and the boulder went flying away into the sky. From that day on, he changed his life. He never drank again. That was his vision. His grandmother knew long before he was helped that alcohol would get him stuck in life.
I AM A RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC

The following is a true story written by a recovering alcoholic. He and his family live on a Reservation. My first experience with alcohol was when I was very young. I remember my parents having their parties after closing time, everyone drunk at our house. I remember my parents having hangovers the morning after as me and my brother helped ourselves to the leftovers. The first time I remember getting drunk was when I was nine or ten years old. It was with a friend. We found some beer that one of the older kids was hiding from his parents. We got drunk and our parents got mad at us. I thought that drinking was like being big. I also liked the feeling of being high. Things that I didn't do when I was sober were easier when I drank. I like to talk to people, especially girls, and when I drank, I was willing to talk.

When I was fourteen, I started to run away from home, usually when I was drunk. Eventually, I was put in jail for running away -- my first in a series of brushes with the law. I thought everyone was picking on me, trying to put me away. Thinking back, I suppose that this was my way to get attention. I'm sure that the running away was out of some sort of self-pity. My troubles with the law went from bad to worse. I was put in jail another time for fighting with a guy who I thought had beat up my brother. The social service people thought a geographical change would help: "It must be the place he's in," they said. They sent me to an Indian boarding school and during the time there I drank only once but smoked grass every day. I came back home thinking that they didn't like me out there, either, or they too were out to get me.

When I turned sixteen, I got my driver's license and within two weeks I had stolen my brother's car and smashed it up. I was drunk and once more landed in jail. I couldn't remember all that had happened and eventually found out that I was having "blackouts". That incident also lead to my first contact with an alcoholic treatment center. I stayed three days and left.

I left because my girlfriend was pregnant; I was going to be a father at the ripe old age of sixteen. Well, I stayed out of trouble for about six months, but soon returned to my old patterns, only this time things just seemed to get even worse. I remember I began talking of killing myself. Once, I got a gun and phoned my girlfriend and in the middle of an argument I took the phone outside and fired the gun. I stayed quiet while she must have been in hysterics on the other end. I don't remember why I'd do such a thing, nor do I remember being bothered by such crazy actions. My blackouts started to come more often. Me and my friends, wanting more to drink one night, broke into a bar and took some beer and hard liquor. Two weeks later, I was once more arrested. I got the details of my actions in court.

My sentence included another stay in the treatment center, this time for thirty days, plus an additional six months following after I got out. I thought thirty days was going to be a breeze, but soon found out it was going to be tough. For the first time in years, I was forced to soberly look at my life and my actions and I found out things about myself that I didn't like. But I also found out about feelings: I found out it was okay to feel the way I felt. I began focusing more on
me and not on everything else around me. While in treatment, I began following the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Having gone through the first five of the twelve steps, I decided to stay even longer than I was supposed to. Thinking back, those thirty-five days were probably the best thing that had ever happened to me.

After treatment I went to a Tribal program for follow-up counseling. On my first day out of treatment my good drinking buddy predicted that I'd be drinking within a month. However, good things continued to happen. I began doing volunteer work with the alcohol program: I'd go to schools and tell my story. Like I said, I like to talk to people and with new ways to do so I really enjoyed the work, mostly I think because I felt I was helping someone. I continued to learn about myself and when reflecting back I can see that my life was changing.

I wondered why Native American people let others believe their own myths, like the “drunken Indian” myth. Through eyes which were now sober, I felt that being an Indian was a lot more than just drinking. It's being proud, kind, and aware of life, not just letting it pass you by. It is accepting what has been done and trying your best to help other people. When I was drinking, I had trouble with conflicts of a Native American-White world. By learning to accept certain things, I feel that my life is now a lot less complicated. Taking away alcohol helped me a lot, but it didn't cure everything. I still realize that I have to deal with all my human feelings and sometimes it gets awful hard. It's good to know that a drink will only seem to fix things for a while and eventually just cause more problems. I find that talking to close friends helps a lot in dealing with these other human feelings. The rewards of staying sober are many, but I now realize that it was up to me to stop and it is up to me to stay sober. So, I would like to say to everyone, it is up to you to help yourself, and in helping yourself, you can help others.