



Detail from "Lewis and Clark's Camp at Traveler's Rest, Lolo Creek 1805" by Edgar S. Paxson. Courtesy of [Missoula Art Museum](#).

**WISDOM OF THE ELDERS RADIO: SERIES 3, PROGRAM 3
HONORING THE NEZ PERCE TRIBE
GRADES K-3 * ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

Lesson plan written by Elaine LaBonte.

SUBJECT AREAS

To be defined following completion of all lesson activities.

SKILLS

To be defined following completion of all lesson activities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing the lessons in this Cedar Series, students will be able to:

- Identify the Tribes and/or ancestral homelands of the Nez Perce and to describe the cultural role that cedar has to these Tribes
- Demonstrate familiarity with cedar trees and the impacts that logging has.
- Consider the responsibility of individuals toward saving or reducing the need for cedar wood.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, as well as pre-historically, Native Americans have defined their culture largely dependent upon the natural resources that occurred within their geographic region and environmental features found within their ancestral

homelands. During the lessons that follow, students will be provided with a worldview very different from their own. They will learn about the role of native people in the environment. This series will focus on cedar trees and what logging has done to the cedar groves which are concerns of the Nez Perce Tribe. Cedar is the Tree of Life for the Nimi'ipuu (Nez Perce Tribe)

Overview

Lesson 1: Introduction to Relationships between Humans and the Environment

Lesson 2: The Cedar Tree

Lesson 3: Nez Perce People and the Cedar Tree

Lesson 4: Responsibility of Individuals

GUIDING QUESTIONS

PREPARING TO TEACH THIS LESSON

If at all possible, invite a tribal member from the Nez Perce to come and speak to the class during Lesson 3 below to discuss the role cedar plays for the tribe from their cultural perspective.

Resources include:

- The Nez Perce Tribe at <http://www.nezperce.org/content/contact/natural.html>.

Other resources for possible guests include:

- Turtle Island Storytellers: <http://www.turtleislandstorytellers.net/>
- Northwest Spirit Quest, Inc.: Elaine.nwspiritquest@dish.net

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Lesson 1: Introduction to Relationships between Humans and the Environment

Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.03.RE.07—Listen to, read, and understand a wide variety of grade-level informational and narrative (story) text.
- EL.03.RE.08—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through discussions.
- EL.03.RE.32—Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text.

- EL.03.RE.34—Take part in creative response to text, such as dramatizations and oral presentations.

CD Segments to Play

Background

Suggested Strategies

- In preparation for this lesson you will need 3x5" post it notes; one for each student. The transcript for the *Sacred Landscape* segment of Wisdom of the Elders Radio Series 3, Program 3 is located at http://www.wisdomoftheelders.org/prog303/transcript_sl.htm; there is also an audio link should you not have a CD.
- Also, print out the picture of the cedar tree or perhaps there is a poster at your school that shows a cedar forest.

Activities

1. Listen

Prepare to listen to the CD. Tell the class to listen very carefully to the segment and to listen for things that the Nez Perce people use cedar for.

2. Discuss

Ask the students to call out things that they heard when listening to the CD. Some of the uses mentioned were: medicines, houses, canoes, feast bowls, baskets, food storage boxes, rain hats and capes, dresses and skirts and also spiritual uses such as cleansing and purification. Pose some questions to the classroom, such as:

- Who is the Nez Perce Tribe?
- Where are they located?
- Do you know what cedar trees are?
- Do you know what cedar trees look like?
- Why might cedar be called the Tree of Life?
- Do you think cedar trees are in danger?

3. Art project

Show the class the picture of cedar trees. Tell the class that some cedar trees are over 1,000 years old! Have the class color one of the pages recommended by the Tribe or have the students draw a picture of a cedar tree and one of the things that the native people made out of cedar. Have

them draw a line from the object to the part of the tree that they think was used.

Lesson 2: The Cedar Tree

Lesson 2, Day 1

Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.03.RE.08—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through discussions.
- EL.03.RE.34—Take part in creative response to text, such as dramatizations and oral presentations.
- EL.03.SL.09—Answer questions completely and with appropriate elaboration.
- EL.03.WR.02—Discuss ideas for writing, use diagrams and charts to develop ideas, and make a list or notebook of ideas.

LIFE SCIENCE

- SC.03.LS.04—Describe a habitat and the organisms that live there.

Background

Suggested Strategies

- In preparation for today's class, you will need to make some little pieces of paper numbered 1-6, make several of each number, at least 5 x the number in your class (Make each number on a different color of paper, so all of the 1's will be red, 2's will be yellow, etc). You will also need something to put the numbers in.
- To begin today's lesson, you may read the following verbatim, or ad lib as best fits your class. "Remember that yesterday we learned about different kinds of things that cedar trees were used for by the Nez Perce Indian people. All trees are important to the world. We need trees and plants to make oxygen in the air so we can breathe!"

Activities

1. Discuss

Ask the following question: What are some of the reasons that trees are important to people?

Someone will say oxygen, since it was just said above. There are lots of things that the students could come up with. The obvious is objects made out of wood. On a more environmental focus, get your class thinking about things that the earth needs trees for.

2. Play a game

The Cedar Tree Game

- Sit your class in a circle.
- Ask for a volunteer to be the cedar tree. The cedar tree now needs to stand in the middle of the floor.
- Ask for another volunteer. This time it needs to be something that needs the tree to live in.
- Ask for another volunteer. This time it needs to be something that needs the tree to eat.
- Ask for another volunteer. This time it needs to be something that needs the tree to hide in.
- Ask for another volunteer. This time it needs to be something that needs the tree to make something. The answer we are looking for is a native person who needs the cedar tree for a canoe, basket, bowl, etc.
- Ask for another volunteer. This time it needs to be a logger.
- With each volunteer, they need to come to the middle of the floor and act out their part.
- Let the class play this game to get some energy out. When you deem it time, send the class back to their seats.

3. Art project

Have the class go back to their seats. Divide the numbers up equally into the class. (If you have 20 students, you would have 3 each of the 6 numbers (colors) plus place 3 more number 6's in.) Have each student draw a number out.

- 1 = cedar
- 2 = something that lives in tree
- 3 = something that eats the tree
- 4 = something that hides in the tree
- 5 = a Nez Perce Indian
- 6 = a logger

Have each student draw a picture of who they will be. This will be the last activity done today. Collect the pictures which can be drawn on papers that can be taped onto them at the next class session.

Lesson 2, Day 2

Suggested Strategies

Activities

1. Review

Today's lesson will focus on the interdependence of things on each other. You may read verbatim to class, or ad lib to fit your class' specific needs. "Yesterday, we learned about the cedar tree and we drew pictures of things that either are the cedar tree or that need the cedar tree."

Have the class sit in a circle. Pass out everyone's picture. Start somewhere in the circle and have each student say what they are (what they drew on their paper) and how they relate to a cedar tree. For instance a woodpecker might eat insects out of the bark of the tree. Once you are confident that everyone understands who is who, push the chairs or tables to the outside of the classroom.

2. Play a game

Cedar Tree Interdependence Game

Let the cedar trees take their places wherever they want to stand. Then let everyone else join in. It will take several of the loggers to cut down one large tree.

Let the class play for awhile, but what is going to happen is the loggers will either cut down all of the trees or all the Indians are going to cut down the trees to be used as canoes. Remind the students that other than cutting down entire trees for canoes, the things that the Nez Perce people used the cedar tree for did not involve cutting down the entire tree, and there was not a big need to cut down several trees for canoes, since one canoe will last a very long time.

After the students have played for awhile, have them sit down.

Ask: What happens when a whole tree is cut down?

If your class can't come up with the answer that describes interdependence in some way, then do the following:

Have the cedar tree volunteer come stand in the middle of the room.

Of the students left ask all the things that live in the tree to come find their place in the trees. Remind them that cedar trees are very big so more than one thing can be living there.

Next have the things that eat off the tree find their place; next, have all the things that hide in the tree, next have all of the Indians go to collect basket weaving materials (basket weaving materials come from the bark and the roots of the tree).

Now, have the loggers come out to cut down one tree.

Ask: What is going to happen to all of you who are dependent upon this tree? The answer should be easy to arrive at; they need to find another cedar tree.

Have the loggers come cut down another tree, and so on until there are no trees left.

Ask: Now what is going to happen to all of you things that are dependent upon the cedar tree?

Have the class return to their seats and discuss this concept for awhile. Let the students lead the discussion as much as possible. The goal is simply for them to understand the interdependence of all things on each other.

Lesson 3: Nez Perce People and the Cedar Tree

Lesson 3, Day 1

Suggested Strategies

- Hopefully, a guest speaker can attend this day and talk to your class.

Lesson 3, Day 2

Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.03.RE.08—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through discussions.
- EL.03.RE.32—Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text.
- EL.03.SL.09—Answer questions completely and with appropriate elaboration.

GEOGRAPHY

- SS.03.GE.01—View and draw simple maps and pictures to locate, describe, and show movement among places.

Background

Suggested Strategies

- In preparation for this lesson, go to http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/exhibits/nepe/exb/dailylife/FoodGathering/NEPE34212_Basket.html and print out this cedar basket; go to the following site and print-out location of the Nez Perce Reservation: <http://www.nezperce.org/RezInfo/NPreservation.htm>; and also print out these other maps which show ceded lands and changes in Reservation size: http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/dworshak/reports/final_eis/map6.jpg; <http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.windriverhistory.org/exhibits/chiefjoseph/images/p159map.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.windriverhistory.org/exhibits/chiefjoseph/chiefjoseph02.htm&h=378&w=450&sz=43&hl=en&start=16&sig2=20BQDR9yrg81mUKp3LLfGw&um=1&tbnid=w1qrPsqlUSzw7M:&tbnh=107&tbnw=127&ei=p8F1RqrhD6jaiQHZ9pGaBw&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dnez%2Bperce%2Btribe%2Breservation%2Bmap%26svnum%3D10%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26rls%3DTS HB,TS HB:2007-06,TS HB:en>

Activities

1. Discuss

Ask if anyone knows what an Indian Reservation is?

A Reservation is an area of land that the U.S. government created in exchange for homelands ceded (traded) by a Treaty. A Treaty is an agreement, like a promise, that the U.S. government made with the Native American Tribes throughout the country. The reason for the Treaties was so that American citizens could buy property to build houses and create towns and States which eventually led to the United States of America.

2. Mapping exercise

Pass out the map of the two different sizes of the Reservation (1855 and 1866). Talk to the class about the original homelands. Native American Tribes lived in areas of land, commonly referred to as homelands. They did not believe that they owned the lands, but that they were caretakers of the land. For the Nez Perce Tribe, this was the usual and accustomed area of lands on the map which are found outside of the 1855 Reservation boundaries. Usual and accustomed area means lands that the Native people

would travel to in addition to their homelands to hunt, fish, and gather foods and medicines.

To help the students understand this concept, use a large city park as an example. It would be helpful if you could use a park in the area that your students are familiar with. The area of the park which holds the playground equipment is the area that the children normally play in (like the Tribes who lived in their homelands). But, the children might also go to a far corner of the park to play baseball, or go to a different part of the park to have a barbeque or take a hike. These areas of the park are like the usual and accustomed lands that the Tribes would go to for hunting, fishing, etc.

Now pass out the Indian Reservation that is shown in the upper corner of Idaho. This is the area of the land that the Nez Perce Tribe has to live on today.

The homelands of the tribe include north central Idaho, southeastern Washington, and northeastern Oregon. Point out the large area of land that was considered "usual and accustomed" areas which included all of the homelands plus parts of western Montana and Wyoming. The original territory was over 17 million acres and the original Reservation established by the 1855 Treaty was 7.5 million acres. In 1860 gold was discovered on the Nez Perce Reservation. This discovery created hostilities and the miners wanted more land available to them. In 1863 a new treaty was drawn up and signed; the size of the Reservation was decreased from 7.5 million acres to 750,000 acres. The current Nez Perce Reservation is located in north central Idaho and remains approximately 750,000 acres.

The following is information on the cultural lifeways of the Nez Perce people – please take as much or as little as you think your class can take-in as this was written for K-3. The objective is that even the Kindergarteners will be able to understand the difference between homelands, usual and accustomed areas and a Reservation through the use of a park. A field trip to a park where you strictly talked about these concepts would be great!

Like many tribes did, the Nez Perce people did travel with the seasons. Their homelands included rivers, mountains and prairies. Beginning in the Spring, the travel would begin. The lower valleys held the roots used for foods and medicines while the rivers held the first runs of salmon and other fish. In the later summer, berries became ripe, and the travel would extend up into the mountains to favored berry picking spots and additional root gathering; hunting also took place during this time, as did fishing and winter storage preparation. Some of the primary foods relied upon include salmon and other fish, animals such as deer, elk, moose, bear, mountain sheep and goats. In later years (after the 16th century) buffalo and antelope was hunted as well, roots such as camas, bitterroot, khouse, wild carrot, wild potato, and other

roots, berries including service berries, gooseberries, hawthorn berries, huckleberries, currants, elderberries, chokecherries, raspberries and strawberries; fowl such as ducks, geese and grouse.

The winter houses consisted of a long house made of wood and covered with tule (a plant) mats. These long houses were as long as 100 feet and were subterranean, meaning they were partially dug-out of the ground. Many families would live in one of these houses; ceremonies were also held in these houses.

The ruling of the tribe (pre-reservation times) was based upon the villages and bands of the Nez Perce. Each band had its own homeland or territory. Within a given band, there would be several villages situated within their designated territory. As with many tribes, their names were place-names, often being associated with the name of the river or stream they were living near. Each village had a leader, generally an Elder of the village – often times these were hereditary positions. Larger villages had various Chiefs in addition to their leader. These villages came together with each other within their band; the bands would get together as well depending upon need, trade, ceremony, etc.

Lesson 4: Responsibility of Individuals

Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.03.RE.08—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through discussions.
- EL.03.RE.34—Take part in creative response to text, such as dramatizations and oral presentations.
- EL.03.SL.09—Answer questions completely and with appropriate elaboration.

Suggested Strategies

Activities

1. Review

Remind the class of the game they played with the loggers and what happened to all of the other living things when all of the cedar trees were cut down.

Ask: Why are trees cut down?

There are many answers the class can come-up with. Write their answers on the board.

Ask: What can we do to reduce the amount of trees cut down?

Again, there are many answers. Focusing on the 3 R's: reduce, reuse and recycle will get your class thinking about this.

2. Art project

As a final activity, have your class make a poster about what they can do to help save trees.