



Basket Making

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Creator | V. Elaine McIntosh |
| Date Created | March 2006 |
| Grade | 2/3 |
| Subject | Social Studies |
| Topic | Ojibway culture – Birch bark basket making |

Descriptive Sentence

Students will explore aspects of the Ojibway people, how to make a basket, the many uses of baskets and different materials used to make them.

Curricular Outcome or Expectation

Please refer to the lesson plan preview for the outcomes for your province

Materials

newsprint or scrap-paper
pencils
bristol-board, (preferably earth tones)
hole puncher
brown string
tapestry needles
coloured markers
scissors
glue
piece of birch bark as a sample

Space Requirements

The classroom

Background information

Baskets can be made out of birch bark, woven with cloth or made with a variety of grasses or clay. Baskets are commonly used within the Aboriginal community for a variety of duties. They also can be made and given as beautiful gifts. Also, baskets can be used for ceremonial purposes such as gathering and holding sacred medicines or they can be used for practical reasons, such as gathering food and water. Baskets can be made in a wide variety of sizes and shapes. Small baskets can be used to store dried fruit or herbs and larger baskets can be used to carry babies. There are many different styles and varieties of basket making in Canada's diverse Aboriginal communities.



LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS WWW.LTTA.CA

Getting Ready

- Discuss how the Anishinabe people handed down the art of basket making from generation to generation
- Research and explore samples and pictures of many different baskets
- Discuss the many uses of baskets in Aboriginal communities such as carrying materials, gathering foods, holding sacred medicines and gift giving
- Research and discuss what types and styles of Aboriginal baskets might have been made in your region
- List any URL's that showcase images of baskets and symbols that are used on the baskets
- Using maps or other resources discuss where birch trees might be found
- Discuss the characteristics of the birch tree, for example birch trees decompose from the inside out and the bark is still intact after everything else is gone
- Birch bark was picked and gathered during the summer and fall months and it was stored and processed during the winter months
- Show the students a sample of the birch bark
- The birch bark should be flattened very well before using
- Sinew was used for weaving or in more traditional styles the roots of trees were soaked in water and while wet could be used for weaving
- Adding designs to baskets is a personal expression. For example Metis people designed baskets using moosetufting.
- In other areas, beading, paints or wood burning pens could be used for simple designs

Development

- On newsprint or scrap paper, have students experiment with drawing their own basket template
- Discuss different designs that could be used on the baskets
- In small groups have students create various designs that might be used on their baskets
- Have students pair and share their images

Application

**Please take a moment to review the
"Creating the Template" video**

- Have students create their template (using template at the end of the lesson as a guideline)
- The four flaps when folded will form the basket.
- Also make a template for the handle and make another strip which will go around the top of the basket for extra support.
- Using two of the flaps which face each other, mark outlines for the holes down each side.

**Please take a moment to review the
"Shaping the Basket" video**



LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS WWW.LTTA.CA

- Now fold up the flaps making sure that the marked sides are on the outside.
- Next, line up the sides with the inside flaps folded in and hole punch the marked sides.
- Then put a pencil through the holes and make a mark on the inside flap.
- Now ask the students to remember what the birch bark looked like and recreate the markings on their template.

**Please take a moment to review the
"Creating the birch bark look" video**

- Using a few different pens (earth tones are preferable) lightly make lines across the template to resemble the look of the birch bark.

**Please take a moment to review the
"Adding Your Design" video**

- At this point have the students add their design to the template
- Now have the students tie each of the four corners with the bottom of the basket lying flat.

**Please take a moment to review the
"Assembling the Basket" video**

- Now using a string, stitch in and out until you reach the bottom of the basket. Then tie a knot to keep it in place. Make sure the knot is on the inside of the basket. A dab of glue will make sure the knot is secure.
- The string should go through all the holes in and out, from top to bottom.

**Please take a moment to review the
"Adding the support band" video**

- Now attach the support band around the top of the basket and hole punch through the strip and the basket
- Now take the string with a knot tied at one end and bring it through both holes (strip and basket) making sure the holes are lined up and the knot is on the inside of the basket.
- The overlap stitch goes over the front and in the back, in and out until you get to the end and make a double knot.
- Make sure everything is lined up and that the basket sits flat on the surface.



LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS WWW.LTTA.CA

- Now on opposite sides of the basket, punch 2 holes side by side for the handle.

**Please take a moment to review the
"Finishing the Basket" video**

- Double the strips for the handle and hole punch each end side by side to line up with the 2 holes on the basket.
- Now with a knot at one end put the string through the holes and tie a knot on the other end.
- You may wish to glue the handle to the basket for more security.

Closure

With students sitting in a circle and one basket placed in the centre of the circle, have students reflect on what they learned about basket making. On small cards, have students draw a picture or write a sentence about what they learned. Alternatively they could draw a picture or write a question they are curious about.



LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS
WWW.LTTA.CA

Basket Template

