

# Wapos Bay RAVEN POWER episode 16

## Episode Description

Raven becomes increasingly aware of inequalities between the men and women of Wapos Bay. She expresses her concern to her mom who assures her that their Cree tradition is matriarchal and that their relationships are based upon respect for the women. Chief Big Sky listens to Raven's concerns but is slow to take any action. Next Raven goes to the women elders and they mobilize the women of Wapos Bay to retreat to a mutually supportive environment and to make a statement to the men. Gradually the men gather at Jacob's home in hopes of a cooked breakfast, but then move to the arena where they set up a makeshift refugee camp. Meanwhile, the women are enjoying a gourmet breakfast, yoga exercises and empowering music and words. Jacob gets frustrated with how dependent the men are on his domestic skills so he reaches out to the women via the Wapos Bay Aboriginal Radio station. Raven is designated spokesperson for the women, and she outlines their demands for increased respect and equality. The men agree.

## Background information

Relationships between men and women based upon respect are an important indicator of strong community values.

Many Aboriginal peoples have a matriarchal tradition, in which women hold important roles and responsibilities with respect to property rights, inheritance, decision making and governance.

The development of Canada as a nation meant that Aboriginal peoples were often forced to give up important and valued traditions. The imposition of the reserve system and band council governance changed the balance of power between men and women. Aboriginal women do not benefit from this change in political organization, and they experience inequitable access to resources to make a living and to raise families. Aboriginal women have successfully worked together to achieve positive change in terms of how they are valued in their communities.

Reading, writing, and speaking are important skills to develop in working towards political change.

Health is linked to the respect and power that members of a community are accorded within that community.

Television, newspapers, magazines, the Internet and other types of media are important tools for groups to use in their efforts to achieve political change.

### PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

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- 1 ► What languages are spoken in your family, in your community?
- 2 ► Are you a speaker of the Cree language?
- 3 ► What words do you know in Cree?
- 4 ► Introduce the Cree language glossary words used in the Wapos Bay episode 16 entitled, "**Raven Power**." Ask students to listen out for these words when the time comes to view, to determine their meaning.

#### CREE LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

**kohkum** – grandmother

**mushom** – grandfather

**Wapos** – Rabbit

**Awus** – Go Away

**Tapwe** – Just wait



- 5 ► What are gender roles? What gender roles have you observed? Are some gender roles valued more than others? Give an example? Do you feel pressure to fulfill gender roles? Give an example. Do you feel conflict about what is expected of you according to your gender? Is there anything that you would like to change with respect to gender roles? How would you go about doing it?
- 6 ► What is the meaning of the term matriarchy? What is the meaning of the term patriarchy? What traditions are observed in your community for passing on roles and responsibilities with respect to property rights, inheritance, decision making and governance? Are men or women more important in that regard? Has it always been this way? How does your community balance the differences? Could these relationships be fair?
- 7 ► Do men and women have different rights? Give examples. Was this always the case? If not, how have things changed? What actions do people take when their rights are not respected? What are the most effective forms of political action?
- 8 ► What communication skills are needed when working towards political change? Give examples.
- 9 ► How do being respected and having power affect our health and wellbeing?
- 10 ► What are the important tools for groups to use in their efforts to achieve political change?

### VIEW EPISODE

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Introduce and View Wapos Bay: **Raven Power**

### POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

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- 1 ► Review the glossary words. How do you say \_\_\_\_\_?  
Grandmother  
grandfather  
rabbit  
go away  
just wait
- 2 ► Discuss: What was Raven's main concern or issue? What are the gender roles you observed in this episode of Wapos Bay? What did Raven do to change this situation of inequality? Was it effective?
- 3 ► Do the people of Wapos Bay have a tradition of matriarchy or patriarchy? Are men or women more important in that regard? Has it always been this way? What led to the changes?
- 4 ► Do the men and women of Wapos Bay have different rights? Give examples. Was this always the case? How have things changed? What actions were taken when the women felt that their rights were not respected? What was the most effective action they took to gain respect? What would you have done?
- 5 ► What skills did the women of Wapos Bay possess that assisted them in achieving change? Give examples.
- 6 ► What did the women of Wapos Bay do to enhance their health? Why do you think this is important?
- 7 ► Discuss: What important tools did the women of Wapos Bay use in their efforts to achieve more respect? Was their approach effective? Does the media favour some causes more than others? Give examples.



**PROJECT IDEAS**

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- Research the history of the Native Women's Association of Canada. What do they do? What are their achievements? Do you agree with their positions?
- Research prominent Aboriginal women in your community, conduct an interview. Ask them about their work.
- Create a survey for your peers to complete regarding their views on gender equality in the school, home, community. Make the survey anonymous but have the respondents indicate their gender. Assess the differences.
- Work in groups to plan actions that will lead to change in achieving gender equality. Carry out the actions.
- Write a press release for highlighting an important aspect of gender equality. Write a speech that emphasizes your beliefs about what needs to be done to achieve gender equality. Plan a public meeting in the school or the community to draw attention to gender inequality. Invite the media. Deliver the speeches.
- Invite a reporter to discuss effective press releases. Find out what motivates them to write about particular causes such as gender inequality. Develop guidelines for effective use of the media to draw attention to a cause. Use these guidelines to write a press release about gender inequality in your school, home, community. Read the press releases at a school assembly. Create a class newspaper that is devoted to gender inequality. Distribute the newspaper to the school community.