

Wapos Bay DANCE, DANCE episode 18

Episode Description

The Wapos Bay residents are signing up for community courses and Jacob passes on his wrestling trunks to T-Bear in the hopes that T-Bear will take up the sport. Mushom is interested in learning to navigate the Internet but jokes that the “moccasin telegraph” is probably still the best form of communication. Jacob’s own university wrestling career ended when it was discovered that the cough syrup he was taking contained banned substances. T-Bear wants to please his father but is torn because he is drawn to the Métis Jigging dance course, which is scheduled for the same time as wrestling. T-Bear wears the wrestling trunks but participates in the dance course instead. His deception is soon discovered when Jacob goes to observe the training. Talon and Raven use the moccasin telegraph with their friend, Amber, and misinterpret what their parents mean by “bundle of joy” The dance teacher provides an important perspective for Jacob regarding T-Bear’s natural talent for jigging.

Background information

The desire to please loved ones can interfere with honouring our own talents and gifts. Imposing our own expectations on others prevents them from pursuing their own interests. The increased attention on the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sports emphasizes the importance of competing fairly and honestly. Honesty is important in competition and in the messages that we pass along.

Métis peoples have a unique culture that combines European and Indigenous traditions. One such tradition is the Métis style of dance known as jigging. Métis jigging continues to be popular at social gatherings as well as a competitive event.

European traders developed alliances with Indigenous families and groups through marriage. Their children developed into a unique nation with traditions that combined aspects from both parents, including the use of a language known as Michif. Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont were prominent Métis leaders who fought for Métis rights to land. Louis Riel was tried, convicted and executed for opposing Canada’s expropriation of Métis land. The events leading up to these actions continue to be contested by the Métis; many aspects of the conflict were unjust.

The moccasin telegraph refers to a time when many Aboriginal peoples travelled on foot. In their travels they passed on news and gossip. The moccasin telegraph continues to operate in many Aboriginal communities.

Métis dancing requires physical talent and stamina.

The Internet and other types of media influence human behaviour and daily life in all parts of Canada, including northern communities such as Wapos Bay

PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

- 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 18 entitled, “**Dance, Dance**” and ask students to listen out for these words when it comes to viewing the program, to determine their meaning.

CREE LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

kohkum – grandmother

mushom – grandfather

Wapos – Rabbit



- 5 ► What gifts and talents do you have? Are they the same gifts and talents that other family members have? Have you ever been pressured to be good at something that you are not? What was your response? Have you ever passed on information that was incorrect or inaccurate? What was the outcome?
- 6 ► What is Métis? It is the name of one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. They have a unique culture that combines traditions from both their European and Indigenous parents. What is jigging? It is a style of dancing that evolved from both Indigenous and European traditions. Do you know how to jig? Have you ever observed Métis jigging or a jigging competition? What is it like? What instruments are used to create the music?
- 7 ► How do you pass on news, information and gossip? Have you ever received news or gossip and then passed it on? Did you ever misunderstand what was being communicated? What was the outcome? Have you ever been misunderstood? What was the outcome?
- 8 ► What was the role of Métis people in the development of Canada? Who are the historical Métis leaders that continue to inspire Métis people today? Who are the Métis leaders today? Clem Chartier is the president of the Métis Council of Canada.
- 9 ► What is the most challenging aspect of Métis jigging?
- 10 ► What is the most reliable source for information in your community? What is meant by moccasin telegraph? It means passing on news and gossip by word of mouth. How is the Internet similar to the moccasin telegraph? Which is more reliable? What are the benefits of using the moccasin telegraph to pass on and receive news? What are the benefits of using the Internet to pass on and receive news? What are the challenges and risks with both mediums?

VIEW EPISODE

Introduce and View “**Dance, Dance**”

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1 ► Review the glossary words. How do you say _____ in Cree?
Grandmother
grandfather
rabbit
- 2 ► What gifts and talents does Jacob have? What gifts and talents does T-Bear have? Have you ever been in the same position as T-Bear? What happened? What are your gifts and talents?
- 3 ► Who are the Métis characters in this episode? What are the Métis traditions you observed in this episode?
- 4 ► What does the Métis style of dancing reveal about the Métis people? They enjoy dancing and exuberant music, and they’re having fun.
- 5 ► How do the members of Wapos Bay pass on news, information and gossip? What was the misunderstanding? What was the outcome?
- 6 ► What is meant by moccasin telegraph in this episode of Wapos Bay? It means passing on news and gossip by word of mouth. How is the Internet similar to the moccasin telegraph? Which is more reliable? What are the benefits of using the moccasin telegraph to pass on and receive news? What are the benefits of using the internet to pass on and receive news? What are the challenges and risks with both mediums? What is the most reliable source for information in your community?



PROJECT IDEAS

- The website for the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research has information about every aspect of Métis life both past and present. Visit the virtual museum on the following website and research the history of Métis music and jigging: metismuseum.ca
- Go to the section titled “moccasin telegraph,” metismuseum.ca/exhibits/telegraph. It contains links to other Websites and the Forum on Métis History and Culture.
- Information about other aspects of Métis culture can be found at: gdins.org
- Use the Internet to research Métis political and social history. What was the source of conflict between Métis people and Canada? What are the strengths of the Métis? What is the future of the Métis?
- Play the telephone game. Have the students sit in a circle. Begin the circulation of a message such as “T-Bear has a natural talent for Métis dancing.” Pass the message to the student sitting next to you by whispering in their ear and continue to pass it on. Have the last student relay the message out loud. How has the message changed?
- Conduct an experiment by comparing the most reliable medium for communication. Choose from e-mail, instant messenger and word of mouth. Include such factors as accuracy and amount of time to get the message to all members of the classroom or school community.