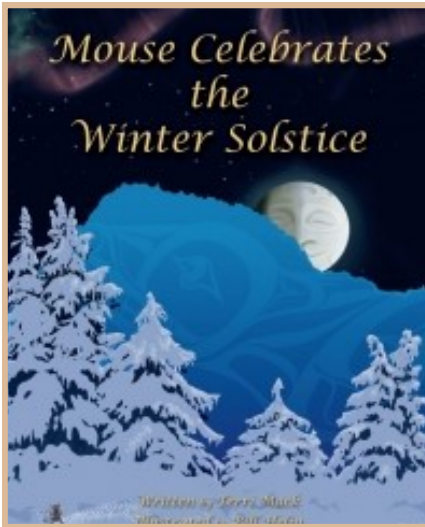


Celebrating the Winter Solstice

Learning Intention: I can use pictures and text to make connections

Lynn Swift and Gail Martindale; adapted from Strong Nations lesson plans: <http://www.strongnations.com/educators/>
And from Carol Walters and Debbie Neilson Literacy lessons



By Terri Mack

Plot Summary:

It is winter. The land lies still, quiet and stark beneath a blanket of snow. The tiny footprints of a mouse can be seen in the light of the moon.

"Wrapped in the quiet, and there in the bleak, there stood a wise mouse, preparing to speak."

The words that mouse chose were from many years past. She spoke them into the cold night air. So begins the enchanting story of a very special Winter Solstice celebration.

Kwakwaka'wakw author Terri Mack and Tsimshian artist Bill Helin have collaborated to bring us this story of strength, friendship and celebration. The lyrical text and engaging illustrations will appeal to readers of all ages.

Author's note:

Gila'kasla!

I spent a year writing and rewriting this poem to be sure to convey the message clearly to my audience. It was important to me that the poem reflect the importance of us all joining together to find the sacredness in celebration, the joy of belonging within a greater community and the voice of determination inside of each of us. Inspired by Indigenous Peoples rising, healing and joining together I hope that this poem inspires our youth to be strong and determined in all their future goals.

~Terri Mack

Before Reading

- Explain to the class what making connections to a story means (it is something that happens when the story reminds the reader of something).
- Explain that a reader can make connections between the book and the reader's own life, between the book and other books, and the book and the world around him/her.
- Explain that a reader can connect to many parts of a book: the title, the pictures, the characters, the events and even the emotions in the story.
- Explain that today the class is going to practise making connections to celebrations.
- Discuss the meaning of the word "celebrate" with the class (to commemorate an event with some kind of festivity).
- Have each student talk with a partner. Have them share which events in their own families are celebrated (birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, Christmas, etc.)
- Have the students share their family celebrations with the larger group. List them on the chalkboard.
- On the chalkboard draw a large venn diagram. On one side of the diagram fill in things that the students do with their families to celebrate. A few examples are listed:



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During Reading:

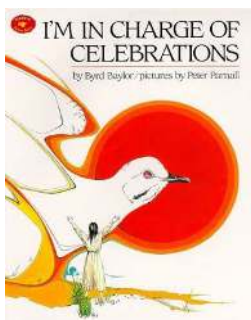
Refer to the **Learning Intention** frequently to remind students that using the text & pictures helps us make connections.

- Explain to the students that today you are going to read a poem about another celebration.
- Read the story to the students.
- On the other side of the venn diagram fill in the things that the mouse and other animals celebrate and witness. You may need to re-read the story as you do this.
- In the middle of the diagram list the things that are the same for this celebration and for the celebrations that the students enjoyed.

After Reading:

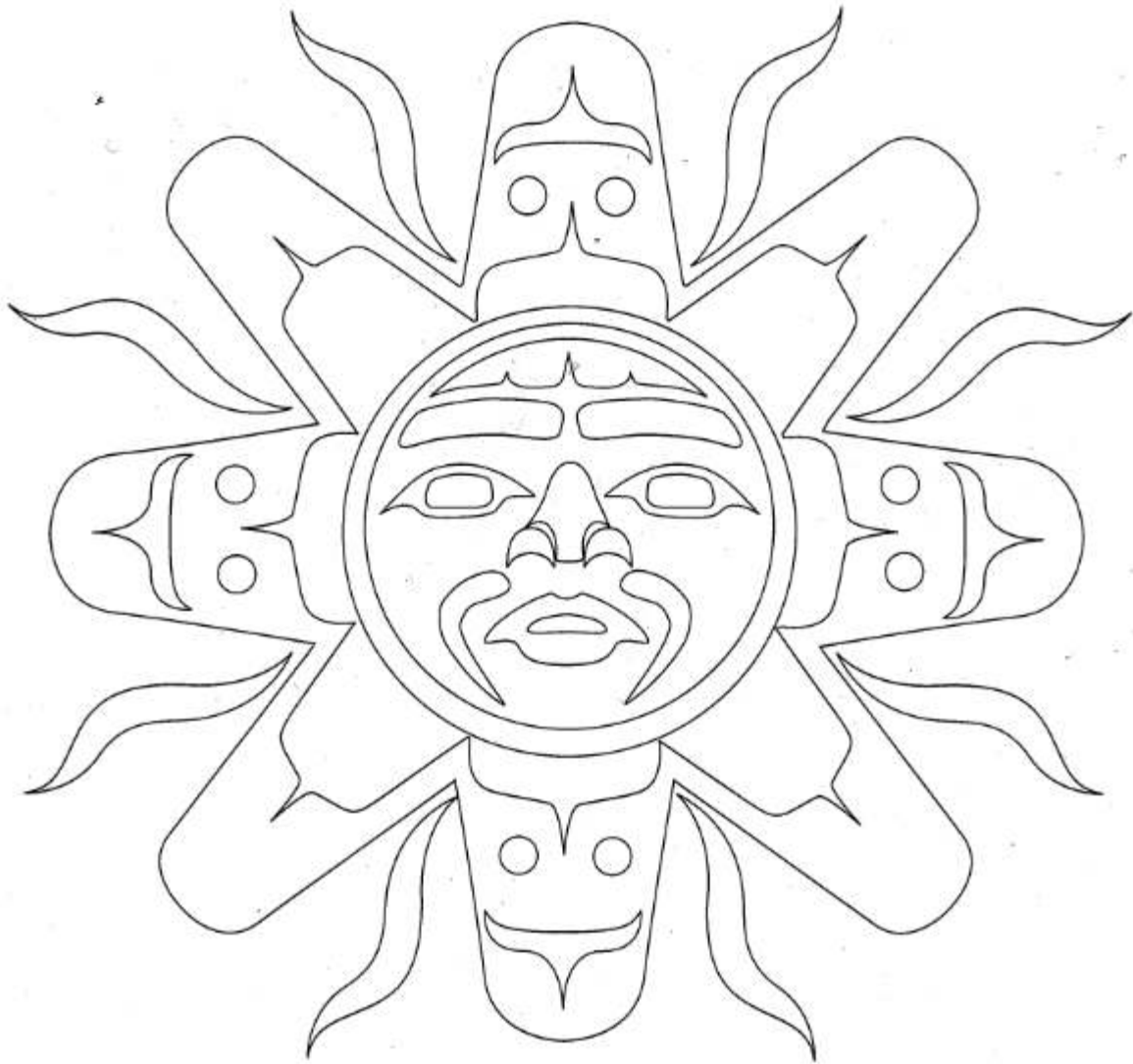
- Have each student talk to a partner and share which celebration is their favourite.
- Have each student draw and colour a picture of a celebration that s/he has really enjoyed during the last year. The picture must include labels of the important details and a caption (underneath the picture) that tells what the picture is about.
- After 15 or 20 minutes have the students stop working and go on a "gallery walk". Have them circulate around the classroom for a few minutes to look at a minimum of 5 other pictures. Ask them to see if they can find a one that illustrates the same celebration as the one that they are drawing.
- Have the students return to their seats to add to and complete their pictures.
- We have also included two snowflake colouring pages on the following page.

Supplemental Resource: by Bird Baylor



For this lesson plan see,

<http://www.strongnations.com/educators/reading-connections/index.php?cat=2823>



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