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Métis Cultural Connections

OUR DISTINCT MÉTIS CULTURE DEFINES US AS ONE OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. MAKE CONNECTIONS TO YOUR MÉTIS CULTURE, AND LEARN WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE.

THE FLAG — The Métis flag, the official flag of the Métis Nation, depicts a white infinity symbol on a blue or red background. The infinity symbol on the flag represents the joining of two very different cultures, European and First Nations, merging together to create a uniquely distinctive culture, the Métis. The Métis infinity symbol also symbolizes the faith that the Métis culture will live on forever.

The Métis flag is the oldest flag in Canada still in use today, predating the Canadian Maple Leaf flag by about 150 years. It was first used by Métis resistance fighters and in times of battle. Today you can spot the Métis flag being displayed proudly by Métis people, especially at special events and celebrations such as Louis Riel Day and National Indigenous People's Day.



Buffalo Bulletin

MÉTIS TRADITIONAL LIFE WAYS CONNECT US TO THE LAND AND OUR ANCESTORS, AND TRANSMITS KNOWLEDGE TO OUR CHILDREN. LEARN TO ACKNOWLEDGE, HARVEST, GATHER, AND SHARE NATURAL RESOURCES.

THE MÉTIS WERE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE FUR TRADERS OF CANADA. They sold furs to three fur trade companies: Hudson Bay Company, North West Company, and American Fur Company. The Métis were skilled in tracking, hunting, trapping, and guiding. To be skilled in these trades, you needed to understand animal tracks. Things that can help identify which animal the tracks belong to:

- **Size:** How big are the tracks? Could they belong to a tiny bird or a big moose?
- **Depth:** How deep are the tracks? Could they belong to an animal as light as a mouse or as heavy as a bear?
- **Location:** Where are the tracks found, does the animal live near water?
- **Patterns:** What is the tracks' pattern? Does the animal have four legs like a wolf or two like a crow?

WINTER IS AN IDEAL TIME TO TRACK ANIMALS. The freshly fallen snow allows for clear tracks to determine what animal may be nearby. Always be safe while tracking. Animals can often be unpredictable, and you should always be animal aware. For instance, tracking a wolf would not be a good idea unless you are experienced. Tracking small animals with children can be a fun family activity. If you do not have snow, mud can also leave amazing animal tracks; look for tracks such as deer, fox, rabbit, and squirrel. If you are in an urban area, look for dog, cat, or people tracks. To compare tracks, look at the size, number of toes, or if you're tracking people, compare the tread of the shoe.

Fun activities to do while tracking:

- Keep a journal of tracks, draw, or take pictures for reference.
- Make white playdough and use animal figurines to make your own tracks at home.
- Create a plaster to pour into mud animal tracks and allow to dry to create a casting.
- Have a track scavenger hunt. Seek and find different tracks on family hikes.

RESOURCES ON TRACKS

- **Winter Playdough Play {Footprints in The Snow}**
<http://bit.ly/3poMFSH>
- **Teach Your Kids to Track Animals on the Trail**
<http://bit.ly/39ocj47>
- **How to Make a Plaster Cast of an Animal Track: 4 Steps (with pictures)**
<http://bit.ly/3sZgnj4>

Louis' Kids Club

MÉTIS CHILDREN WILL LEARN ABOUT THEIR CULTURE AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM WITH A FUN ACTIVITY. FAMILIES WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE, CONNECT AND SHARE TIME TOGETHER.

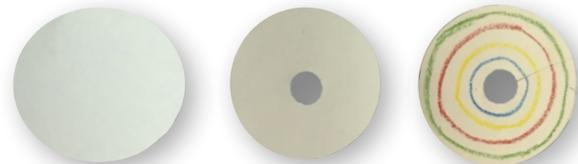
When our ancestors would set out along the well-worn trails of the buffalo hunt, they would need a place to sleep. Sometimes Red River Carts could be used for shelter, but teepee-like structures were also very handy. They would've been lightweight, easily stored, and quick to assemble! You can make your own little teepees just with paper, sticks, colouring pencils and glue!

STEP 1

To start, find a piece of paper and have a parent help you cut out some circles. To get them perfectly round, use a protractor or a cup and trace around the edge.

STEP 2

Next, cut a small hole in the centre of your circles. You can trace an outline using a quarter or a nickel. This could be tricky with scissors, so ask a parent to lend a hand!



STEP 3

Make one cut from the outside of the circle all the way to the inner circle. Find some crayons, pencil crayons, or paint and design your teepees!



STEP 4

Next, glue the inside of your paper, and bring the paper into a cone shape.

STEP 5

Next, make a small cut halfway up your teepee, and make a fold in the cut to make a door. After this, head outside with your family and gather some sticks; you will need them!

STEP 6

Your last step is to take those sticks and stick them to the gluey inside of your teepee. Then you are ready to set up camp!



Daily Physical Activity

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WILL LEARN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES FOR HEALTHY GROWTH AT EVERY AGE. THE ACTIVITIES WILL INCLUDE MÉTIS TRADITIONAL PRACTICES, OUTDOOR PLAY AND MUCH MORE.

Things have been challenging during Covid-19 between isolation, world changes and the unknown. Many of us can feel significantly affected, especially during these darker winter months. A considerable way to clear the mind, body and spirit is to go outside and exercise. A great way to do this and connect to Métis roots at the same time is through snowshoeing! Traditionally, the Métis travelled by wagon, toboggans and sleighs pulled by horses, dogs, and oxen. The Métis used snowshoes contrived of wood and rawhide.

In addition to connecting to the outdoors and roots, snowshoeing is a great way to connect with family and try a new activity together. It is a gentle form of exercise, as opposed to running or walking, as the snow helps soften the impact. However, it is still cardio-intensive and great for burning off those holiday sweets.

Plus, you can feel good about taking care of the environment while snowshoeing! It causes less damage to hiking trails as opposed to hiking in the spring or summer months. Due to the



snow, sometimes snowshoers can venture to different areas that may not be as accessible during other seasons.

We would love to see photos of your snowshoeing adventure; you can share them by sending them to metisearlyyears@mnbc.ca.

Explore options in your area to safely snowshoe. Many places have opportunities for rentals as well.

- LOWER MAINLAND REGION:** www.cypressmountain.com/tickets-and-rentals
- KOOTENAY REGION:** www.westkootenayhiking.ca/?s=Snowshoeing
- VANCOUVER ISLAND & POWELL RIVER:** www.qioutdoorclub.org/category/snowshoeing
- THOMPSON OKANAGAN REGION:** www.adventurekelowna.com/winter-adventures/kelowna-snowshoeing/
- NORTH CENTRAL REGION:** www.caribooski.ca/snowshoe-trails/
- NORTHWEST REGION:** www.outercoast.ca/gear-rentals/snowshoes/
- NORTHEAST REGION:** www.tourismfortstjohn.ca/what-to-do/nature-outdoors/outdoor-adventures/



THE LIGHTENING AND DEWHURST FAMILY

My name is Joanne Lightening, and I live with my fiancé Sam Dewhurst, with my three older children Jada 17, Taya 14, Logan 11 and our youngest Isabel, who just turned 3. Sam is of English ancestry, born in Whitehorse and grew up in Carcross and Vancouver. I am Métis, Cree, Finish and English with a twist of Irish. I was born in Burns Lake, B.C., and I grew up there as well as in Houston B.C. We have always been a Northern family, having lived in various places in the North, but making our home in Prince George.

I am at the beginning of my Métis journey. As a child, I did not really think about culture or colour or my ancestry; I was just a farm kid. We were all people working in a small community, and I grew up on an acreage homestead where my grandparents on my mom's side had come from Finland and settled. Trout Creek was a small community; we had a hall and regular dances, with the old-timers playing music and the entire family gathering for potlucks and dancing. Now that I look back, it was very Métis. My Dad would often take out his guitar after those gatherings and play well into the night. We worked the land and respected the land we lived on. We had hay fields, chickens, cows, and horses. This was my passion growing up. I was a horse lover and took part in fall fairs and 4-H. I grew up with two older brothers and did lots of the things they did, like fishing, hunting, as well as rough and tumble activities on the land.

As I moved on and created my own wonderful family, I carry many of my childhood traditions. Even though we are living in an urban setting, we are surrounded by forests and lakes. We enjoy hiking, camping, fishing, and hunting. Holidays and gatherings are important as we gather as a family to eat and enjoy a large meal. We play board games and enjoy the company of all.

I do not know a great deal about my Métis history as my grandparents passed when I was young. My Dad came from Alberta and was born in Lac La Biche. My grandmother a Cardinal, and her mother, a Sinclair. My grandfather Lightening, formerly Lightning (Grandma misspelled it on the marriage certificate). I raise my children, teaching them who they are and to stand up for themselves. Be proud and always remember where you come from and that family is your safe place.

What's your name, where you from?

SHARE YOUR FAMILY'S CONNECTION AND JOURNEY WITH THE MÉTIS NATION COMMUNITY. TELL YOUR STORY AND HAVE YOUR FAMILY FEATURED IN THE NEXT EDITION OF *LEARN WITH LOUIS*.
 SUBMIT YOUR STORY TO:
[MÉTISEARLYYEARS@MNBC.CA](mailto:METISEARLYYEARS@MNBC.CA)

The Learning Journey

The air outside is crisp, the temperature has dropped and we need extra clothing to be able to enjoy the outdoors. The process of putting on extra gear is great at building skills; here is what they could be learning!

SMALL MUSCLES, FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:

MÉTIS CORE VALUE *Strength, Patience.*

- Pulling zippers up and down.
- Pushing snaps closed and opening them up.
- Finding fingers and thumb holes in gloves and mittens.

All of these task strengthen small muscles and give children the ability to hold pencils, turn the pages in a book or tie shoes when they are older.

LANGUAGE/COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

MÉTIS CORE VALUE *Sharing*

- Being able to label types of clothing (hat, mittens, rain pants, jacket etc.).
- Communicating too itchy, too small, too bit etc.

Knowing how to communicate these will assist children in learning names of items in their environment and being able to describe the things around them.

BIG MUSCLES, GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:

MÉTIS CORE VALUE *Strength, Patience*

- Sitting down to pull on rain or snow pants.
- Standing on one foot to put on a boot.

These big muscles need to grow and be worked to be can run, climb, jump, and dance the jig.

COGNITIVE/THINKING SKILLS:

MÉTIS CORE VALUE *Patience, Respect, Balance, Mother Earth*

- Knowing the order in which clothing goes on the body.
- Gaining patience to complete each task.
- Positions such as, front from back.
- Problem solving skills, such as if it's cold, wear more clothing.

These skills will help in the future to learn to read and write, problem solving and things in relation to space or position.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SKILLS:

MÉTIS CORE VALUE *Tolerance, Patience, Kindness, Caring and Sharing.*

- Seeing family (and friends) put on their gear.
- Practicing to be successful
- Learning to do things on their own
- Regulating emotions while putting on the clothing.

Practicing these skills will give children experience to cope when other hard tasks come up in their lives.

http://www.kamloopschildrenstherapy.org/dressing/The_Snowy_Day by Ezra Jack Keats.

The Canada Learning Bond

THE CANADA LEARNING BOND IS A FREE OPTION FOR MANY FAMILIES TO SAVE FOR THEIR CHILD'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION. LEARN ABOUT THE CLB AND OTHER WAYS TO SAVE FOR THE FUTURE.

WHAT IS IT? The Canada Learning Bond is a free Education Savings Grant available to children born January 1, 2004 or later, for families whose net family income is equal to or less than \$ 58,535 (higher for families with 4 children or more). This is retroactive, so even if you do not qualify now, you may qualify based on previous years.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD ALREADY HAS THE CANADA LEARNING BOND? Some families are unsure if their child has already received the Canada Learning Bond. If this is the case, you can call the Canada Education Savings Hotline, and they will be able to tell you if your child has received the Canada Learning Bond. The number to call is 1-866-274-6627. Make sure you have your SIN and your children's SIN handy when you call.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER FREE EDUCATION SAVINGS GRANTS AVAILABLE TO MY CHILD? You may not be aware, but another free Education Savings Grant is available to children ages 6-8 years of age within British Columbia. This one time grant of \$1200 is called the British Columbia Training and Education Savings Grant. This grant is available to all income levels. It must be requested and will be deposited into a RESP like the Canada Learning Bond.

IF YOU FEEL YOUR CHILD IS ELIGIBLE, PLEASE CONTACT:

Donalda Greger, Métis Navigator
Métis Nation British Columbia
Cell: 604-202-7158
Email: dgreger@mnhbc.ca

**The first 36 families whose children are eligible and complete the process of applying for the Canada Learning Bond will receive a \$100 gift card, and each child will receive a Métis Sash Coin Purse. Families will also have an opportunity to take part in Virtual Cultural Workshops.*

Michif with Maddy the Magpie

THE NATIONAL MÉTIS LANGUAGE IS MICHIF, A DISTINCT LANGUAGE DEVELOPED FROM FRENCH, CREE AND OTHER FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES. HAVE FUN LEARNING MICHIF WITH MADDY THE MAGPIE.

Michif is the national Métis language. It is a unique language that developed in the Red River valley in the early 1800s and has features of French, Cree and other First Nations languages. Maddy the Magpie would like to share some words in Michif with you! To find out how to say Maddy's words go to http://www.metismuseum.ca/michif_dictionary.php or download the App "Heritage Michif to Go" on iTunes or goggle play.

Winter: l'ivayr | **Snow:** la niizh | **Good morning:** boon matayn

l'ivayr
(Winter)



Métis Early Years

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