

TOGETHER WE ARE ONE

Making Our Class Wheel

Background:

The Medicine wheel is the foundation of the Aboriginal world view. Though simple in design, it is filled with symbolic meaning and represents the circle of life. It encompasses all areas of life -- physical, emotional and spiritual. At the core of the wheel is the concept of self as the self is the centre of the universe. The four quadrants, the key elements of the design, build on the centre to include all aspects of the world-- 4 directions of the compass, 4 personalities, 4 stages of life, 4 aspects of nature, 4 seasons, 4 main races etc.



It defines who we are as a human race, our lives and our world.

Further information can be found in the Founding Nations block in the Block-by-block section of this website or on other websites.

Goal:

To work independently and cooperatively to create a class 'wheel' that reflects both the student's individual identity and their group identity as a class. This project will teach students the value of one's self while making them understand that they are also part of a community with the responsibility for others that this entails. It will help students learn to respect and care for others, understanding that all are needed in the circle of life. It will also teach them to respect the wisdom and breadth of understanding found in our Aboriginal traditions and teachings.

Materials:

- 4 full sheets of coloured Bristol board to represent 4 quarters/quadrants of the circle. Choose colours on which writing and drawings will show up, such as white, yellow or medium blue. The choice of colours can be a class decision as this will be a class symbol.
- art supplies for writing, drawing and decorating the Bristol board.

Activity:

1. Divide the class into 4 working groups. Assign one coloured sheet of the Bristol board to each group.
2. Cut each colour into a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a circle, a quadrant of the wheel, using the template provided in the kit. You will then have 4 large quadrants to form your wheel.
3. Each group will divide their quadrant evenly into pie-shaped sections according to the number of students in the group, one for each student in the group.

4. Each student will begin by writing his or her name on the inner point of their section and then decorate his/her own personal section using words, drawings, pictures, etc. as instructed by the teacher.

Note: There are several ways a teacher can approach the content of each segment once each name is written in the tip of the wedge. Each child can be asked to portray specific items from the list above or a theme or question can be assigned to each group, e.g. the yellow group portrays the class interests, the blue, the class traits of character etc. The difficulty of the questions and themes must be adjusted by each teacher to reflect the age level of the students.

Key information that can be included:

name, birthdate, nationality, family, location
likes & dislikes, interests, favourite things
dreams for the future, hopes for the world
character attributes

5. When each child has completed his/her wedge, the group will piece their sections together to form a quadrant -- one quarter of the wheel.
6. The four quadrants will be assembled together to form a complete wheel. The student names will then form the center of the wheel. From these, spreading outward will be the class identity. Under or over the circle add a banner with the words TOGETHER WE ARE ONE.

Note: Oral presentations by each student explaining their own section will expand on this activity and provide more opportunity for sharing and learning about each other. As a class, what do we have in common? How are we different? Together, like the wheel, we are one.