

Grade 1

Language

Oral Communication
Reading

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

Treaties

Students learn that promises come in different forms and that it is important to keep promises.

Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2006*

Specific Expectations

Speaking to Communicate

- 2.4 choose appropriate words to communicate their meaning accurately and engage the interest of their audience (e.g., choose words relevant to the topic from the full range of their vocabulary, including new words used regularly in the classroom; use descriptive adjectives to clarify and add interest to a narrative; use inclusive language that conveys respect for all people)

Reading for Meaning

- 1.1 read a few different types of literary texts (e.g., pattern books, rhymes, books from home, simple fiction stories), graphic texts (e.g., calendars, environmental print, signs), and informational texts (e.g., morning messages, strategy charts, instructions, simple non-fiction books, labels)

Aboriginal Context

Treaties are agreements between two or more nations that create mutually binding obligations. Many First Nation communities across the country signed treaties with the federal government.

From the Aboriginal point of view, the intent and spirit of treaties is more important than the literal interpretation of the formal text. Many promises were made both orally and in writing in these treaties – First Nations recorded treaties orally whereas the government recorded them in writing – and the courts have ruled that a First Nation's understanding of what a treaty means must be considered.

Teaching Strategies

- Talk about making and keeping promises.
Teacher prompts: What promises do you make? Who do you make them to? What happens when you keep a promise? What happens when you don't keep a promise?
- Read aloud a story that has the importance of promises as its theme (see Resources: Bruchac and Bruchac; Munsch and Kusugak).
- Ask students to identify the reasons why keeping a promise is important, and record their ideas on a chart.
- Connect their ideas about the importance of promises to the promises made by the Canadian government to Canada's Aboriginal people. List these promises on the chart under the heading "Treaties".
- Have students make a promise, orally or in writing, to a friend or the class, using the sentence stem "I promise to".

Resources

Bruchac, Joseph, and Bruchac, James. *Raccoon's Last Race*. New York: Dial Books–Penguin, 2004. This picture book relates an Abenaki tale that warns against arrogance and stresses the importance of keeping promises.

Indian Claims Commission. *The Facts on Claims*. "The Facts: What Are Treaties?" http://www.indianclaims.ca/pdf/facts_treaties_2005.pdf. A summary of the history and a description of the process of treaty making in Canada.

Munsch, Robert, and Kusugak, Michael. *A Promise Is a Promise*. Toronto: Annick Press, 2002. Allusha goes fishing alone on the sea ice. When the Qallupilluit appear, they drag her down beneath the sea. She escapes by promising to bring her brothers and sisters to the sea creatures.

Making Community Connections

- Take students to a swearing-in ceremony where they will see an example of people making a verbal contract or promise. (Note that the signing of documents, such as treaties, is viewed as a ceremony by Aboriginal peoples.)

ABOUT THE TEACHER'S TOOLKIT

This teaching strategy is one component of *Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit*, a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom. Based on the revised Ontario curriculum, the collection includes resources for educators at both the elementary and secondary levels. Other resources in this series can be found on the ministry website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

