

Title

Constellations, Sacred Sites and the stories of the Oceti Śakowiŋ

Grade Level

Middle School

Theme

Lakota Star Knowledge

Duration

Two Days

Goal

Students will appreciate that sacred sites in the Black Hills and constellations in the heavens are correlated through stories of the Oceti Śakowiŋ.

Objectives

Students will be able to comprehend vocabulary from the story “Shooting the Red Eagle”

Students will be able to read “Shooting of the Red Eagle” as Readers Theater

Students will be able to connect “Shooting of the Red Eagle”, the constellation Wiciŋcala

Śakowiŋ (Pleiades), and Hiŋhaŋ Kaga Paha (Harney Peak) in the Black Hills

Students will be able to reproduce the constellation Wiciŋcala Śakowiŋ

South Dakota Standard

Essential Understanding 3

The origin, thought, and philosophy of the Oceti Śakowiŋ continues in the contemporary lifestyles of tribal members. Tribal cultures, traditions and languages are incorporated and are observed by many tribal members both on and off the reservations.

Indicator 2

Analyze the Oceti Śakowiŋ sacred sites, traditional stories, star knowledge and how they relate to each other.

Cultural Concept

The people of the Oceti Śakowiŋ recount stories which describe the relationship between sacred sites in the Black Hills and specific constellations.

Cultural Background

The story that connects the Hiŋhaŋ Kaga Paha (Harney Peak) and the constellation Wiciŋcala Śakowiŋ (Seven Little Girls or Pleiades) tells that one year a band of Lakota camped near Harney Peak in the Black Hills. Every day a red eagle would swoop down and steal a little girl, carry her to the mountaintop and kill her. The men tried to shoot the red eagle but failed. They

prayed for Fallen Star to come and after seven days (and after seven little girls have been killed) he arrived. He shot the red eagle and placed the spirits of the seven girls in the sky as a constellation – Wiciŋcila Śakowiŋ (Pleiades), the Seven Little Girls.

Fallen Star’s mother and her sister were Lakota women married to Star men living in the star. When Fallen Star’s mother was pregnant she becomes home sick and fell back to earth, gave birth to Fallen Star, and died. Fallen Star is cared for by a family of swallows until they can no longer care for him. The swallow takes Fallen Star to a Lakota family who raise him to manhood. He then pledges to help mankind with medicine and in natural disasters.

Student Activities

Discuss and illustrate unfamiliar words from the story “Shooting the Red Eagle”

Read the story “Shooting the Red Eagle” as Readers Theater (Legends of the Lakota by James LaPointe, pp.90-92

Locate the constellation Wiciŋcila Śakowiŋ on the star chart

Create the constellation Wiciŋcila Śakowiŋ

Resources

Star chart from p. 6 of *Lakota Star Knowledge*

Colored Pencils

Copies for each student of “The Shooting the Red Hawk”

Vocabulary sheet

Assessment

Students will write a three paragraph reflection about the relationship of the sacred site in the Black Hills, the constellation Wiciŋcila Śakowiŋ, and the story “Shooting the Red Eagle”.

References

Goodman, R (1992). *Lakota Star Knowledge*. Mission, SD: Siŋte Gleśka University

White, M. M. (1993). *Fallen Star’s Mother*. Chamberlain, SD: Tipi Press

LaPointe, J. (1976). Harney Peak. In, *Legends of the Lakota* (pp. 87-92). San Francisco, CA: The Indian Historian Press

Developer

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