

## Cultural Standards

**3.1.1:B-2** Discuss the importance of kinship and respectful relationships

**3.3.1:C-2** Give examples of positive attributes of self, family, classmates, school staff and community members

**3.4.1:D-2** Suggest ways to demonstrate respect for living things in the local area

**4.1.1:F-2** Identify the traditional ways in which people in Native culture met their basic needs

## MN State Standards

### Science

#### Kindergarten

**0.1.1.2.1** Scientific inquiry is a set of interrelated processes used to pose questions about the natural world and investigate phenomena.

#### 1st Grade

**1.1.3.2.1** Men and women throughout the history of all cultures, including Minnesota American Indian Tribes and communities have been involved in engineering design and scientific inquiry.

#### 2nd Grade

**2.2.2.1.1** The motion of an object can be described by a change in its position over time.

### Social Studies

#### Kindergarten

**0.4.1.1.1** Historians generally construct chronological narratives to characterize eras and explain past events and change over time.

#### 1st Grade

**1.1.1.1.1** Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.

#### 2nd Grade

**2.4.2.4.1** The difference and similarities of cultures around the world are attributable to their diverse origins and histories, and interactions with other cultures throughout time.

# Ojibwe Clan System

Lesson by Deanna StandingCloud

Lesson Template by Odia Wood-Krueger

**Objective:** Have a basic understanding of the Clan System

**Integration:** Social Studies, Science

## Background Information

The Anishinaabe people believe that Creator gifted the clan system to maintain societal order on Earth. Each clan has roles, talents, and responsibilities to contribute to the overall wellbeing of the entire nation. There are 7 primary clans of the Anishinaabe people; loon, crane, fish, bird, bear, marten, and deer. Members belonging to the same clan considered themselves close relatives & could not marry within their own clan.

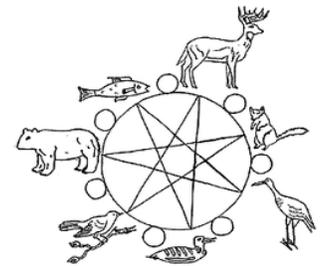
Traditionally, the Loon & Crane clans worked together as eloquent leaders & orators. They were skilled planners,

negotiators, & upheld the Seven Teachings. If ever there was a conflict between the Loon & Crane clans, the fish clan helped mediate the situation.

Members of the Fish clan are responsible for water ceremonies. They are also connected to star teachings.

The Bird clan are teachers and spiritual advisors & masters of intuition.

Protectors of the people, the Bear clan members are responsible for safeguarding the community. Because they spent much time patrolling the area, they are also very knowledgeable of wild medicines and herbs.



Providing serve to the people, the Marten clan are skilled warriors & peace keepers. They are also responsible for maintaining the Warrior Society.

There are still descendants of the Deer clan today. However, the gentle, kind, and artistic members of deer clan have vanquished historically.

## Lesson

1. Create a KWL chart with students. What they KNOW, what they WANT to know, and finally, what they LEARNED.
2. Invite a local Elder to the class to discuss the significance of the Ojibwe Clan System. If you are unable to locate an Elder, work with local American Indian community to identify an individual available to come in to present information about the importance of the Ojibwe Clan System.
3. Connect with MPS Indian Education to check out animal puppets to use when explaining the characteristics of each clan to your students. If the puppets are not available, your classroom can spend time creating their own puppets using construction paper, colored pencils, etc.
4. Allow students to draw a picture or write about what role each clan has.
5. Conduct an activity that matches the characteristics of each clan with the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Ask students how each clan demonstrates each of the teachings and why. Ask why is this important to the whole community?
6. Using star stickers or star cut outs, allow students to assemble the Loon Constellation (Little Dipper) on a picture of a Loon. Integrate information about Giiwedini Anang (the North Star) Ask students why they think the Leadership Clan is a constellation?

## Materials

- “The Mishomis Book”
- Animal puppets
- Clan photos
- Seven Grandfather Teachings chart
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Star stickers
- Loon picture
- Ojibwe Star Map

## Vocabulary

**Doodem** - *Clan*

**Ajijaak** - *Crane*

**Maang** - *Loon*

**Giigoonh** - *Fish*

**Bineshiinh** - *Bird*

**Makwa** - *Bear*

**Waabizheshi** - *Marten*

**Waawaashkeshi** - *Deer*

**Ogichidaa** - *Warrior*

**Ogimaa** - *Leader*

**Anang** - *Star*

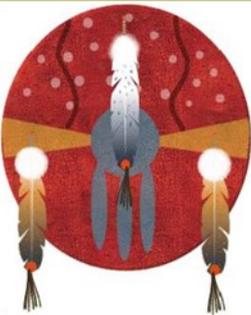
**Inawemaagan** - *Relative*

**Mikinak** - *Turtle*

**Migizi** - *Eagle*

**Mooz** - *Moose*

**Giizhig** - *Sky*



Minneapolis Public Schools  
Indian Education  
indianed@mpls.k12.mn.us  
612-668-0610

## Discussion Questions

1. Do you have a clan? If so, what is it? What are the characteristics of your clan?
2. How do you figure out what your clan is?
3. How do each clan honor the Seven Grandfather Teachings?
4. What is your relationship to others in the same clan?
5. Do we have clans today? How can they help us in today's world?
6. How do clans work together?
7. What is your favorite animal? Why?
8. How are we similar to animals?
9. How do we treat our family?
10. What are some things you're good at? How do these things help others?
11. Why do you think we live differently then we did a long time ago?
12. If we needed help from one of our relatives, how we go about asking them?

## Assessment

Students should be able to verbally identify each of the seven clans and explain a basic understanding of one of their characteristics.

Students should also have the ability to ver-

balize their basic understanding that members within each clan are closely related to one another. They should be able to articulate how a family interacts with one another.

Through drawings, writings, or verbally, students should also know the correlation between the North Star, the Loon Constellation and the Clan System.

## Enrichment Activities

1. Organize a clan system in your own classroom! Assign students to a specific clan mathematically by lottery (so there are no hard feelings). When the class as a whole goes about their activities, projects, or field trips, recognize how the roles of each clan plays a part in everyday life.
2. Facilitate a family tree project. Ask students to interview their family, gather photos and decorate their tree. Incorporate relative names in the Ojibwe language. A great resource to read and have access to audio files is the Ojibwe People's Dictionary. It can be found at [www.ojibwe.lib.umn.edu](http://www.ojibwe.lib.umn.edu) Provide a space for students to reflect on the Seven Grandfather Teachings, how they can be used in their family and how it relates to the Clan System.
3. Read “The Mishomis Book” to your classroom. Allow students to draw a picture after every chapter so they have comprehension of the stories. After the book is complete, have students gather their drawings and create a Mishomis Book of their own!
4. Conduct an animal study focusing on the Seven Original Clans; Crane, Loon, Fish, Bear, Marten, Bird, and Deer. Create profiles of each of the animals; what they eat, how they live, and their habitat.
5. Organize a field trip to a local planetarium or collaborate with Indian Ed to conduct a star lab day. Help students make the connection with the stars with activities on Earth. Connect the Clan System with the Mooz, Fisher, and Loon Ojibwe constellations! Have them draw or journal their findings.