

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Newsletter

February 29, 2016



Hello Everyone,

In the month of February, we have visited fifty-seven classes and facilitated four Professional Development opportunities. This speaks to how our Division is willing and open to bring First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture in to our classrooms. Our team appreciates your support and would like you to continue with the great work you are doing through conversations and planning lessons with FNMI infusion in mind.

As we explore Pope Francis' Encyclical letter throughout the year, there are various opportunities to share the gift of song, prayer and poetry of Aboriginal people in connection with their Spirituality. They are traditionally linked to the Great Spirit, Mother Earth, Father Sky, Grandfather Sun, Grandmother Moon and all the species that live on the land. Chief Dan George, author, actor, hereditary Chief of the Coast Salish tribe and honorary Chief of the Squamish tribe of North Vancouver, was an excellent role model in how to use words, song, prayer, poetry, as well as play and motion picture scripts, to convey a strong message for his people, and love for the Earth.

*The beauty of the trees, the softness of the air,
the fragrance of the grass speaks to me.
The summit of the mountain, the thunder of the sky,
The rhythm of the sea, speaks to me.
The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning,
the dewdrop on the flower, speaks to me.
The strength of the fire, the taste of salmon, the trail of the sun,
and the life that never goes away, they speak to me
And my heart soars.*

- Chief Dan George

Hiy hiy,

Valerie & Tracy

Catholic Faith Interwoven with Aboriginal Spirituality

Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*

One of the many marvelous things about Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, "*Laudato Si*", on Care for Our Common Home," is that it is written to all of mankind. In his address, Pope Francis recognizes the relationship with the First Nations worldview that everything is connected. All creatures, including human beings are all linked together to make up systems. He states, "in this sense, it is essential to show special care for Indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values (146)." As we move forward in Truth and Reconciliation, Pope Francis encourages us to come together for our Mother Earth to build a better home for all our future generations.



Resources

Aboriginal Poets: [Vera Wabegijig](#), [Jim Poitras](#)

Elder in the Making - [Documentary trailer](#) - On the prairie grasslands of Southern Alberta, a Blackfoot aboriginal and a Chinese-Canadian rediscover their shared connection to the land and future generations.

Rocky Mountain House – National Historical Site – The park offers some programs to support First Nation and Métis perspective. Please follow the link for more [information](#).

Waskasoo Environmental Education Society - Please follow the link for more [information](#)



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Current Events

Aboriginal History Month - Essential, Unknown [The Manitoba](#)

Families of missing, murdered indigenous women want action beyond national inquiry [CBC](#)

Canada's prisons are the "new residential schools" [Macleans](#)

Remembering Henry Louie Northwest - [First Nation Drum](#)

Blackfoot Runner wins Gold for Canada - [First Nation Drum](#)

Skraelings by Rachel and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley win Indigenous literature Award - [CBC Books](#)

Professional Development

[The Provincial First Nations, Métis and Inuit Professional Learning Project](#) - The Provincial First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Professional Learning Project calls for educators across the province to take actions to develop their understanding of creating relational spaces for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content in educational programming

Resources

[Walking Together Resource](#) - This Alberta made digital resource gives information about the First Nation people in Alberta.

[Our Way Is a Valid Way](#) - The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) Professional Development Resource for Educators.