

"LIVING WITH YOUR MOTHER " VIDEO

DIGGING IN: FACILITATING DIALOGUE AND ACTION

KEY THEMES AND TERMS

Longhouse, creation story, Skywoman, Flint and Creator, Mother Earth, Turtle Island, Dish with One Spoon Treaty, Great Sacred Gamble, Joseph Brant, Three Sisters agriculture, colonization, cradleboard, beavertail

CATALYZING CONNECTIONS

DECODING QUESTIONS

- *Description:* What do you see/hear/feel while watching the video?
- *Personal Connection:* How do the stories Rick tells connect to your personal experience?
- *Common Themes:* What are the social issues/themes that emerge from our personal stories? Is there a common issue that is shared among us?
- *Social Analysis:* How did this come to be? What are the historical and social processes that created this situation?
- *Planning for Action:* What can be done? What can I/we do?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- What is the core of Haudenosaunee philosophy?
- How does the origin of the term "Mother Earth" relate to the Haudenosaunee creation story? How does that story understand we humans are connected to the Earth?
- In what ways does the earthen jar represent the universe and our sustenance?
- How did this land (North America) come to be called "Turtle Island"?
- What ecological, political, and social lessons does the "Dish with One Spoon Treaty" offer us?
- "If you eat well, your mind will be strong and you'll be able to make good decisions" - what does this say about the "gut-brain" connection? Have you felt the difference in your mental capacity when you have not been well-nourished? What impact might that have on broader political decisions?
- How is the idea of the "family" expanded to include elements like the Earth and Sun? How does Grandmother Moon help to keep life going?
- Revisit the annual cycle of Haudenosaunee ceremonies related to food (image at 8 min.). What impact will climate change have on that cycle? What food-related

cycles are you aware of in your community or territory? What ceremonies or rituals are associated with them?

- This video is called “Living with Your Mother: The Great Dish.” How do you now understand what that means?

Hands-On Activities

Rick suggests that learning how to grow, prepare and eat food are skills that require physical labour, as well as cooperative labour. Create a group activity of either growing, preparing or eating that reminds you of both the labour and the pleasure and community-building in this work.

INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Discuss the different elements in the Haudenosaunee Creation Story - the skydome and earth dome, the duality of the twins born of Skywoman’s daughter, the relationship between human and plants. Research other creation stories for the similarities and differences in these elements.

In what ways does the cradleboard that Rick made for his daughters represent what was lost with colonization and what is being recovered now? How does it represent an intergenerational process of Indigenous resurgence?

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

At the core of the Haudenosaunee worldview is the acknowledgement of and an expression of gratitude to all beings that sustain life. What are the ways that you, your family or community recognize and thank the elements that we depend upon? See “The Thanksgiving Address: Greetings and Thanks” video.

There is a growing practice of offering land acknowledgements at schools, cultural and political events. The Dish with One Spoon Treaty is often recognized in the region around Toronto, Ontario. What treaties govern the areas that you live in? How can they be recognized?

DIGGING DEEPER: RESOURCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND ACTION

VIDEOS

Ferrero, Pat, dir. "Iroquois Women The Three Sisters." SFSUCaptions. August 16, 2013. Video. 10:06. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW9DQ7IXhzQ>.

Historica Canada. "Voices From Here: Richard Hill." June 2, 2020. Video, 13:04. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ckxi7rjGac>.

Olan, Kay. "Haudenosaunee Creation Story." May 20, 2015. Video, 22:44. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qV5sGEneGCM&feature=emb_rel_end.

Onondaga Historical Association. "The Creation Story." April 28, 2016. Video, 3:32. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSzDM7Jmg94>.

Six Nations Polytechnic. "Creation Story - Conversations in Cultural Fluency Lecture Series #1." November 12, 2015. Video, 1:53:42. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SegYkan5yml>.

Six Nations Polytechnic. "Ecological Knowledge & the Dish with One Spoon - Conversation in Cultural Fluency #2." January 29, 2016. Video, 33:07. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RL83GvOO_C0.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Akwesasne Notes, ed. *Basic Call to Consciousness*. Summertown, TN: Native Voices, 2005.

Hill, Susan M. *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017.