



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

# Learning From Ceremonies

## ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- **Identity**
- **Lifeways**

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student will understand that

- Tribes in Oregon have ceremonies as part of their identities,
- C'waam is important to Oregon Tribes and celebrated in ceremonies, and
- ceremonies help people know more about themselves.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How do ceremonies grow people's identity?

## REQUIRED TIME

- 30 minutes

## Overview

This lesson focuses on how we develop our identities and learn about ourselves through activities with family and elders. For Oregon Tribes, participating in ceremonies to celebrate special times is an important way to do this. Students will learn about one tribal ceremony the Klamath Tribes holds each year for the return of the C'waam - a sucker fish. Students will then draw and describe an aspect of the ceremony.

## Background for Teachers

This lesson focuses on the Essential Understanding, Identity. There is no single identity for Native Americans who come from different Tribes, cultures, and experiences. One way in which identity is fostered by Oregon Tribes is through participation in ceremonies that celebrate important events. Through participation in these ceremonies, youth's understanding of their place within their community and their world is strengthened.

This lesson also addresses the Essential Understanding, Lifeways, which focuses on the ways in which Native cultures and traditions are shaped by their environment. In the same way that nature is complex and nuanced, lifeways within and across tribes are diverse and reflect multiple ways of being and knowing.

One way that tribal identities are fostered and lifeways are sustained is in the ceremonies that celebrate a particular time. One example of a ceremony practiced by an Oregon Tribe is the Klamath Tribes' Return of C'waam Ceremony. This ceremony takes place on the Sprague River and is a way the Klamath Tribes connect to their ancestors and the C'waam as part of that ancestry. Tribal ceremonies are not just practiced in the past but continue to be celebrated today.

## Considerations for Teachers

### Practices

While teaching this lesson, the following principles can help guide your decision-making and engagement with students.

- Focus on teaching the Essential Understanding through an analysis of today's tribal ceremonies.
- When sharing content with students, address the "why" not just the "what."
- Highlight the strengths and struggles of Oregon's Indigenous peoples today while also acknowledging their history and traditions.

## STANDARDS

### Oregon English Language Arts Standards

- **K.W.2:** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
- **K.SL.1:** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- **K.SL.5:** Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.

## MATERIALS

### What materials are needed for students to engage in this activity?

- Slide deck
- Paper
- Markers or crayons



- Ensure your teaching practices are appropriate for Native and non-Native students.

## Assessment

During this lesson, observe and listen to students during discussions and as they work independently and collaboratively to determine how their learning is progressing. Write down what you notice about what students say and do in relation to the success criteria. Use this formative information to provide feedback to students and plan next steps.

At the end of the lesson, provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their learning through a self-assessment. Students can indicate their level of learning in relation to specific success criteria. They can also write out an explanation of why they feel they are at that learning stage.

## Success Criteria

- I can explain what a ceremony is.
- I can describe one way that the C'waam Ceremony is important for the Klamath Tribes.
- I can draw and describe one thing that happened in the C'aam Ceremony.

**For the following activities, use the slide deck to support your implementation.**

## KEY WORDS and IDEAS

- **Identity:** Who you are, including your family, the things you do, the people you spend time with, and the people you feel you are a part of, like your Tribe.
- **Tribe:** A group of Indigenous families who share land and ways of doing things for years and years.
- **C'waam** (tch-wom): A fish with a sucker, important to Tribes in Oregon.
- **Ceremony:** An event for an important time.



## Opener

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**Time: 5 minutes**

### Step 1:

Gather the students in a circle.

Ask students to think about special days celebrated by their families and communities. Ask students to share examples of these special days. Explain that celebrations and ceremonies are a big part of Tribe's identities. Identities are the ways that we think about ourselves and our communities.

Say, "There are many Native American Tribes across Oregon that have ceremonies to celebrate special times and special animals like the C'waam. At these ceremonies, sometimes young kids learn from older people, Elders, about nature and traditional ways of living.

Say, "Today, we will learn about the Klamath Tribes' C'waam Ceremony. Other Oregon Tribes have similar ceremonies.

### Step 2:

Review the Essential Question with students: *How do ceremonies grow people's identity?* Give them an opportunity to answer, question and wonder.

### Step 3:

Review the learning outcomes and success criteria with students so they understand what the intended learning is and what it looks like when they have achieved it.

## Main Activity: Part 1

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**Time: Approximately 10 minutes**

### Step 1:

Review the key words and ideas with students. Spend time focusing on identity.

Write identity on the board and offer an example:

- On the weekend I like to ... (read, ride my bike, bake, etc.)
- I am a (reader), that is part of my identity!

### Step 2:

Ask a few students to say what they like to do with their friends or family or on the weekends.

- They might say: "I like to run!"
- Respond: "You are a runner, that is part of your identity."
- Ask the class: "Raise your hand if you like to run!"

### Step 3:

Discuss what a celebration is, offer an example and then ask students to talk about celebrations they do with their family. Ask how it feels to attend these celebrations and what they like about the celebrations. Then give an example of a celebration you participate in (holiday, birthday or something with your family).

Example:

- I celebrate spring by (participating in Passover, Easter, the equinox, taking time to notice the spring growth on plants, etc.).
- This is a way I celebrate spring, and that is part of my identity.
- It makes me feel...
- I like \_\_\_\_\_part of the celebration

Ask students:

- Can anyone share a celebration they do with their family or other people?
- How does it feel?
- What do you like?

Explain that when groups of people have special celebrations with activities, these can be called ceremonies. Ask students: Has anyone heard that term?

Say to students, "A celebration can be any party, but a ceremony has very special meaning and activities."



Introduce the idea of a ceremony as a special celebration with activities. Let students know that ceremonies are important traditions for Oregon Tribes and that today they will look at an example of a ceremony by the Klamath Tribes.

**Step 4:**

Ask students if they can locate the picture of the Klamath Tribes' symbol on the map. Explain that it is a symbol for the Klamath Tribes and indicates their location in Oregon on the map. The Klamath Tribes are a group of Native Americans who have lived in Oregon since time immemorial, since before anyone can remember.

Say to students, "The Klamath Tribes, just like other Oregon Tribes, have done ceremonies for longer than anyone can remember! As long as the rivers have existed! The Klamath Tribes (point to their land on the map) have a ceremony for a special fish every year in March called the C'waam Ceremony. Other Oregon Tribes have similar ceremonies."

(C'Waam is pronounced T'Uaam)

**Main Activity: Part 2**

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**Time: Approximately 10 minutes****Step 1:**

Listen and Repeat: On slide 7, read each line and have students repeat after you:

The Klamath Tribes are Native Americans who live in Oregon. Every March, they go to the river, dance, drum and pray to their Creator so the C'waam fish will swim up the river.

**Step 2:**

Show students an excerpt from the video, [The Klamath Tribes' C'waam Ceremony](#).

Explain that this video shows part of a ceremony to honor the C'waam that is public. Part of the ceremony is private to the Klamath Tribes' members.

Ask students to see if they can notice at least two things from the video, such as what people are doing, what the ceremony sounds like, where it takes place, what people are



wearing and how people are feeling.

### Step 3:

Ask students to share one thing they saw in the video. Write their responses on the board and draw quick pictures to accompany their words. Connect this to the idea of identity:

- Explain to students that this ceremony, like many ceremonies, is very important to the Klamath Tribes because it connects the people to the natural world, and in particular, to the C'waam who will soon travel up the river.
- Ceremonies can help to teach people about what is important. In this example, the C'waam fish is very important to the lives of the Klamath tribal members.

### Step 4:

- Have students choose one thing to draw from the ceremony and (if appropriate) write its name.
- Have students turn to a partner and say one thing they learned about the C'waam ceremony.

## Closing

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**Time: Approximately 5 minutes**

### Step 1:

Turn and Talk:

Say, "Tribes in Oregon, like the Klamath, have many important Ceremonies, which support their identity."

Have students turn to a partner and tell each other

- One thing about your drawing
- Why the C'waam Ceremony is important



**Step 2:**

Ask students to self-assess based on the success criteria. This can also be done collectively by the whole group. They can pick their level of learning (sort of or yes) and share with a peer, or you can print out the self-assessment and ask students to fill it out and turn it in.

**Additional Resources**

- Klamath Tribes: Our History (<https://klamathTribes.org/history/>)
- KOBI-TV Story on Return of the c'waam (In this video, you can hear the pronunciation of c'waam): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrxVFR1xVt8>







## Student Self-Assessment

**Name:**

**Directions:** Read aloud the lesson Success Criteria in the first column to students. Have them indicate if they were able to meet the criteria by marking it in the handout, with hand gestures, or by sharing aloud. Then ask students to explain why they chose “not yet” or “yes” to a peer.

Success Criteria “Can I...?”	Not Yet 	Yes 
give an example of a ceremony?		
say why the C’aam Ceremony is important?		

draw one thing from the C'aam Ceremony?		
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