

Lesson Plan:
Dream Catcher

Source: Adapted from <http://www.kinderart.com/camp/rainbowdreamcatcher.shtml> and <http://www.kinderart.com/multic/>

Subject:

Native American history.

Focus:

Understanding the meaning of the dream catcher.

Overview:

Have some students share their dream catcher and explain the things they added to represent themselves.

Purpose:

To familiarize students with Native American arts and crafts through legends, and to reveal the origin of the popular decorative art called a dream catcher.

Objective:

To learn about Native American folk tales, legends, and stories.

Resource Materials:

- Paper twist ribbon (sold in a roll—one roll is enough for 12 hoops of 6 inches each)
- Yarn or string in any color
- A variety of beads and feathers in assorted colors

Activities and Procedures:

Begin by showing the class examples of dream catchers. You might tell them the story of the Lakota spirit of wisdom named Iktomi who disguised himself as a spider to visit the Lakotas' leader. Iktomi took the leader's willow hoop and told him about the importance of the cycle of life. Iktomi spun a web in the leader's hoop and told him that the "dream catcher" would catch the leader's good dreams and let the bad ones fall through the web's center. This would help the leader and his people realize their dreams and ideas. To read the story of the Iktomi dream catcher, visit <http://www.dreamcatchers.org/dcat16T.html>.

1. Precut the hoops from the paper ribbon and tape the open end to create a circle.
2. Have students tie an anchor knot with the yarn/string from one side of the hoop to the other in order to create a line across the hoop's center.
3. Have students continue to create their dream catcher's "web" by stretching the yarn/string across the hoop's center in different directions. (Note: If they want to include beads in the web, they must string them before they tie off the yarn/string onto the edge of the hoop.)
4. Tie two or three pieces of yarn/string on the bottom of the dream catcher hoop to suspend beads and feathers, and include a small loop of yarn/string at the hoop's top to hang your dream catcher.
5. Make sure all knots are nice and tight to keep the dream catcher's web intact.

Tying It All Together:

Discuss with the children of the importance of various beliefs, customs, and traditions of the Native American culture.

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