

CEDAR : THE ROOTS SPEAK

Elementary Education Program for Grades 3 – 5

Teacher's Notes



Right to Left: Bentwood cedar box and D-adze (MOA Teaching Collection)

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Planning Your Visit

Booking Information

Please access our online bookings guide, ***Booking Education Programs: What You Need to Know***, available on the MOA website at www.moa.ubc.ca/programs/resources.php.

Class Guidelines and Requirements

This education programs is led by trained Volunteer Associates (VAs). Accompanying adults and teachers are responsible to supervise their group ***at all times***. We require a ratio of 1 adult per 7 students and recommend that students wear name-tags. Upon arrival, please check in with the Admissions desk and make arrangements for payment. The Volunteer Associate responsible for your group will meet you in the Museum lobby.

Teachers are asked to review and communicate the ***Guidelines for Supervising Adults*** available in our online bookings guide, ***Booking Education Programs: What You Need to Know***, at www.moa.ubc.ca/programs/resources.php.

Program Description and Objectives

Cedar: The Roots Speak is a one hour and fifteen minute program designed to highlight the continuing importance of the cedar tree among First Nations of the Northwest Coast (NWC). During this program, students develop their observational skills and explore First Nations through examining a variety of objects created from the trunk, bark, and roots of the cedar tree, and the tools and technologies used to make them. This program aims to communicate the continuing importance of the cedar tree to historic and contemporary First Nations communities.

Note: ***Cedar: The Roots Speak*** is a Volunteer Associate (VA) guided program and does not include a full tour of the Museum. We welcome you to extend your visit before or after your scheduled program as there are many more exhibits to explore with your class.

Curriculum Relevance

Cedar: The Roots Speak is designed to complement the BC Grade 4 Social Studies Curriculum, although it can be adapted to other levels. Skills that students practice during the program include: observation, identification, and cultural sensitivity, as well as critical and creative thinking. The content of the program relates to the following subject areas: First Nations Studies, BC History, Language Arts, and Visual Arts.

Program Outline

Meet and Greet in the Lobby

The class is greeted in the Museum lobby by an Education Volunteer Associate (VA) for a brief introduction to the program and associated activities. Students then have the opportunity to identify and observe the characteristics of a living cedar tree before proceeding into the Museum galleries.

Gallery Tour

In the Museum galleries, students are introduced to a map showing First Nations people, communities, territories, and linguistic groups. Students then examine a range of NWC cedar objects including Musqueam House Boards, and Kwakwaka'wakw Sea Lion Houseposts. Students gain a better understanding of the objects in the Museum through close observation.

Presentation

Education Volunteer Associates use a range of visual aids to introduce historic and contemporary Northwest Coast big houses and long houses. Visuals are used to introduce students to the traditional process of harvesting cedar - its bark, its roots, and its timber posts and planks.

Hands-on Activity with Teaching Collection

Starting with a group discussion about why the cedar tree is important for spiritual, ceremonial, and practical use, the class explores why cedar is called the "Tree of Life." Objects are presented according to three categories: the trunk, bark, and roots. Students are divided into three groups and examine objects in the teaching collection. Upon conclusion of the hands-on activity, students are asked to apply their knowledge to a group of unfamiliar cedar objects, and to share their questions and discoveries with their classmates.

Wrap up

Students review key themes introduced throughout the program. Students and attending adults are encouraged to visit the Museum galleries.

Pre or Post Visit Activities

Questions to stimulate discussion:

- What do museums do?
- What is a museum of anthropology?
- Why do museums have the objects they have?
- How does the environment influence what an artist creates?
- What can be learned about people by studying objects they make?

Introduce your students to the Northwest Coast (NWC)

Using the “First Nations in British Columbia” map (<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/map.htm>), show the students the traditional territories of the First Nations related to the program: Haida, Musqueam, and Kwakwaka'wakw.

Discuss the necessities of life

Ask students to think about what is necessary for life (food, clothing, shelter) and how they acquire these necessities. First Nations people acquire some of these necessities from the cedar tree, both in the past and in the present. Ask students to consider how the cedar tree could be used to fulfill these things. Encourage students to think about how the cedar tree was used in the past and how it continues to be used today.

Explore the idea of Cedar as the “Tree of Life”

The cedar tree is known as the “Tree of Life” among some First Nations people, because of all it provides. Explore this idea. Ask students to discuss objects that are important to them and why. Initiate a discussion about why the cedar tree is so important to Northwest Coast First Nations. Ask students to brainstorm how they would use a cedar tree.

Explore woodworking traditions

Ask students to bring a wooden object to class from their own culture (or a photograph of one). Encourage students to ask: What is it used for? What materials were used? How was it made? Is it still done today?

Ask students to consider modern tools found in their homes that they would use to create objects from a tree. Compare them with tools that Northwest Coast First Nations historically used, and those which continue to be used.