

# CEDAR: THE TREE OF LIFE

Elementary Education Program for Grades 3-5

## Teacher's Notes



*Right to Left: MOA volunteer with class, Cedar Box and 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](http://www.moa.ubc.ca/programs/resources.php).

### Class Guidelines and Requirements

All Educational Programs are 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](http://www.moa.ubc.ca/programs/resources.php).

### Program Description and Objectives

*Cedar: The Tree of Life* is a 90 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 culture 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 Tree of Life* 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.

## Program Outline

### Meet and Greet in the Lobby

The class will be greeted in the museum lobby by an Education Volunteer Associate (VA) for a brief introduction to the program and activities. Students then have the opportunity to identify and observe the characteristics of a living cedar tree before proceeding into the museum galleries. The program is a combination of tour and hands-on activity.

### Tour

Students will see a range of NWC cedar objects including Musqueam House Boards, Kwakwaka'wakw bentwood boxes, and also a canoe carved by Haida artist Bill Reid. The tour aims to encourage students to start their inquiry by looking at the objects. Within the tour students will be divided into two groups and are introduced to two objects, and then asked to look closely at two others to suggest their material, means of production and use.

### Hands-on Activity with Teaching Collection

The class will split into four groups:

**Cedar Bark Group – blue group**

**Bentwood Box Group – yellow group**

**Haida House Group – red group**

**Canoe Group – black group**

Each group will examine and learn about different objects. Students will have the opportunity to handle and examine the objects in the MOA teaching collection. Each group is asked to identify their group of objects, to recall information from the tour and to answer a series of problem solving questions and then share their discoveries with the class. Through close observation, inquiry based questions, and visual aids; the historic and contemporary relevance cedar to NWC First Nations will be introduced.

### Drawing Activity and Wrap up

After their object exploration, students will use their observational skills in a drawing activity. This activity requires students to look closely and carefully analyze objects. The program concludes with a review of key themes and an encouragement to share their knowledge with others.

## Curriculum Relevance

*Cedar: The Tree of Life* is designed to complement the new BC Social Studies and Arts Education curricula in focusing on big ideas, competencies and cross-curricular learning. Here are suggestions in how this program relates to the curriculum subjects:

Social Studies		
Grades	Concepts	Curricular competencies
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural characteristics and ways of life of local First Nations</li> <li>Cultural and technological accomplishments of local First Nations</li> <li>How local First Nations use resources</li> <li>The role of oral history, stories, and objects as evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Social Studies inquiry processes</li> <li>Understand significance of individuals, groups, places, events and objects</li> <li>Determine continuities, changes, patterns, and trends between different time periods, places, and phenomena</li> <li>Understand different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, and events</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of colonization on local First Nations</li> <li>The history of local community, and connections between their community and significant people, objects, and developments</li> </ul>	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local First Nation individuals and their contributions to contemporary Canada</li> <li>Contrasting perspectives about land ownership and use, including resource extraction and the environment</li> </ul>	

Arts Education		
Grades	Concepts	Curricular competencies
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials, tools, processes, techniques, and technologies to support arts activities</li> <li>Art and artistic traditions from traditional and contemporary First Nations arts and arts-making processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore identity, place, culture and belonging through arts experiences</li> <li>Observe, listen, describe, inquire, and predict how artists use tools, processes, materials, and environments</li> <li>Experience, document, perform, and share creative works in a variety of way</li> </ul>
4		
5		

## Pre or Post Visit Activities

### Questions to stimulate discussion:

- What is a museum of anthropology?
- 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)

Use the map First Nations in British Columbia, located in the Teacher Resource Guide available on the MOA website at [www.moa.ubc.ca/programs/resources.php](http://www.moa.ubc.ca/programs/resources.php). Show students the territories of the First Nations related to the program: the Haida, the Musqueam, and the Kwakwaka'wakw.

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

The cedar tree is known as the “Tree of Life” among 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 what kind of uses they can imagine for the cedar tree.

### Comparing historic and contemporary methods

Many of the objects in the program, such as canoes, bentwood boxes, and the Haida house are both still made and used by First Nation's communities today. However, contemporary artists apply new methods along with traditional practices to create these objects today. Initiate a discussion of new methods that students observed or think will be used. Compare and contrast these methods and have students think about objects they use that might have been made differently in the past.

### Sites that you might want to visit

To learn more about MOA's collections: <http://collection-online.moa.ubc.ca/>

To learn more about canoes: <http://moa.ubc.ca/voicesofthecanoe/>

To learn more about the artists introduced in the program:

VMC virtual exhibition Bill Reid <http://theravenscall.ca/>

Bill Bellis: [https://www.spiritsofthewestcoast.com/artist/bill\\_bellis/](https://www.spiritsofthewestcoast.com/artist/bill_bellis/)

Richard Sumner: <http://www.alcheringa-gallery.com/richard-sumner.html>

Irene Mills: <http://moa.ubc.ca/voicesofthecanoe/history/haida-weavers/>