MOTHER EARTH AND THE NEEDS OF LIVING THINGS

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL: Grades 1 to 3

SUBJECT: Science and Technology

Suggested time: 90 minutes

Essential Question: How does Inuit artwork represent Mother Earth?

LEARNING GOALS

Students will:
- Learn about the concept of Mother Earth as portrayed in Inuit art
- Understand the needs of living things

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Blank paper for each student
- Crayons, coloured pencils, markers or paint for students to create a picture
- Picture of Kenojuak Ashevak’s “Mother Earth” painting

1. RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING: As a class, ask students to think about needs and wants. What is a need? What is a want? Share with students the video “Needs and Wants” www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1z4-YIZopY (1:58). Ask students in pairs to list their needs and wants. What is the difference between the two? Who provides these things for you?

2. Share with students an Inuit depiction of Mother Earth by Inuit artist Kenojuak Ashevak. Discuss the following points with students:
   a. What do you see in this picture? Who do you think the women in the picture is? Inform students that the women is Mother Earth.
   b. Have you ever heard of Mother Earth? Why do you think people call the earth Mother Earth? Have students discuss any prior knowledge of Mother Earth, as well as where they think the term comes from. Students may discuss many possible answers; the basic concept is that the earth provides for all living things the way a mother provides for her children.
   c. Who does Mother Earth take care of? Students can refer back to the picture to see who Mother Earth is holding; she takes care of animals, plants and all living things.
   d. How does Mother Earth take care of them? Remind students that their mothers, fathers or primary caregivers take care of them by providing them with the things they need. Have students recall what living things need.

3. RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING: Tell students that they will be drawing a picture of Mother Earth taking care of living things. Each picture should show Mother Earth providing needs to animals, plants or people. To help students create their own interpretation of Mother Earth, print the words “air,” “water,” “food,” and “shelter” on the board. Have students brainstorm different ways these needs could be drawn. If time allows, have students draw examples on the board.
   a. “Air” could be wind, bubbles underwater.
   b. “Water” could be rain, lakes, rivers.
   c. “Food” could be fruit trees, grain, vegetables.
   d. “Shelter” could be trees, a cave, leaves

4. When student are finished, display the picture around the classroom or in the hallway to share with the rest of the school community.

5. RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING: Ask students to look for examples of Mother Earth taking care of living things in the classroom. Have students collect these items and share them with the class.
Kenojuak Ashevak’s “Mother Earth” (1961)