

The Jicarilla Apache Relationship to the Earth

Unit # 1 Lesson # 2 Fourth Grade

Lesson Overview

In Lesson One, we learned the Jicarilla Apache Origin Story and how the Jicarilla people emerged from the underworld. The Jicarilla have traveled and lived throughout Southern Colorado and New Mexico for many thousands of years, honoring their important relationship to this land through the sacred directions, seasons, rivers and mountains. When the Jicarilla Apache Nation was created as a reservation in 1887, the limited lands that they were granted did not include any land in Colorado, though many tribal members and descendants lived throughout Colorado for many generations, and still do. The borders created by a new form of government changed the world of the Jicarilla. Their culture remains alive on their reservation in northern New Mexico and in significant land formations throughout the valleys and mountains of Southern Colorado. In Lesson 2, Tribal elders and members relate the geographic layout of their ancestral homelands and the importance of Southern Colorado to the Jicarilla culture. The Jicarilla Apache people show an honor and reverence for the land in Lesson 2 through sharing the longstanding art of pottery making, working with ceremonial earth to build bowls, cups, pots, and other utilitarian ware as well as sculptures and other clay creations.

Inquiry Questions:

1. Why do the Jicarilla Apache people have such reverence for the Earth? In what ways is the Earth honored through Jicarilla practices?
2. How do practices like pottery sustain the Jicarilla relationship to the Earth?
3. What is human migration? Why might have people of various cultural groups including Indigenous peoples, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and others migrate to and settle in Colorado? What social and economic decisions might cause people to locate or relocate in various regions of Colorado today?

4. What does nomadic mean? Where and why did the Jicarilla Apache migrate?
5. Why is it important to understand pre-settlement events and people in Colorado history?

Colorado Academic Standards:

SS09-GR.4-S.1-GLE.1-EO.b. - Identify cause-and-effect relationships using primary sources to understand the history of Colorado's development.

SS09-GR.4-S.2-GLE.1-EO.a,b,c Use maps to locate resources and regions

SS09-GR.4-S.1-GLE.1-EO.d and SS09-GR.4-S.1-GLE.2-EO.b Examples of groups of people have settled in Colorado and how they got here and how they have interacted with each other (Anasazi, Hispanos, Europeans, Native Americans)

SS09-GR.4-S.2-GLE.2-EO.a, b, c; N.1 Use geographic tools to answer questions

Materials:

- [Video Lesson: The Ancestral Homelands of the Jicarilla Apache](#)
- [Map of ancestral homelands of the Jicarilla Apache](#)
- Map of the Jicarilla Apache Nation
- [Video Lesson: Sheldon Nuñez-Velarde: Master Potter of the Jicarilla Apache Nation](#)
- Optional: Clay (either naturally dug or if not available, purchased from a store) and clay working tools including bowls, cups, shaping tools, slip, and burnishing rocks.

Source Materials:

- First source interviews and transcripts from the Jicarilla Apache Nation

Background Knowledge/Contextual Paragraph for Teachers:

The Jicarilla Apache describe four sacred rivers: the Arkansas, Canadian, and Pecos Rivers, and the Rio Grande. Today these geographic locations can be found in Southern Colorado and New Mexico. Instruct students to draw their own rendition of the area based on the Origin Story and Ancestral Homelands videos, then having them examine current maps of the area to see how their maps compare.

The activity with clay can be done in a classroom with clay and tools. Students can watch the video of Sheldon Nuñez-Velarde, Master Potter of the Jicarilla Apache Nation, and construct a small bowl using the steps in the video. Once the items are made, they can be fired in a kiln. Teachers will need to survey local resources to guide them in this activity.

Building Background Knowledge for the Student:

This lesson follows the previous lesson of the Origin Story of the Jicarilla Apache, describing four rivers and the mountain ranges that encompass the ancestral lands of the Jicarilla Apache. Students will be given an opportunity to draw their own maps, including significant rivers, mountains, and other geographic locations, and then review real maps to see how they compare. They can identify and discuss how our regard of land has changed over time through comparing and contrasting maps.

Instructional Procedures and Strategies:

After watching The Ancestral Homelands of the Jicarilla Apache, students will draw a map of the Jicarilla Apache homelands as described, using rivers and mountains to identify the area where the Jicarilla Apache lived and roamed before European contact.

For the clay activity, introduce youth to pottery through the Sheldon Nuñez-Velarde video. When introducing pottery to students, you can provide large

chunks of clay or dug earth. Put the clay and earth on a tray on the floor or on a table. Allow students to work with the clay to get a feel for its properties. They can make sculptures, use it to express emotions, and more. Clay stimulates multiple senses allowing students to touch, see smell, and listen. It builds dexterity movements to help build strength in the hands and fingers, and helps develop neural networks which are important for brain development.

Clay is a natural material with a distinguished history as a natural resource. It has been an important resource for society for time immemorial. Clay is one of the oldest building materials and is widely used for utilitarian and decorative pottery.

These exploratory sessions provide opportunities for students to learn what clay can be used for, and to develop understandings of cause and effect. Exploratory sessions with clay will allow students to learn about wet and dry, smooth and rough, hard and soft, round and flat, etc.

Old clothes or aprons will help with cleanup. Some students do not enjoy messy activities or are maybe initially cautious. If this is the case, perhaps offer smaller pieces of material and a selection of tools to make marks on the clay.

Critical Content:

Understand the origins of other people and cultures living in Colorado today.

Understand the high value that the Jicarilla Apache had for the earth.

Key Skills:

Students will draw a map using geography skills

Students learn to work with clay

Critical Language (vocabulary in English):

Micaceous, slip, coil

Variations/Extensions:

Students who want to learn more can research additional practices on how the tribe uses and honors the land.

Formative Assessment Options:

Observe students while they accomplish the tasks of the lesson, such as their maps. Encourage discussion of the difference between current land borders and the ancestral lands maps, and the impact of man-made borders on Native people. Allow students to work with the clay until they become comfortable with it. Teachers should introduce them and guide the discussion on the topics of interest.