



TOGETHER WE DRUM, OUR HEARTS BEAT AS ONE A JOURNEY OF STRENGTH AND MATRIARCHS with Willie Poll and Chief Lady Bird



Join us for a book reading and a conversation about “Together We Drum, Our Hearts Beat as One” with author Willie Poll and illustrator Chief Lady Bird. In this workshop, these two change-makers speak about the power of matriarchs, the drum, and joining together to make Turtle Island safer. “Together We Drum, Our Hearts Beat as One” is a story that was born out of the MMIWG2+ epidemic and aims to empower girls, women, and gender diverse folks about the power and gifts they have. The story is about ancestral connection in the face of racism and hate. “Together We Drum, Our Hearts Beat as One” was a finalist for the Indigenous Voices awards in 2023.

Chief Lady Bird is a Chippewa and Potawatomi artist from Rama First Nation and Moosedeer Point First Nation. She graduated from OCAD University in 2015 with a BFA in Drawing and Painting and a minor in Indigenous Visual Culture. She uses art to empower and uplift Indigenous people.

Willie Poll is a Metis author from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and has been working in Indigenous education for the last 10+ years. She holds a BA in Indigenous studies and an MA in Archaeology and strives to create work that empowers the next generation of change makers.



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We hope you enjoyed hearing from Willie Poll and Chief Lady Bird as they shared their beautiful story.

Here is a list of discussion questions to review as a class during the pause for reflection slide part way through the workshop.

- What do you think a matriarch is?
- Who are some matriarchs in your life?
- Who are some people you go to when you are feeling scared or overwhelmed? Who makes you feel safe?
- What are some things that matriarchs pass down through their families?
- What do you think the monster represents?
- Did you notice all of the beautiful flowers and berries on the pages? Why do you think she was surrounded by them?
- What kinds of feelings did you have when reading the story?



They began to sing and drum with so much power
The plants around them suddenly started to flower.

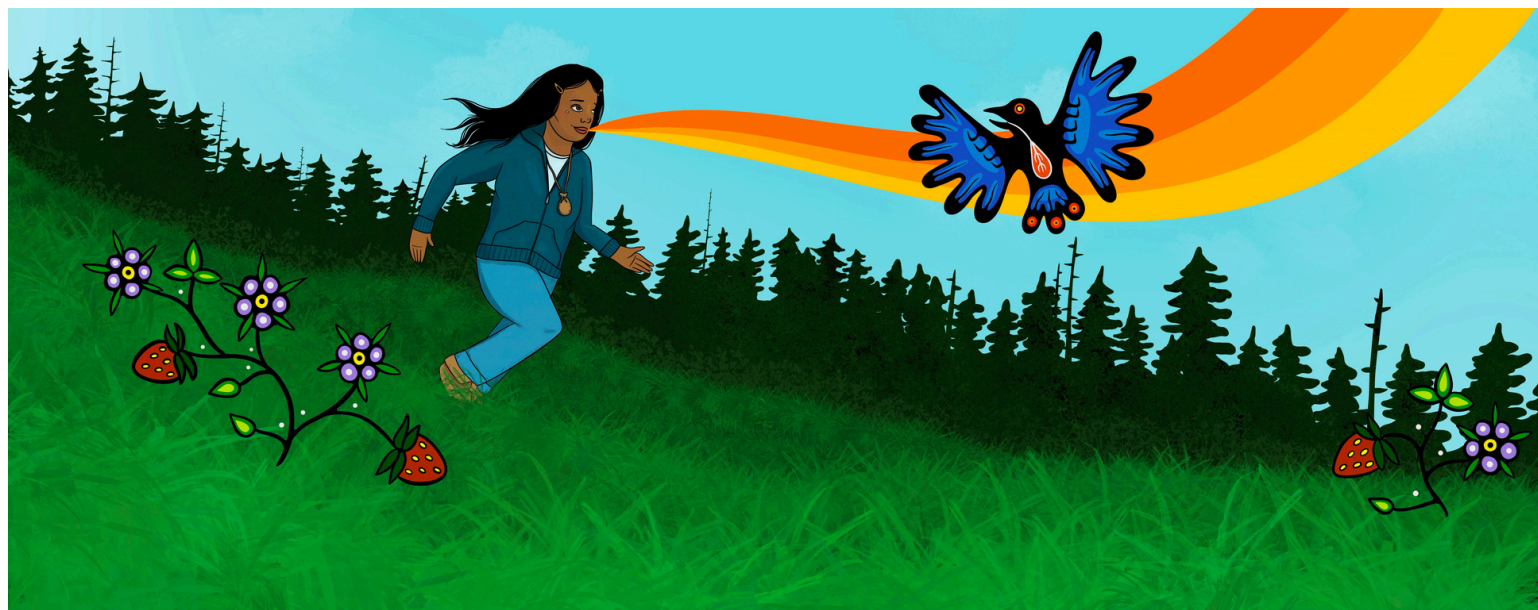
The sun shone brighter and the animals peered near.
The little girl felt like she'd never again know fear.

After a short discussion, continue the video and complete the rest of the lesson.



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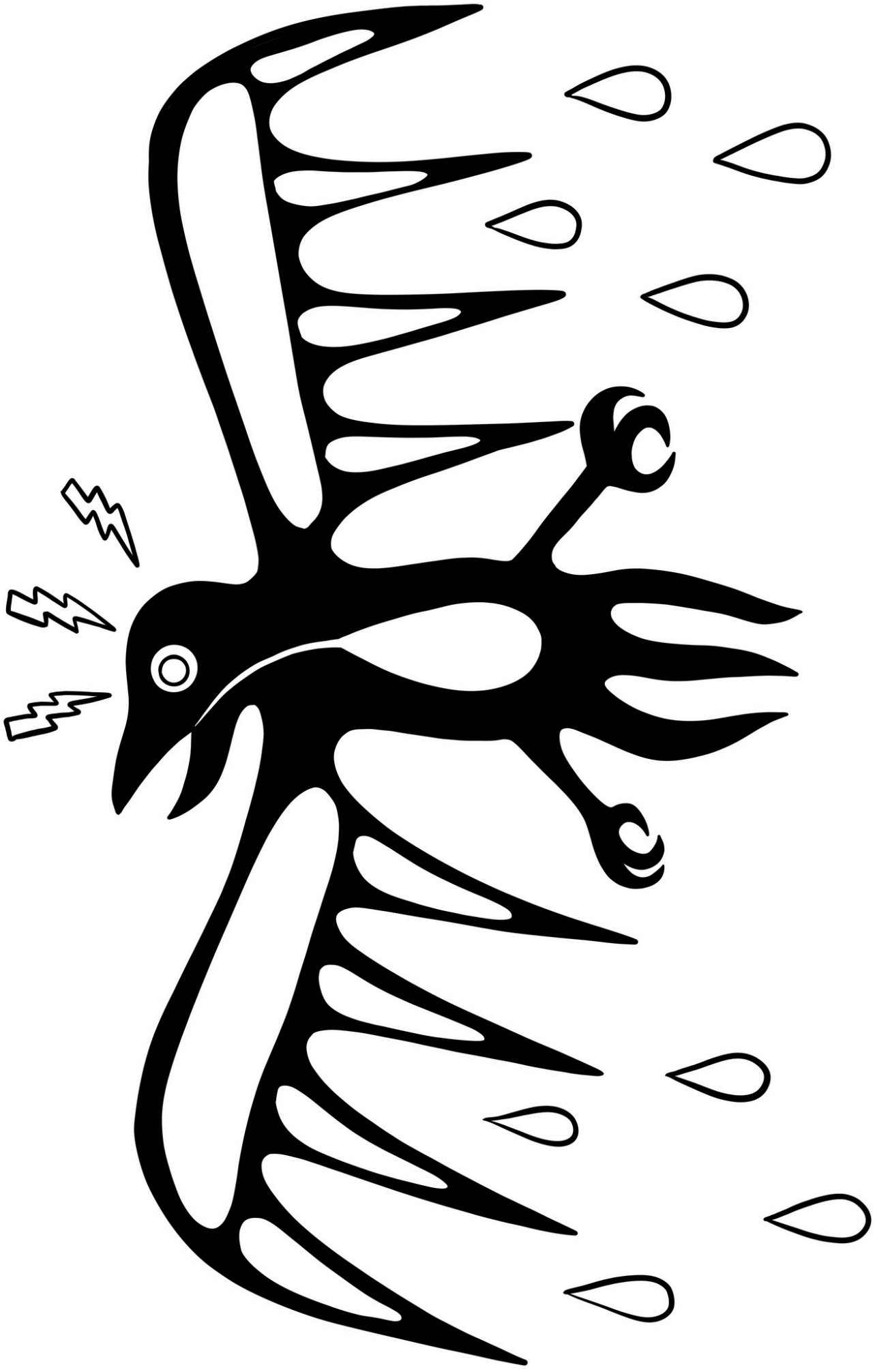


On the following page you will find a Thunderbird that Chief Lady Bird drew. The Thunderbird is an important part of the story: he comes to protect the young girl from the monster. The word for Thunderbird in Anishinaabemowin is Animkiig. AN-NI-MI-KEEG.

On the drawing of the Thunderbird, draw all of the things that make you feel safe. You can do this by drawing inside the blank spaces or around the Thunderbird. You can add colours that make you feel safe and calm, your favorite comfort activity or snacks, and the people you feel safest around.

We also invite you to check out these free resources (lesson plan and coloring sheet downloads) from Twinkl that can be found at: <https://www.twinkl.ca/search?q=willie+poll&c=37&ca=327&ct=ks2&r=teacher>

Some are sampled in the last three pages of this lesson plan.



My Thunderbird Protector

“Together We Drum, Our Hearts Beat as One”

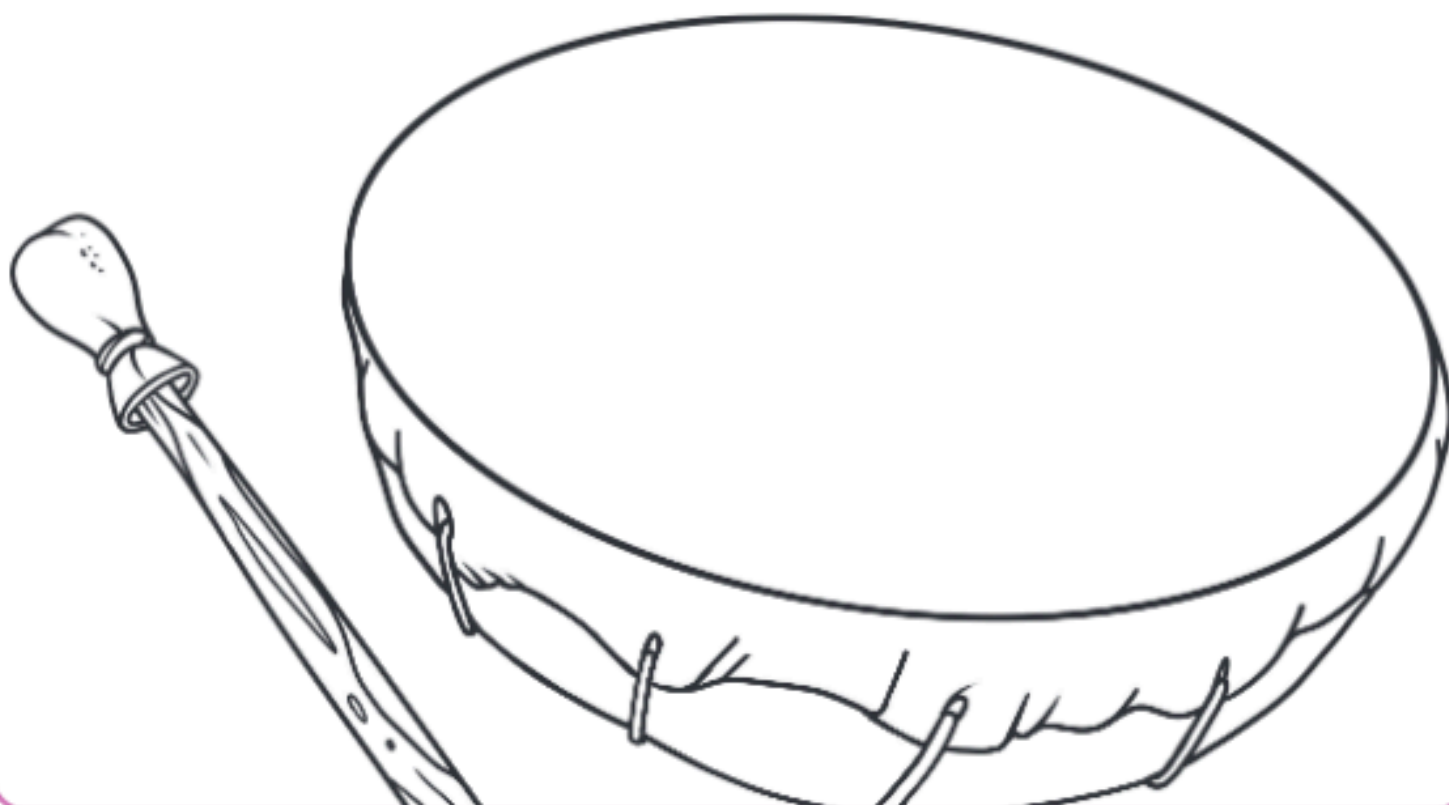
The Power of the Drum

Within the story of “Together We Drum, Our Hearts Beat as One,” we follow the journey of a young Anishnaabe girl. It is through her connection to her ancestors that she is able to overcome the obstacles along her path.

A huge part of her connection comes from her drum. The hand drum is very important to many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island. The drum has a spirit, just like you and I. The beat of the drum is the heartbeat of Mother Earth and it connects all of us through that heartbeat. It is said that the heartbeat is the first thing you hear when you are just a tiny baby inside your mother’s womb. When we make drums, we are bringing life into the world, and life is precious. We must respect the drum as we would our relatives.

Drawing Activity

Within the drum below, draw a relative that you feel connected to. This relative could be here in our world or may have passed on into the spirit world.





Together We Drum,
Our Hearts Beat as One



Illustrated by Chief Lady Bird



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