

Storytelling through theatre with the Mi'kmaq Heritage Actors



***Both elementary and middle/high
school versions available***



The Mi'kmaq Heritage Actors, Atlantic Canada's premier Indigenous theatre group, is based in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Their company began in 2009 with the creation of a piece based on eight Mi'kmaq legends which were turned into a script by director Cathy Elliot. Since then the group has continued to grow and evolve with every new show and every new member.

They are drummers, they are singers, they are dancers; join us as we join them and take part in this unique form of storytelling. We will hear the story of their beginning and how their theatre company is helping young people to reclaim their culture, their traditions, their language, and their stories. This workshop is a celebration of Mi'kmaq culture and we invite you to open your hearts and minds as you learn, watch, and partake in this workshop.

There are two versions of this video; one for elementary grades and one for middle and high school grades. The upper years video deals with MMIWG2+ and should be previewed before sharing with your class. The content may be triggering.



Workshop activities

Elementary version

Discussion questions:

- Watching their performances and dance, how did you feel?
- Richard talks about healing taking 7 generations; why do you think it takes 7 generations to heal?
- Julie speaks to this generation being the next changemakers; how do you think that you and your classmates might make change now or in the future? What kinds of things would you want to change?
- Julie talks about music and dance as ways to tell stories; how do you think the music and the dance helps people to feel a part of the story?
- Julie goes around and speaks to her elders and asks them to share their stories, why do you think this is important?
- What other cultures have their own types of song and dance?

Individual activity

Imagine you are a musician and you are putting out your first CD. Your songs tell the story about your life and what is important to you. In the rectangle below draw what your album cover might look like to help people understand what the songs will be about.

Album name:

Workshop activities

Upper years version

Discussion questions:

- What did you think about the video?
- What message did you take away from it?
- What are some of the ways that song and dance can amplify a message or story?
- How does the Mi'kmaq Theatre Company use performance as a way to spread advocacy?
- Why do you think it is important to connect with your culture?
- Why do you think Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people are at a higher risk of violence?

Further learning group activity

First, create a list of social justice topics that are important to you - this could be anything from saving sea turtles to MMIWG2+. As a group decide on one of the topics to create a song verse about. Think of a melody for the verse and a genre of music it will fit into. When you are done, have a sharing circle where each group is able to perform their verse and talk about what it means and the advocacy within it.

