Title
Constellations, Sacred Sites and the stories of the Oceti Šakowin

Grade Level
Middle School

Theme
Lakota Star Knowledge

Duration
Two Days

Goal
Students will appreciate that sacred sites in the Black Hills and constellations in the heavens are correlated through stories of the Oceti Šakowin.

Objectives
Students will be able to comprehend vocabulary from the story “Shooting the Red Eagle”
Students will be able to read “Shooting of the Red Eagle” as Readers Theater
Students will be able to connect “Shooting of the Red Eagle”, the constellation Wiciūŋčila Šakowin (Pleiades), and Hiŋhaŋ Kaga Paha (Harney Peak) in the Black Hills
Students will be able to reproduce the constellation Wiciūŋčila Šakowin

South Dakota Standard
Essential Understanding 3
The origin, thought, and philosophy of the Oceti Šakowin continues in the contemporary lifestyles of tribal members. Tribal cultures, traditions and languages are incorporated and are observed by many tribal members both on and off the reservations.
Indicator 2
Analyze the Oceti Šakowin sacred sites, traditional stories, star knowledge and how they relate to each other.

Cultural Concept
The people of the Oceti Šakowin recount stories which describe the relationship between sacred sites in the Black Hills and specific constellations.

Cultural Background
The story that connects the Hiŋhaŋ Kaga Paha (Harney Peak) and the constellation Wiciūŋčala Šakowin (Seven Little Girls or Pleiades) tells that one year a band of Lakota camped near Harney Peak in the Black Hills. Every day a red eagle would swoop down and steal a little girl, carry her to the mountaintop and kill her. The men tried to shoot the red eagle but failed. They
prayed for Fallen Star to come and after seven days (and after seven little girls have been killed) he arrived. He shot the red eagle and placed the spirits of the seven girls in the sky as a constellation – Wiciŋcilakowin (Pleiades), the Seven Little Girls. Fallen Star’s mother and her sister were Lakota women married to Star men living in the star. When Fallen Star’s mother was pregnant she becomes home sick and fell back to earth, gave birth to Fallen Star, and died. Fallen Star is cared for by a family of swallows until they can no longer care for him. The swallow takes Fallen Star to a Lakota family who raise him to manhood. He then pledges to help mankind with medicine and in natural disasters.

Student Activities
Discuss and illustrate unfamiliar words from the story “Shooting the Red Eagle”
Read the story “Shooting the Red Eagle” as Readers Theater (Legends of the Lakota by James LaPointe, pp.90-92
Locate the constellation Wiciŋcilakowin on the star chart
Create the constellation Wiciŋcilakowin

Resources
Star chart from p. 6 of Lakota Star Knowledge
Colored Pencils
Copies for each student of “The Shooting the Red Hawk”
Vocabulary sheet

Assessment
Students will write a three paragraph reflection about the relationship of the sacred site in the Black Hills, the constellation Wiciŋcilakowin, and the story “Shooting the Red Eagle”.

References

Developer
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