

UNDER THE WISDOM TREE

SAMPLE LESSON 2

Main Issue:

What is creativity?

Wolf Bones

*adapted by Connie Dunn
from a Native American folktale*

There is a story that is told in the Southwest about La Loba, the wolf woman. An old woman (or old man) gathers up the bones from the dessert. She collects them and carefully lays them out in the cave to form the body of the wolf. Naturally, as she nears completion, she is excited, because, after all, she has found the entire set that match exactly. All along, she has thought about the song she will sing when she is finished. When she places the last bone, she stands back and admires her work. She has the entire skeleton of a wolf.

But now it is time for the old woman to build a fire and sing her song. She has waited a long time for this. As she builds her fire, she begins to see her dance that she will do to the song she is going to sing.

When the fire is just right and the moon is at the right point in the sky, the woman remembers the ancient ones of her people. She remembers the dance and the song and the power they create. She looks at her wolf skeleton and begins to sing:

Hey, ya, ya, ya. Hey, ya, ya, ya. Hey, yun, yun, yun. Hey, yun, yun, yun.

Over and over, she sings the song. She sees the melody come to life in her feet as she dances around the fire. And for hours, she sings and dances. She calls upon the Great Spirit to hear her song and feel her dancing prayer. She is asking the Great Spirit to take her wolf skeleton and give it life.

And so, the woman sings and dances: Hey, ya, ya, ya. Hey, ya, ya, ya. Hey, yun, yun, yun. Hey, yun, yun, yun.

She never gets faster or slower, but stays constant in her rhythm, just as the rhythm of nature that she knows well. Her people have known for generations that it is the rhythm of nature that holds the powers of creativity given to them by the Great Spirit.

And as the woman sings, the muscle, flesh and hair of the wolf begin to grow on the wolf bones. The eyes and tongue move. Soon the creature rises and moves to the edge of the cave and walks beyond it. Then, slowly gaining speed, the wolf begins to trot and then to run. And as the old woman ceases her singing and

dancing to observe the wolf, she notices it slowly changing shape into a woman with long flowing hair. The old woman smiles.

She knows the Great Spirit has been at work. Then, under the full moon, the old woman begins to collect wolf bones.

Major Theme Discussion:

(Depending on ages of your children, this can be done as questions or as a commentary. Some groups may require a bit of both. Included are some questions. Most of the answers relate to the story. However, there may be something you know the children can relate to better than the story to understand the value. All connections are a value lesson.)

Who can tell me a value they found in the story? (**NOTE:** *There may be other values the children find in the stories.*) Did someone say creativity? Yes, the old woman in our story created a wolf woman with the help of the Great Spirit. Can you think of things you've created?

Can anyone think of other values?

Supplies for Activities:

1. 3-11 year olds

Old socks, cardboard, glue, felt (black, red and pink are the most important colors to provide), yarn, fake fur, material scraps, pipe cleaners, fabric backed tape, such as electrical or gaffer's tape, needle and thread, markers, buttons, pom-poms.

2. 12 & up

No supplies necessary.

Activities:

3-11 year olds

Make sock puppets.

Pick out a sock. Put your thumb in the heel and your hand in the rest of it. Cut out two cardboard pieces for mouth. Tape the cardboard together with the fabric-backed tape to give it a hinge. With your hand in the sock, open your hand and place the cardboard mouth where it should be. Draw a line around it, so you can see where it is to go once you have taken your sock puppet off your hand.

Glue the cardboard to the sock, making sure that the sock is glued well to the outline of the cardboard mouth. That way, when you move the mouth, the sock doesn't pull away from the mouth. Put a red felt tongue inside the mouth. Glue it to the tape.

Make teeth from white felt or white cardboard and glue them into place. Use pom-poms or buttons for eyes. You can even use dried beans for eyes, especially black-eyed peas. Put yarn or fake fur on for hair or eyebrows.

Decorate or dress them as you see fit.

You've CREATED your own CREATION.

12 & up: Discussion Group

(If your group of teens are split between younger teens and older teens, you might think about setting up two discussion groups. However, you may be surprised to find that they all get along famously. Just watch for signs that the group is not working and adjust.)

Discussion Topics:

- What does creativity mean?
- How is the divine creation of the human race much the same as creating a pot from a clay? Discuss.
- There are many books out about creativity. What do you do when you feel the urge to create? Discuss.
- When we get stuck in a rut, can we sing the flesh back on our bones to recreate ourselves? Discuss.