

Pine Nut Song and Dance

Topic: Food Gathering (recommended for early fall).

Grades level(s): K-2

Time required: Approximately 1 hour

Background: “Indians have music for everything that is done. Every song has different words and meanings. There are songs for dancing. There are songs for the rabbit dance, the bear dance, the circle dance, the snake dance, and the eagle dance. Dance songs for war are usually sung fast,” (Numu Way, p. 40). The pine nut ceremony includes a dance called the “circle dance.”

Pine nut gathering in the fall was combined with religion, work and play. Pine nut trees produced a nutritionally sound food that sustained the people throughout the winter. Pine nut time meant gathering of other families and served as an occasion for social reunion. Pine nuts were an important food source. In the early spring, before the trees began to bud, the Paiutes prayed for a successful pine nut crop. In the late summer, scouts and elders traveled to the mountains to find the most promising pine nut area. They returned carrying a pine bough with a few immature cones, which were the sign of a good crop. After this plans were made for the annual ceremony, the Pine nut Dance.

As fall approached, when the rabbit brush bloomed yellow, enough pine nuts had to be gathered so that during the ceremony and dance everyone received a few pine nuts. A small group was sent to the pine nut hills to collect the nuts. After the group had collected enough pine nuts they returned carrying a small tree to show that thankfulness and celebrate with dancing. The pine nut ceremony lasted all night. The Northern Paiute knew that great power was in songs and dancing and if they dance the pine nut dance there would be a bountiful harvest. In holding hands and dancing together the Indian people expressed togetherness as a group. Friendships were also made or renewed.

Around the time of the first frost as the cones burst open the Great Basin Indians could be found gathering, roasting, eating, and storing pine nuts. The small pine nuts were very abundant and were flavorful, nourishing, and a source of protein.

Men beat the trees with long stick poles with a hook on the end. This caused cones, nuts, twigs, and pitch to shower down on the women and children. The pine nuts were then picked from the cones and the ground.

Other tools used were large cone-shaped baskets called burden baskets. Winnowing baskets were like curved trays. The nuts taken from the cones were eaten from the shell, ground into flour and stored for future use, (Emm, et., pp. NP-8, NP-9, SP-9).

This lesson is meant to be taught as part of a unit about the Great basin Indians in the fall, typically in late September. This is a lesson from the sub unit: Culture. This lesson should proceed and/or followed by lessons on pine nuts, pine nut collecting, pine nut soup and the pine nut harvest celebration and dance.

Nevada State Social Studies Standards Addressed:

H1.1.4 Listen to stories that reflect the beliefs, customs, ceremonies, and traditions and social practices of cultures around the world.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

RL.1.4 Identify words and phrases in stories that appeal to senses

Objectives: The students will understand the pine nut circle dance by listening to narrative story and participating in a class pine nut circle dance.

Language Objective: The students will reflect on the feelings and atmosphere of the traditional Pine nut dance in a narrative story by completing a circle map as a whole class.

Key Vocabulary: Paiute, ceremony, festival, pine nut, circle dance, shuffle step,

Materials Needed: Wuzzie Comes to Camp: written/illustrated by Nancy Raven, CD of music if possible or *You Tube* music: Judy Trejo (Circle Dance Songs) or Jack Gladstone.

Setting the Stage:

1. Gather the students onto the meeting mat.
2. Read the background information to the students if the students have not been taught and/or for a refresher.
3. Read the background or at least the 3rd and 4th paragraph.
4. Review the Key Vocabulary.
5. Read pages 24-26 Pine Nut Dance and Songs from “Wuzzie Comes to Camp,” stopping at each step to have the students feel what is being read. Remind them that good readers typically feel what the writer may be feeling.
6. **Activities/Strategies:**

Evaluation/Assessment(s): Informal assessment of student skills by observation.
Formal Assessment of skills assessed with Circle Dance Rubric

Grading Rubric: Dance Rubric (see figure 1)

Accommodations (Differentiated Instruction): as needed according to large Motor skills.

Bibliography/Resources:

Websites to use are those that have a circle dance shown or explained or Utube music by Judy Trajo –Circle Dance music.

Wuzzie Comes to Camp: Written and Illustrated by Nancy Raven (ordering info: Trafford.com/08-0133)

The Numu Way: Compiled by Mary Pope from material found in *Numu Ya Dua*. This is a Publication of the and copyright by the Yearington Paiute Tribe, 1983

Celebrating Nevada Indians: (pp. NP-8, NP-9, SP-9) By: Nevada Native American Education Association

Pine Nut Circle Dance Rubric

Category	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Followed Directions	Student followed all of the directions thoroughly.	Student followed directions with few errors.	Student followed some directions while others were ignored.	The student did not follow instructions and followed their own desire.
Retold Story	Student listened to partner's retell and also retold the story	Student retold story but did not listen to partner.	Student listened to elbow partner, but did not retell.	Student just visited. No retelling.
Woven Correctly	Over/Under pattern is well defined and used from beginning to end	Over/Under pattern is somewhat visible but not clearly defined.	Over/Under pattern is somewhat visible but not continuous.	There is no visible over/under pattern.