

Bringing Métis Children's Literature to Life—The Diamond Willow Walking Stick

Author: Leah Marie Dorion
Illustrator: Leah Marie Dorion
Translator: Norman Fleury

Overview of Story: *The Diamond Willow Walking Stick: A Traditional Métis Story About Generosity* focuses on a Métis Elder's remembrances of traditional teachings about generosity that were taught to him by his grandparents. These lifelong lessons imparted on him "how to live in a good Métis way," and has taught him how to live with respect within the circle of life. In this charming children's book, the third in an ongoing series on traditional Métis culture, author and illustrator Leah Marie Dorion takes the reader on another enchanting journey while once again honouring the special bond between Métis children and their grandparents. This book also includes a chart on the uses of the willow tree.

Themes in this book:

- Values: honesty/respect
- Mentorship
- Storytelling
- "Métisness"
- Nature/trees/habitat
- Foods/healthy eating/medicines
- Symbols
- What goes around, comes around

Possible Curriculum connections:

Language Arts

- Listen, comprehend, and respond
- Compose and Create

Science

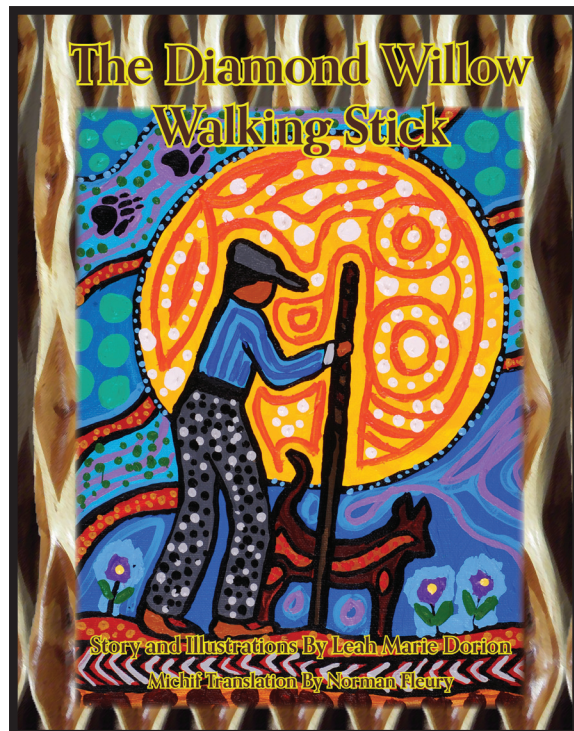
- Interdependence among plants, individuals, society, and environment

Social Studies

- Cultural diversity and traditions
- Social and cultural diversity
- Decision making
- Family

Health/Physical Education

- Values



Before Reading: Discuss with the students how one could be generous. Listen to various examples from the students' [background knowledge](#) of how people could be generous. They may have heard about someone who donated locks of hair to make wigs for cancer patients or how someone gave their time to help babysit for a busy mother so she could get her shopping done or how someone picked up garbage on the playground without being asked or how someone shared their lunch with someone who had forgotten theirs at home. Discuss the phrase, "What goes around comes around."

During Reading: Tell the students that *The Diamond Willow Walking Stick* is a story about generosity. While listening, compile a list (mentally or written) of the different acts of generosity in the story.

Stop from time to time while reading and discuss "acts of generosity."

Acts of Generosity ...	Generosity Given Back ...
Grandma gave care packages to the local Elders.	When Grandma and Grandpa got older people from the community brought them wild meat and tanned hides.
Grandpa gave horses to a family whose house burned down.	People showed great respect for him.
We made a meal for visitors.	The visitors shared stories.
We created a skit for the fundraiser.	Everyone was proud.
I passed the blanket around for donations.	Leaders represented the community at a meeting in Edmonton.
I was taught to read and write by grandma.	I wrote letters for Elders in the community.
I was taught how to create a walking stick out of Diamond Willows.	I gave it to a man with mobility problems.

After Reading: Revisit the phrase, "What goes around, comes around." Discuss the meaning of it in the story and its personal meaning.

Have students reflect on their acts of generosity. How has their generosity come back to them? Create a class project on how the class could show generosity to someone. (Shovel driveways after school for free, collect cans and give the proceeds to a hurricane ravaged country, etc. or create a booklet of ways one can show generosity.

Additional Post-Reading Lesson for *The Diamond Willow Walking Stick*:

Letter Writing: In this story, the character wrote letters for others. Compose a letter to someone who has influenced you to thank them for teaching you, helping you or supporting you. Follow the guidelines for a friendly letter.

