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Lesson: The Lakota Emergence Story

Lesson Objective: Students will learn where the Lakota people emerged from and what helped them to survive.

Lakota history is passed down from generation to generation through verbal storytelling. Origin stories are important because they help to sustain Lakota language and culture and have been done since time immemorial. I was told that in the beginning the plants and animals were still being created by Inyan (rock) and Wakan Tanka (Spirit Creator). There were no people, that lived at that time, on top of Maka (earth). There were however two spirits that lived on the surface of the earth. They were there because they were disciplined by Mahpiyato (supreme judge of all things) and put there for causing problems in the underworld during a spiritual celebration of creation.

Iktomi (spider) and Anug-ite (double face woman) lived on the face of the earth before any other. Iktomi's original name was Woksape (wisdom) but because he was playing tricks on people in the underworld, he was deported to the top and given his name of Iktomi and his characteristics of games and tricks. Anug-ite was originally named Ite (beautiful face woman), but because she too became vain and was easily misguided into misdeeds and tricks, she too was deported to the top of the earth. She was given two faces; one ugly face and one beautiful face. They were punished to live by themselves on top of the world. They had only each other for company and grew tired of playing tricks on each other. Iktomi had an idea. He knew where the people (pte oyate) lived in the underworld and asked Anug-ite to help him trick the Pte Oyate onto the world so they would have new company to play tricks on! Anug-ite agreed!

They begin to gather gifts and things to help them lure the Pte Oyate onto the world. The gifts were porcupine decorated clothing, dried berries, and dried meat. They ask Sungmanitu Tanka (wolf) to help them. They loaded the gifts on the back of the wolf and had him carry the gifts close to an opening and put them there. Then they had the wolf take a message to the humans through a hole in the ground. The Sungmanitu Tanka met the humans and told them he had gifts for them if they followed him. Some followed him and others decided not to. He gave them a taste of meat and they really liked it because they never tasted meat before. He told them there was more of that where he came from. Most of the humans stayed but the few that tried the meat followed the wolf to the opening; they wanted to try more of the meat and also look at the other gifts. The wolf took those that followed and gave more meat for them to taste and showed them the buck-skin clothing they never had before. They were amazed and impressed. They looked out the hole and the sky was blue and big and beautiful. The flowers close by made everything smell good! A smell they never knew existed

before! It was springtime so the plants were in bloom and it was warm out and sunny! Things they have never seen before. Some decided to come out of the cave and look around while eating meat and enjoying the scenery. They lived in the dark; on earth it was dark and it was also warm at that particular time. The wolf took them to the lodge of Anug-ite, and she invited them into her lodge. They saw her clothing and saw only the beautiful side of her face. She visited with them and told them stories of good times on earth. She said she would teach them how to get meat and make clothing like hers. They stayed for a while and then wanted to leave and go back and tell their relatives what they learned. When they returned to the place to go back through the cave, they could no longer return. Iktomi closed the cave. He was watching from the trees and laughing at them. They returned to the lodge of Anug-ite (Two face woman). She hissed at them and showed the other side of her hideous face. The humans were terrified and ran away into the timber and trees. The humans were scared and didn't know what to do and they begin to cry. It was then that the creator heard them and asked them why they were on the surface of the earth. They told him their story but he was upset because they didn't listen to him. They knew they were never supposed to leave the underworld.

In time, the creator went down to the humans underneath the earth and told them it was time for them to live on top. Creator selected a leader called Tokahe (the first one of the Pte people) and told him to take the people out to the top of the earth. On the way up, they stopped to pray 4 times. When they got to the surface, the Creator instructed them to follow a buffalo's track. He said when you find them, they will supply you with all that you need. Your shelter, clothing, food, and tools will come from the Tatanka (buffalo). This animal is sacred and you will also use him for your ceremonies. It was at that time that the people learned how to hunt to preserve buffalo meat. The creator showed the Pte' Oyate' (buffalo People) how to cut the meat into small pieces to dry in the tate (wind). Drying the meat in the air helped to preserve it for use at a later time. They were also instructed to mix it with fruit to make medicine for the people. It was called wasna' (fruit medicine)!

When the people return to the entrance they can no longer go back, but the Creator left the cave as a reminder of where they came from and who they are! That entrance is called Wind Cave, the origin place of the Lakota's.....Aho!

1. Please write a paragraph on how the Lakota people came to hunt and cure buffalo for their survival.
2. Who are the Pte' Oyate?
3. Who is Iktomi and what was his power?
4. Who was Anug-ite and why did she have two faces?

5. How did the Lakota people survive after they were forced to stay on top of the earth?

Resource for learning more about the Lakota Sioux and Buffalo: Google and Type www.youtube.com. Click on YouTube and type in the search box: "Knowledge 6 lesson 2 the Lakota Sioux and the Buffalo."

https://www.youtube.com/results?sp=mAEB&search_query=lesson+2+the+lakota+sioux+and+the+buffalo

1. Discuss all the things that can be made from the Buffalo after watching the Video!