

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Title:

A British Columbia Teacher Curriculum Guide for the Theme:
Marine Ecosystems, Habitat Protection & Conservation, and Abalone
Species at Risk

Lesson #2 (Part 1):

Youth Activism (Part 1) – Action Pledge: Youth Write a Letter to the MLA
on Issues They Care About

Special Note - These lessons are intended to be used as a guide. Please add your own creative ideas, teaching strategies, and personal style to adapt these lessons to the needs of your local community and student interests.

By

Tracey Bussanich (B.Ed.) – Educator
Inspirus Education (Pronounced Inspire Us)
inspirusgroup@gmail.com

Fall 2009

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Lesson Summary:

In this lesson, Part 1 of Youth Activism, the students will take action by writing a letter to their local MLA. In small groups, the students will discuss issues they care about, and what they would like to see happen in their community! The students will share with the class their individual letters. In a leadership role, the youth are encouraged to reach their full potential as capable, competent, and caring eco-citizens. Their opinion and voice is important to make a difference today and for the future!

After the students write their letter, they will sign and commit to an "Action Pledge to Protect BC's Endangered Species, and Make Positive Changes for Their Community, Environment, and Resources." As a class, the students can decide if they would like to take the "Sierra Club Letter Writing Challenge" and send their letters to Sierra Club. Please visit the link on to the Sierra Club BC Chapter website. Click onto the "Action Challenges - 2. Write a Letter" section.

http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education/ed_students/elementary-students/action-challenge/action-challenges.

As a self-confidence booster, the students will display their letter to the MLA in the school hallway. They will be a role model demonstrating leadership and youth activism by telling other students about their letter to the MLA and action pledge they have signed!

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Lesson:

1. Divide your class into small groups of 4 people. In small groups, students can brainstorm and discuss with each other:
 - In terms of eco-friendly action projects, what would they like to see happen in their community? How can they make a positive change for the environment and resources around them?
 - What other issues are important to them, and what do they care about?
 - Do they have any questions for their MLA?
 - How is the government helping protect BC's endangered species, such as the Northern abalone, in the local area?
2. Have each group record their brainstorm on pieces of chart paper and share with the rest of the class for discussion. Photocopy and hand out the "What's on Our Minds" (mind maps) outline for each student to write their ideas inside the picture of a person's head.
3. Review parts of a letter, and how to write a letter to their local MLA. Students will then use their ideas from their brainstorm session to write a letter to their local MLA. Visit the link on to the Sierra Club BC Chapter website. Click onto the "Action Challenges - 2. Write a Letter" section. http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education/ed_students/elementary-students/action-challenge/action-challenges. Students then edit their letters and may write out their letters to give to the MLA on the field trip. See Lesson # 2 – Youth Activism (Part 2). Ask the students to decide as a class if they would like to take the "Sierra Club Letter Writing Challenge" and send their letters to the Sierra Club as well.
4. To practice public speaking, the students will present their letter in front of the class. This will help the youth gain confidence when they present their letter to the MLA on their field trip. Remember to cheer for each person after they read out their letter! Public speaking takes courage and self-confidence! Photocopy three sets of each letter. One set to give to the MLA on the field trip, one set for the students and teacher to keep for their portfolio, and one set to display the letter in the hallway of the school.
5. On a large piece of chart paper, have the students sign and commit to an "Action Pledge to Protect BC's Endangered Species, and Make Positive Changes for Their Community, Environment, and Resources."
6. Have the students share their signatures and letters to the MLA with the rest of the school by posting the chart paper in the hallway. Congratulate and celebrate with your youth for being role models in the school by demonstrating leadership skills and youth activism in the community!

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Subject Area(s): Environment and Sustainability Across BC's K-12 Curricula: Social Studies, Language Arts, and Health and Career Education.

Grade Level: Our summer camp chose to host students 6-12 years old in age. This unit is designed for teachers to adapt the unit for elementary, middle, and high school.

Standards: See Below

BC Ministry of Education Curriculum Prescribed Learning Outcomes:

Social Studies:

- Describe ways individuals contribute to a community.
- Demonstrate a sense of responsibility for their local environment, BC's endangered species, and community.
- Identify a variety of social structures in which they live, learn, work, and play together.

Health and Career Education:

- Identify types of work and careers that interest them.
- To encourage activism in youth applying a goal-setting model to a short-term goal.

Language Arts:

- Developing oral language abilities (speaking and listening).
- Developing reading and viewing abilities.
- Developing writing and representing abilities.

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Write a letter to their local MLA about an issue or issues they care about.
- Commit to an Action Pledge to protect BC's endangered species, such as Northern abalone.
- Commit to an Action Pledge to make positive changes for their community, environment, and resources.
- Decide as a class if they would like to take the Sierra Club Letter Writing Challenge.
- Model leadership skills and youth activism to their schoolmates by posting their letter to the MLA in the hallway.

Lesson Scope and Sequence:

One of our hopes for this teacher guide is that your youth stewardship group (your class) will realize that they have an important role to help make this world a better place. May your youth feel empowered to share their ideas and opinions, and take action! Your role is to help mentor your youth into understanding that they are important, and that their community needs to hear from them.

In this lesson, Part 1 of Youth Activism, the students will write a letter to their local MLA. As well, they will sign and commit to an action pledge. In Lesson # 2, Part 2 of Youth Activism, the students will go on a field trip and visit the local government office to present their letter to the MLA!

Watch your youth gain self-confidence as you daily talk to them about youth activism, and how they contribute to "The Seven Paddles of Our Ocean Canoe: environmental stewardship, teamwork, self-confidence, gratitude, leadership, friendships, and taking action." Sometimes it takes a bit of patience to wait until the students in your class feel comfortable to voice their own opinions...it's well worth the wait!

BC's Species at Risk - Northern abalone Information for the Lesson

<http://oceanlink.island.net/Conservation/abalone/BHCAP/Nisga/ncw.html>

Abalone was recognized as a sentinel species by Nisga'a Youth needing our protection, in addition to oolichan (eulachon), chum salmon and glass sponge reefs. The population of Northern abalone in BC declined dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s due to overharvest. The fishery was closed to all harvesting in 1990. In 1999 abalone was listed as a "Threatened" species, and in 2003 it was legally protected under the Species At Risk Act (SARA) which prohibits taking, buying, selling or trading of abalone. While several marine species will be used as agents of this program, the abalone will be the Nisga'a Coast Watch keystone species for promoting best management practices, conservation and protection of marine resources in Northern BC and Nass Coastal Waters.

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Student Assessment:

As a whole class, set criteria for evaluating what makes a good letter to their MLA; and for demonstrating leadership skills and youth activism. Criteria could include:

- Ability to voice their opinion and idea.
- Proper format of a letter.
- Ability to state a concern for their community.
- Ability to commit to an action pledge.
- Ability to speak in front of the class with a loud, clear, and confident voice.
- Sharing and being proud of their letter with other students in the school.

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Review:	Individual and whole group	To practice public speaking, the students will present their letter in front of the class and to other students in the hallway of their school. This will help the students gain confidence when they present their letter to the MLA. Remember to cheer!
Eco-friendly Action Project:		<p>Our eco-friendly action project was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write a letter to the local MLA about an issue or issues the students care about. ▪ Commit to an Action Pledge to protect BC's endangered species, such as Northern abalone. ▪ Commit to an Action Pledge to make positive changes for their community, environment, and resources. ▪ Demonstrate leadership skills and youth activism by displaying the letter to the MLA in the hallway.
Application/Work time:		One or two lesson blocks as needed.

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

<p>Self-Evaluation and Critique:</p>		<p>Our summer camp hosted youth ages 6-12 years old. It was a challenge that took time and patience for these young youth to understand that they have good ideas. Once our young youth realized that their ideas are important, they were able to write a short letter to the MLA with teacher assistance. We called these letters, "What's on Our Minds" (mind maps). Their short letter was written inside the outline picture of a student's head.</p> <p>When our Nisga'a youth visited their village government in New Aiyansh, BC to present their letters...the government representatives liked their ideas!</p> <p>At the end of the two week camp, our young youth felt empowered and important. They started to talk about going on a youth exchange to Vancouver, BC, or California, USA, for next year!</p>
<p>Accommodation Options: See Below</p>		
<p>ELL / IEP Students:</p>		<p>Assign a mentor to help young students get their wonderful ideas in a short letter format.</p>
<p>Highly-Capable Students:</p>		<p>Ask these students to be the "official recorder" for their small group. Have them write every person's idea onto a piece of chart paper.</p>

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Management/Organization Tips:

- Photocopy the letter format handout from the Sierra Club website at http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education/ed_students/elementary-students/action-challenge/action-challenges .
- Decide as a class if they would like to take the Sierra Club Letter Writing Challenge.
- Prepare large pieces of chart paper to hand out to each small group for their brainstorm session.
- Prepare on a large piece of chart paper the "Action Pledge to Protect BC's Endangered Species, and Make Positive Changes for Their Community, Environment, and Resources" for the students to place their signatures. Remember to bring this Action Pledge to the MLA!
- Photocopy three sets of the final copy of the student's letter to the MLA.

Approximate Time Needed: Use a 45 minute block of time to write the letter. Take an additional 45 minutes, for the students to present their letter to the class as needed.

Prerequisite Skills:

- Knowledge about local government and MLA.
- Knowledge about letter format.
- Knowledge on public speaking.

Materials and Resources Required for Lesson:

See Management and Organization Tips above.

Adopted and other Audio/Visual: None.

Supplemental Resources (including Internet resources):

Supplies: See Management and Organization Tips above.

Nisga'a Fisheries: Marine Conservation Youth Stewardship Lesson Plan

Technology – Hardware (Click boxes of all equipment needed.)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> VCR	<input type="checkbox"/> Projection System
<input type="checkbox"/> Printer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Video Camera	<input type="checkbox"/> Camera
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digital Camera	<input type="checkbox"/> Scanner (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/> Video Conferencing
Technology – Software (Click boxes of all software needed.)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photocopier machine. ▪ Take photos and videos of the student as they read out their letter. 		
Optional Technology Extensions:	If your school has a website, post the student letters on the website!	