

We Are Water Protectors

By: Carole Lindstrom Illustrated by Michaela Goade
New York: Roaring Book Press

Synopsis of the Story

Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, *We Are Water Protectors* issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption—a bold and lyrical picture book written by Carole Lindstrom and vibrantly illustrated by Michaela Goade.

Strategies	Teacher Hints
<p style="text-align: center;">Background Information</p> <p>Begin by asking students what the most important and vital thing in their life is. They may answer toys, games, friends or family. Respect all answers, but guide the conversation to things students need for survival. Consider food, shelter and finally make sure they come to the realization that water is fundamental for life, even a few days without water could be disastrous.</p>	<p>Ensure to level this discussion to the age and maturity level of your students. Be the judge of what is acceptable.</p>
<p>Share the Article 'An ongoing symbol of colonization': How bad water affects First Nations' health https://globalnews.ca/news/8199988/first-nations-water-crisis-health-effects/</p>	<p>Discuss the ramifications of the article.</p>
<p>Older Students can review the website https://waterfirst.ngo/</p>	<p>Although this organization is not Indigenous-run, they have an Indigenous Advisory Council providing feedback on the work they do.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion</p> <p>Have students imagine they do not have clean water. How is their day different? What do they have to do to try to have a similar standard of living? Think about all the things access to clean drinking water affects - not just drinking water itself, but all the things that come from the ability to have easy access to water.</p>	<p>Accept as wide a range of answers as possible. Write down and post the list so students can refer back to it.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion</p> <p>Display the cover to “We Are Water Protectors”. Have students discuss the cover and title. What do they see? What could it mean? What could the story be about? What do they think a water protector is and does?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Read the Book</p> <p>Read the story to the class, pausing to show the illustrations so the students can see the rich details.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Statues</p> <p>Students should be scatted throughout the classroom so that they have their own space. Have the students imagine themselves to be a creature from the story - an insect, bird, wolf deer etc... When they have chosen, have them freeze in a position showing that animal. Students can look around at all the animals in the class.</p>	<p>You can select each student individually and ask them what animal they are and how they are feeling living free in the forest.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Statues</p> <p>Invite students to imagine that the black snake has come, carving its way through the forest. The water is spoiled, the land is sick. Have them create statues of their animals dealing with the effects of the black snake.</p>	<p>You can select each student individually and ask them what animal they are and how they are feeling now with the black snake.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Hot Seating</p> <p>Have the students work in small groups to come up with a list of questions they could ask the black snake. Explain that you are going to go into the role as the snake and sit in the “hot seat” answering their questions.</p>	<p>This activity could be difficult depending on the age of your students. Focus on answering the question honestly while in role.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Chanting</p> <p>Have the students imagine they are allies and want to help defeat the Black Snake. Review the pages that say “We stand with our songs and our drums. We are still here.” Work with the class to create a chant they can use to try to defeat the Black Snake. Perform the chant together.</p>	<p>Older students can work in small groups and create their own chants. As a performance, you can go into role as the Black Snake and be “defeated” by the chant.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Writing in Role</p> <p>Have students imagine they are allies in the fight against the Black Snake and have just defeated it. Have them write a letter of journal entry describing what they have accomplished. What did they do? Why did they do it? Why was it important? How do they feel now?</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Extension - Art/Media Activity</p> <p>Invite students to create art pieces or educational posters about the dangers of oil pollution. Create slogans and taglines and use imagery to convey meaning.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Extension - Earth Steward and Water Protector Pledge</p> <p>The book has a template for a water protector pledge. Review with your students and invite them to sign. Post in a prominent location in the school to help raise awareness.</p>	

Further information:

The CBC Curio website (<https://curio.ca/>) has several videos about the resistance to pipelines in both Canada and beyond.

Lean360 (<https://learn360.infobase.com/>) has several documentaries about pipelines. Please review all films and ensure they are appropriate for your grade.

Please see drewbeatty.com for more information and lesson plans.