

The Story of Nibi (Water) Song

I can sing Nibi Song and tell its story

This song was written by Doreen Day at the request of her grandson, Mashkoonce. Doreen and Mashkoonce give written permission (via the website below) for everyone to share this song... sing it to the water every day. Verbal permission to use this song in Minnesota classrooms was obtained by Lyz Jaakola.

This is the story of the Nibi (Water) Song, as told by Beatrice Menase Kwe Jackson, Migizi Clan.

Doreen attended a conference about the water in which the internationally known speaker, Dr. Masaru Emoto said, the very least we should do every day, is to speak to the water:

Water, we love you. We thank you. We respect you.

So she did this. Every day on their drive to drop Mashkoonce (Little Elk) at school, they passed a body of water. And every day they said those words to the water as they drove by. They made games by saying it in different voices and then would say it as fast as they could.

Then one day Mashkoonce, said, “Nokomis why can’t we say this in our language?” So, Doreen asked her daughter’s language teacher to write it in Ojibwemowin. Doreen had the words taped to the car visor as they learned the words.

One day Mashkoonce said, “Nokomis why don’t we sing the words, don’t you think the water would like it to be sung?” So she thought about it and came up with the tune. They sang this song to the water every morning on their drive to school. It is sung like a lullaby and doesn’t use shakers or drums.

Nibi Song (pronounced Nee-bee)

http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com/?attachment_id=2244

Click the link above to listen to Nibi Song. Follow the words. Join the singing. Move your hand to outline the shape of the melody. Where is ornamentation used in the melody?

Nibi Song

Ne-be Gee Zah-gay-e-goo

Gee Me-gwetch-wayn ne-me-goo

Gee Zah Wayn ne-me-goo

Translation

Nibi = water

Gee = you

Zah-gay-e-goo = we (inclusive) love you

Me-gwetch-wayn ne-me-goo = we (inclusive) thank you

Zah Wayn ne-me-goo = we (inclusive) respect you

The Water Walk

Information for this lesson comes from <http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com>

I can tell about the Water Walk



What is the water walk?

The Mother Earth Water Walk was started in 2003 by Josephine Mandamin, an Anishinaabe grandmother. She and a small group of adults from different clans wanted to raise awareness of their relationship to the waters by walking around Lake Superior.

Why did they focus on water?

Water is one of the basic elements needed for life to exist, yet it was being polluted by chemicals, vehicle emissions, motor boats, sewage disposal, agricultural pollution, and leaking landfill sites.

Where did the walk begin and end?

The walkers began and ended at the Bad River reservation (Wisconsin) on the South Shore of Lake Superior. Bad River reservation is one of the Ojibwe-Anishinaabe communities well known for environmental protection programs.

How many days did it take to complete the walk?

The 1,300-mile walk around Lake Superior took 36 days. That's an average of 36 miles each day.



Why did they carry water from all over?

Walkers carried a copper bucket of water from four directions to recognize the spirit of four directions in everything they do. All the waters around Turtle Island are at various levels of pollution and Lake Superior is the largest body of fresh water, so it is a gesture to call attention to the role humans have in keeping our waters fresh.

What happened at the end of the walk?

At the end of the walk there were ceremonies for the walkers and for the water. The water was added to Lake Superior.

Final thought? Singing songs like **Nibi Song** is a way to honor something we respect.