

### **Art Lesson for 5th Grade: Three Tribes**

(students are unaware that the lesson is based on their Native Americans studies)

#### **The set up:**

- \* When the students arrive, there are 3 tables set up with a label on each-"Dirt Tribe", "Rock Tribe", "Stick Tribe" plus my table ... not yet labelled.
- [I selected resources that would be readily available to any New England Native American tribe.]
- \* On each table is a basket of the material, spoons, small baskets and containers, and a bowl of water.
- [All tribes would have access to water.]
- \* At each table are flat styrofoam trays that serve as bases for the individual or group work.

#### **First Presentation:**

Students are told

- \* that they are in a tribal group, tribes work for mutual benefit
- \* that they have a natural resource to use but they need to protect it so they don't use it up
- \* brief discussion & questions follow.

**First activity:** tribe members are to explore the possibilities of using the resource to create, looking for the best use and limitations; time is limited. [Children create structures, little villages, boundaries, etc.]

#### **Second Presentation:**

Students are told that there are other tribes in the region with other resources and they may establish trade with the other tribes, trying to discover if combining resources enhances possibilities. However, students must remember the following-

- \* they need to retain some of their resources
- \* an ambassador or emissary should negotiate terms of a trade, because if the whole tribe went on a trade mission, who would remain to protect their resources? The tone of negotiations is discussed.
- \* what is needed to carry out the trade? Containers to carry, which are already on their tables.
- \* brief discussion & questions follow.

**Second activity:** tribe members are given time to select trade ambassadors and start to negotiate with the other tribes; given the new resources, they then start creating structures, etc.

#### **Third Presentation:**

I pull out my sign, "Trading Post" and put a basket of scissors, raffia, and jute string on my table; we talk about the influence of outsiders offering different tools and materials, usually wanting a different type of trade agreement. [They keep coming to me with offers which I reject until they ask or figure out that what I want is clean-up help.]

**Third activity:** tribe members are given time to create using the new tools that are available to them if a successful trade agreement is reached.

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I use all the terms that will enhance their sense of clarified roles, character of interaction, and role playing. After a few minutes of doing the activity, the students clearly show they are stepping into the role of tribal member, into the process of selection of ambassador, trade negotiator, etc. It is always fascinating to listen to them. Their products are wonderful and ingenious, and when they get to the study in class, they will have experienced all of the above, leading to better understanding of their social studies units to follow.