

TRADITIONAL WEATHER FORECAST: SUPERSTITION AND BELIEF GR: PREK-2 (LESSON 5)

Elder Quote/Belief:



“Superstition and Belief – like the story of the swallows may be more of a teaching tool rather than a superstition teaching that for every action, there is a reaction. How do we integrate that into the lesson plan? In the past these were taught by parents, aunts and uncles instead of at school.”
-Pat Norman, Port Graham

Grade Level: PreK-2

Overview: Superstition and belief has always been a part of our culture and heritage. These stories have always been a way of teaching the younger kids. If the child disobeyed their parent, there would be consequences. These beliefs and superstitions were a way to help guide each other through various situations in life. Superstitions are difficult to explain but are very real and should be heeded. Our ancestors have used superstition and beliefs as guidelines through many years of observation of the environment in which they lived.

Standards:

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content Science:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
D4 Gather oral and written history information from the local community and provide an appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance	F2, 3 Cultural, social, personal perspectives and science. A student should understand the dynamic relationship among scientific, cultural, social and personal perspectives.	CE Students should have knowledge of traditional stories and methods of teaching through story telling.

Lesson Goal: Students will learn about various beliefs and superstitions and how the Elders used these stories as a way of teaching.

Lesson Objective(s): Students will:

- Be introduced to traditional superstitions and beliefs that the Elders knew and passed on as lessons used through generations.
- Learn the Sugt’stun or Eyak vocabulary words

Vocabulary Words:

Sugt’stun Dialects

English:	Prince William Sound:	Lower Cook Inlet:	Eyak:
story		Quliyanguaq	wAXah
Old Belief		Qangirllat Picit	

Legend			tsahgL
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Materials/Resources Needed:

Books: (**OR**, if there are teaching beliefs/superstitions in your community, replace these ones with local)

- [*Old Beliefs- Qangirllat Picit*](#)
- [*Fireweed – Life and Times in Port Graham*](#)

Teacher Preparation:

- Invite an Elder to share their beliefs and teaching stories if available. Review ways to show respect for guests with students before they arrive.
- Research for local beliefs and superstitions from your community to share with students.
- Review and mark the following stories, so can quickly locate to read out loud:
 - “*When to Take Toys Out*” p. 8
 - “*When February and March Fight*” p. 24
 - “*The Little Boy and His Words*” p. 32

Opening:

(Introduce the Elder, if available, to share some of their teaching superstitions/beliefs regarding weather.)

How many of you heard of a superstition? For example, one old superstition is that if you step on a spider, it will rain. Superstitions and beliefs have played an important part of the Chugach Region’s culture and heritage. These stories have always been a way of guiding and teaching others and children. Sometimes superstitions are difficult to explain, but the Elders want to stress they are very real and should be heeded. Our ancestors have used superstition and beliefs as guidelines through many years of observation of the environment in which they lived.

We will be reading stories from the books *Old Beliefs* and *Fireweed – Life and Times in Port Graham*. (Try to locate other beliefs from the surrounding communities.) Hopefully, these stories will help give a better understanding of what some of the Chugach Regions superstitions and beliefs are regarding weather or seasonal change and how the Elders used them to teach.

Activities:

Class I:

1. Read and discuss the following Elder quotes to the students:
 - a. “*Beliefs – don’t whistle when you’re in the wheelhouse, in the boat. You’re calling the bad weather.*” -Tom Anderson, Cordova
 - b. “*It was considered taboo for young girls to talk about the weather and that they should always wear a scarf around their head, like a pelat’uuk, like the women wear in church.*” – Jennie Kamluck, Port Graham.
 - c. “*If you burn green grass, it will make it rain.*” -Stella Meganack, Port Graham.
 - d. “*Fog leads the salmon into the bay. If you’re lost in the fog, you look to the sky and see which way it’s moving. The fog moves inland from the ocean, and if you’re lost in the fog in the woods you find a creek and follow it down stream.*” -Stella Meganack, Port Graham

- e. *“Superstition and Belief – the story of the swallows may be more of a teaching rather than a superstition, for every action there is a reaction, how do we integrate that into the lesson plan? In the past these were taught by parents, aunts and uncles instead of school.” -Pat Norman, Port Graham.*
2. Ask the students if they have heard of these beliefs and are they aware of other beliefs in regards to weather.
 3. Read out loud to the students, the following stories from the book [*Old Beliefs- Qangirllat Picit*](#) and after each story is read, ask what the students think the plot of the story was.
 - a. *“When to Take Toys Out”* This story was about the timing of seasons. The lesson was for kids, that if you took your toys out before the geese returned, you would make the winter last longer into spring.
 - b. *“When February and March Fight”* This story is about the spring months that fight each other on who is the most stormy.
 - c. *“The Little Boy and His Words”* This story is about a boy who wished for summer and made the winter longer.

Assessments:

- Students can correctly pronounce the Sugt’stun or Eyak words
- Students are able to retell the superstitions and beliefs and weather forecast.

