

Lesson 5: Ikče Wicašta in Mni Sóta Makóce

Main Idea: Within a Dakota worldview, it is important to strive to be *ikče wicašta*.

Essential Questions

- Why should we all learn about *ikče wicašta*?

Learning Goals: (Students will know that):

- Many Dakota people, both young and old, strive to be *ikče wicašta*.
- *Ikče wicašta* can also hold meaning for people who are not Dakota.
- Part of being *ikče wicašta* means being a good relative to each other and to the land and all things that live on it.

Students Will Be Able To:

- Define *ikče wicašta*
- Understand what *ikče wicašta* means to Dakota people

Student Tasks:

Ikče Wicašta discussion

Fill out *Ikče wicašta* video notes worksheet

Assessment Tools:

Ikče wicašta video notes worksheet

Exit Slip quick write

Main Lesson Activities (all times are suggested as a guide):

1. Review Dakota Values – 10 min
2. Introduction & Discussion of *Ikče Wicašta* – 15 min
3. *Ikče Wicašta* in Action – video interview and reflection – 20 min

Prior Knowledge Activated:

Lessons 1-4

Personal, family, and community values and worldview

5.1 In the Classroom

Learner Resources	Teacher Materials
<p>Media Resources: Login by clicking Login button or going to: http://dakotawicohan.org/my-account/</p> <p>- Username: DW - Password: dakota123</p> <p>Then go to: http://dakotawicohan.org/lessons/lesson-5-ikce-wicasta-in-mni-sota-makoce/</p> <p>Dakota Community Interviews: - David Louis, Samantha Odegard, Glenn Wasicuna (3:29 minutes)</p> <p>Dakota language in this lesson: - <i>Dakota wičohšin – Dakota ways of living</i> - <i>ikče wicašta – common people/person</i> - <i>mitakuye owas’iŋ – all my relations; we are all relatives</i></p>	<p>Handout: - Ikče wicašta video notes</p> <p>Vocabulary: (add to ongoing wall chart or student notebooks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- reclaim: <i>to take back something you lost or that was taken from you</i>- humanity: <i>the part inside of us that acknowledges other people's dignity and worth</i>- humanize: <i>to see someone's full human nature; to relate to someone or something as an equal person or being with equal value to oneself</i>- dehumanize: <i>to ignore or devalue a person's or a group's humanity, that is, to see them as less human or less like an equal person to yourself</i>- settlers: <i>people who come to a place that is new to them and who try to buy or control the land so they can stay</i> <p>MN 6th grade Social Studies Standards Alignment: 6.4.4.15.1 Compare and contrast the Dakota and Anishinaabe nations prior to 1800; describe their interactions with each other and other indigenous peoples. (Before European Contact).</p>

Recommended Additional Reading Other Instructional Materials for Instructors

Northern Lights Connections

- Chapter 18 : Taking A Stand (digital 18.13-18.16; print pp. 402-04)

5.2 Review Dakota Values

Ask students to review their Dakota Values in Action Worksheet and share their response with another person or the whole class (depending on time).

OR

Ask students to review the Core Dakota Values list and choose one that they saw in action in the last day. How was that value applied to a specific situation? What happened that makes them think that? Ask them to share with another person or the whole class, depending on time.

5.3 Introduction to Ikče Wicašta

Review main idea, essential question, learning goals and any vocabulary for the day.

For Teacher:

The Dakota people describe themselves as Ikče Wicašta, “common people.” It’s important to understand that ikče wicašta is not simply a Dakota word to describe who they are as a people. It is used to describe people living into their full capacity as humans, sometimes translated as being a “real human being.” The idea behind this concept is rooted in humility. We are no better or no less than anyone or anything because we all come from the same creator. This understanding is at the foundation of Dakota identity, that is, who we are. Before the term “Dakota,” before “American Indian,” before “Native American,” before “Indigenous,” before any other label, we recognize that we are human beings first. Using the term “ikče wicašta” to refer to oneself signals a desire to reclaim one’s own humanity.

Listen to the pronunciation of ikče wicašta on the student website and practice saying the phrase as a class. [Find at Lesson 5: Ikče Wicašta in Mni Sóta Mačoce
<http://dakotawicohan.org/lessons/lesson-5-ikce-wicasta-in-mni-sota-makoce/>]

But why do some Dakota use the term ikče wicašta to talk about reclaiming their humanity? Over the course of our shared history in Mni Šota Mačoce , many settlers, ministers, traders, and agents of the US government interacted with the Dakota people and often lived side by side with them in Mni Sóta Mačoce. Yet in different ways and at different times they also tried to make the Dakota seem less than human so that they could justify disrespecting or even erasing their language and culture, and excuse how they mistreated them and cheated them in ways that pushed the Dakota out of their homelands. Even today there are still some people who don’t think of the Dakota as fully human—they were just people who deserved to get driven out of the

way because they were “weaker.” And now more Dakota people live outside of Mni Sóta Mačoce than here in their homeland. Also, some Dakota reservations are located next to or on some of the most polluted and contaminated parcels of land in the state. For instance, a nuclear power plant was built next to Prairie Island in 1973, and is also used to store nuclear waste. In addition, the Lower and Upper Sioux Reservations are located right along the Minnesota River, one of the most polluted bodies of water in Minnesota.

Dehumanization is a process of making certain people seem less than human and therefore, more vulnerable to being treated badly, or unfairly, or even violently. Individuals can dehumanize each other, but often in human history we see dehumanization working at a larger social and cultural level. People may not be living out their full humanity, or ikče wicašta, when they are dehumanized by others, but neither can the people who are doing the dehumanizing. Striving to be ikče wicašta is a way for all people to claim their full humanity.

In Mni Sóta Mačoce many Dakota are working to reclaim their humanity by living Dakota wičoh'aŋ and striving to reach the goal of ikče wicašta as a way to affirm the humanity and dignity of all people, including oneself.

5.4 Introduction to *Ikče Wicašta* (Continued)

For Teacher	For Students	Additional/Optional
<p><i>Ikče wicašta</i> is something that you try to embody and show in your actions. Participating in commemorative walks that honor and remember the Dakota story in Mni Sóta Mačoce, particularly the more painful and violent chapters of that story, is a way that some Dakota are striving for <i>ikče wicašta</i>. For others it means developing relationships with people or with one's own culture and language in a more full and positive way. <i>Ikče wicašta</i> means something very special to the Dakota people, but it can hold meaning for everyone who is open to the idea of developing our shared humanity and building a relationship to the land and with all of the people who call Mni Sóta Mačoce home.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add definition of <i>ikče wicašta</i> to vocabulary wall chart or student notebooks. • Go over how definition of <i>ikče wicašta</i> compares to <i>Dakota wičoh'aŋ</i>. <p>Dakota wičoh'aŋ: refers to activities and ways of living</p> <p>Ikče wicašta: refers to how one defines oneself—a person tries to become <i>ikče wicašta</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If needed before you launch this discussion, stop and ask students to consider the following definitions of “humanize” and “dehumanize.”

For Teacher	For Students	Additional/Optional
<p>Ask students to envision or describe what they think <i>ikče wicašta</i> looks like, that is, a true human being, someone living up to their own ideals and full potential. They can turn and talk to someone first or write first.</p> <p>Do the words and examples that students listed or named tie into what they have learned so far about Dakota worldviews and values (things like <i>mitakuye owas'iñ</i>, <i>Dakota wičoh'añ</i>, <i>wóuñšida</i>, or other Dakota values they have considered).</p> <p><i>A lot of what we have learned so far about the worldview and values of the Dakota are all a part of striving to be <i>ikče wicašta</i>.</i></p>	<p>Let's think about what <i>ikče wicašta</i> is.</p> <p>What would it mean to be a full and true human being?</p> <p>What are the characteristics of a person who is described as an <i>ikče wicašta</i>?</p> <p>Make a list of their actions and values.</p>	<p>Humanize: To see someone's full human nature; to relate to someone or something as an equal person or being with equal value to oneself.</p> <p>Dehumanize: To ignore or devalue a person's or a group's humanity, that is, to see them as less human or less like an equal person to yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following discussion might best be carried out in small group discussion before students share in the larger group. Or you may want to have students write their responses first. • You won't know what stories students are carrying as examples of dehumanizing behavior so be ready to jump in to provide examples if some students are reluctant to share. Or prompt them to think about historical or less personal examples if they prefer.

For Teacher	For Students	Additional/Optional
<p>Discuss with students examples of what they consider to be dehumanizing actions or words that they have experienced personally or seen or heard others experience or have learned about in history. How do we repair those actions and words? Or how do we recover from those actions?</p> <p>Be ready to prompt students with some examples at first. And keep in mind that dehumanizing someone is often more violent than bullying someone or calling him or her names, although bullying can certainly escalate into that kind of dehumanizing behavior.</p> <p>Dehumanizing someone is more systematic and extreme than most students experience in a school setting. Being dehumanized usually changes your day to day quality of life.</p>	<p>What are some examples you can think of that show us what dehumanizing actions or words are?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your personal life • other people and situations you know of or have heard about • what you have learned about in history 	<p>Possible examples:</p> <p>personal: <i>being physically attacked just because of who you are (for ex: poor, immigrant, black or brown-skinned, LGBTQ)</i></p> <p>other people/situations: <i>being at the mercy of smugglers who get you into a country and then leave you to die in the back of truck or container; being gunned down by a shooter because you are gay; having people ignore you or get angry at you because you're out on the street asking for money</i></p> <p>history: <i>the Holocaust in WWII or the more recent Rwandan genocide (both are examples of systematic killing of people simply because of who they are); being punished for speaking your native language (like they did with American Indians in boarding schools and regular schools in the US who did not speak English)</i></p>

For Teacher	For Students	Additional/Optional
<p>There are a range of ways to address dehumanization and we can suggest ideas to students, but they may have their own responses too.</p>	<p>How do we repair or recover from those actions and words?</p>	<p><i>Possible responses:</i> <i>In our personal life we might need to seek out others who understand and can help us to resist being badly treated and find individual strength.</i></p> <p><i>For situations where we know others are being dehumanized (even if we don't know those people personally) we can speak up and voice our reaction/protest. We can take actions to educate others around us who might not be paying attention or even care that much.</i></p> <p><i>When we think about dehumanization in history we can seek to educate ourselves and better understand what happened and why and we can dig deeper to find more stories so that the hard stories don't just disappear from view.</i></p> <p>How does this discussion about dehumanization relate to the Dakota and their concept of ikčé wicašta?</p>
		<p>This might be hard to address before watching the video interviews. You can return to this question at the end of the lesson.</p>

For Teacher	For Students	Additional/Optional
<p>Gauge where the classroom is at. This is a deep and potentially difficult discussion. If necessary and if you have time, it may be helpful to have students pause and do a free write or a poem or some artistic project that allows them some time to process the previous discussion.</p>		<p>Ask students to take an example of people they know (in school or their friends) who have been dehumanized. Think about the person who was dehumanized and the people who were dehumanizing that person—</p> <p>What happened? Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the situation turn around? • How might all the people involved reclaim their full humanity? • What are ways that the person being dehumanized might resist that treatment? <p>Writing prompts/poem prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the above questions to write a short paragraph • Start a poem or paragraph with: “Being dehumanized feels...” • “Dehumanizing others feels....” <p>Artistic expression project ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sketch/draw the feelings in a visual form • make a cartoon that shows a situation unfolding • visual collage that shows the feelings or actions in image— maybe all of them at once, not in a sequence

5.5 Ikče Wicašta in Action

View the short video of Dakota elders speaking about ikče wicašta (3:25).

Find at Lesson 5: Ikče Wicašta in Mni Sota Makoce

<http://dakotawicohan.org/lessons/lesson-5-ikce-wicasta-in-mni-sota-makoce/>]

Have learners discuss in small groups: (use worksheet if desired)

- *How do the different people in the video describe what it means to be ikče wicašta?*
- *What words, phrases, images, or stories did you hear or see that makes you say that?*
- *How do they compare to one another?*

Exit Slip: Ask students to write down at end of lesson what the connection is between ikče wicašta and dehumanization.

5.6 İkçe Wicašta Video Notes Worksheet

How does this person describe what it means to be ikçe wicašta? What words, phrases, images, or stories did you hear or see that makes you say that?

Name of person in video: _____

description:

words/phrases:

images:

stories:

Name of person in video: _____

How does this person describe what it means to be ikçe wicašta? What words, phrases, images, or stories did you hear or see that makes you say that?

description:

words/phrases:

images:

stories:

Name of person in video: _____

How does this person describe what it means to be ikče wicašta? What words, phrases, images, or stories did you hear or see that makes you say that?

description:

words/phrases:

images:

stories: