

Lesson 5: Ikçe Wicašta in Mni Sóta Maḵoce

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

Essential Questions

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

Learning Goals: (Students will know that):

- Many Daḵota people, both young and old, strive to be *ikçe wicašta*.
- *Ikçe wicašta* can also hold meaning for people who are not Daḵota.
- Part of being *ikçe 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 *ikçe wicašta*
- Understand what *ikçe wicašta* means to Daḵota people

Student Tasks:

Ikçe Wicašta discussion

Fill out *Ikçe wicašta* video notes worksheet

Assessment Tools:

Ikçe wicašta video notes worksheet

Exit Slip quick write

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

1. Review Daḵota Values – 10 min
2. Introduction & Discussion of *Ikçe Wicašta* – 15 minutes
3. *Ikçe 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/ - Username: DW - Password: dakota123 Then go to: http://dakotawicohan.org/lessons/lesson-5-ikce-wicasta-in-mni-sota-makoce/</p> <p>Daḡota Community Interviews: - David Louis, Samantha Odegard, Glenn Wasicuna (3:29 minutes)</p> <p>Daḡota language in this lesson: - Daḡota wiḡoh'aḡ – Daḡota ways of living - ikḡe wicaḡta – <i>common people/person</i> - mitakuye owas'iḡ – all my relations; we are all relatives</p>	<p>Handout: - Ikḡe wicaḡta video notes</p> <p>Vocabulary: (add to ongoing wall chart or student notebooks) - reclaim: to take back something you lost or that was taken from you - humanity: the part inside of us that acknowledges other people's dignity and worth - 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 - dehumanize: to ignore or devalue a person's or a group's humanity, that is, to see them seem as less human or less like an equal person to yourself - settlers: people who come to a place that is new to them and who try to buy or control the land so they can stay</p> <p>MN 6th grade Social Studies Standards Alignment: 6.4.4.15.1 Compare and contrast the Daḡota and Anishinaabe nations prior to 1800; describe their interactions with each other and other indigenous peoples. (Before European Contact).</p>
Recommended Additional Reading for Instructors	Other Instructional Materials
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 Ikçe Wicašta

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

For Teacher:

The Dakota people describe themselves as Ikçe Wicašta, “common people.” It’s important to understand that ikçe 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 “ikçe wicašta” to refer to oneself signals a desire to reclaim one’s own humanity.

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

But why do some Dakota use the term ikçe wicašta to talk about reclaiming their humanity? Over the course of our shared history in Mni Sóta Maḵoce, 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 Maḵoce. 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 Maḵoḱe 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 ikḱe wicaḱta, when they are dehumanized by others, but neither can the people who are doing the dehumanizing. Striving to be ikḱe wicaḱta is a way for all people to claim their full humanity.

In Mni Sóta Maḵoḱe many Dakota are working to reclaim their humanity by living Dakota wiḱoh’añ and striving to reach the goal of ikḱe wicaḱta as a way to affirm the humanity and dignity of all people, including oneself.

5.4 Introduction to Ikçe Wicašta (Continued)

For Teacher	For Students	Additional/Optional
<p><i>Ikçe wicašta is something that you try to embody and show in your actions. Participating in commemorative walks that honor and remember the Daḡota story in Mni Śota Maḡoce, particularly the more painful and violent chapters of that story, is a way that some Daḡota are striving for ikçe wicašta. For others it means developing relationships with people or with one’s own culture and language in a more full and positive way. Ikçe wicašta means something very special to the Daḡota 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 Śota Maḡoce home.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add definition of <i>ikçe wicašta</i> to vocabulary wall chart or student notebooks. • Go over how definition of <i>ikçe wicašta</i> compares to <i>Daḡota wiḡoh’aḡ</i>. <p>Daḡota wicoḡ’aḡ: refers to activities and ways of living</p> <p>Ikçe wicašta: refers to how one defines oneself—a person tries to become <i>ikçe 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>ikçe 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 Daḡota worldviews and values (things like <i>mitakuye owas'ın</i>, <i>Daḡota wiḡoh'an</i>, <i>wóuḡsida</i>, or other Daḡota values they have considered).</p> <p><i>A lot of what we have learned so far about the worldview and values of the Daḡota are all a part of striving to be ikçe wicašta.</i></p>	<p>Let's think about what <i>ikçe 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>ikçe 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 seem 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. 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><i>personal: being physically attacked just because of who you are (for ex: poor, immigrant, black or brown-skinned, LGBTQ)</i></p> <p><i>other people/situations: 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><i>history: 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>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 Ikçe Wicašta in Action

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

Find at Lesson 5: Ikçe 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 ikçe 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 ikçe wicašta and dehumanization.

5.6 Ikçe 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 ikçe wicašta? What words, phrases, images, or stories did you hear or see that makes you say that?

description:

words/phrases:

images:

stories:

