

Wapos Bay JOURNEY THROUGH FEAR episode 2

Episode Description

It is June 21 and there is a lot of excitement because the Wapos Bay community is celebrating National Aboriginal Day with a summer festival. Young T-Bear and Talon accept a challenge to climb the community's fire tower. Grippled by a fear of heights, T-Bear is unable to come down, even when his father, Jacob, comes to the rescue. Reluctance to confront their fears leads to a misunderstanding and plenty of assumptions as the story is reported as a political protest on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). Meanwhile, Raven is preparing for a fishing trip with her mom and kohkum, but begins to feel sick. Both T-Bear and Raven respond to their fears by first denying and avoiding them and then eventually overcoming them with the support of their family, friends and elders. No matter the source of fears there are real physical and emotional responses to them and, as we see in this story, guidance from family, friends and elders can lead to a journey through fear.



Key themes

- Understanding and overcoming fears and peer pressure.
- Making assumptions based on stereotypes can lead to larger misunderstandings.
- Features of a northern Canadian community such as fire towers, recreation, celebrations, cultural traditions and values, and Aboriginal language traditions.
- The Cree way of life in this fictitious northern community includes festivals, celebrations and the passing on of skills and traditions.

PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES (Refer to Background Information guide for series' preview activities)

- 1 ► Introduce the Cree words used in *Journey Through Fear*.

CREE GLOSSARY

kohkum – grandmother

mushom – grandfather

wapos – rabbit

wan ska – wake up

wee kay – medicine

- 2 ► What is fear? What happens to your body when you're afraid?
- 3 ► What is peer pressure? Has a friend ever dared you to do something you didn't really want to do? What are some ways of dealing with peer pressure?
- 4 ► What is a stereotype? *A generalization about a particular group of people.*
What stereotypes exist about Aboriginal people and communities?
e.g., protesting inequality by occupying government offices to get attention.
How do stereotypes affect you, your family and your community?
- 5 ► **A)** For northern students: How would you describe your summer environment to someone who has never been here? What do you like about living in your community? What local events do you look forward to?
B) For other students: When you hear about "the North" in the summer, what images come to your mind? Describe the northern environment: *e.g., trees, lakes, short summers, lots of daylight, northern lights, mosquitoes, black flies, moose and fish.*
How do you think the people in northern communities travel in summer? *On foot, canoes, motorboats, airplanes and other modern vehicles.*
What do you suppose the people in northern communities do for fun and recreation in the summer? *Summer festivals, bingo, dances, fishing, camping, storytelling.*
C) What is the purpose of a fire tower? What are the sources of forest fires in the North?
- 6 ► **A)** How do the media shape our views of Aboriginal people? How do the media shape our views of ourselves?
B) What is the media's role in stereotyping?
C) What is APTN?

VIEW EPISODE

Introduce and View *Wapos Bay: Journey Through Fear*.

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1 ► Facilitate a class discussion on fear. Cultivate a safe environment for students to express, work through and reflect on their emotions. Develop guidelines, e.g., what is shared in the class is to be respected and not fodder for creating conflict by putting down others about their fears.
 - A)** How did T-Bear respond to peer pressure? How did he respond to his feelings of fear? How did Jacob respond to fear? How did Raven respond to fear?
 - B)** What happens physically when we experience fear? *The adrenaline hormone is released, causing faster heart beats, faster breathing, shaking and even crying or screaming and sometimes increased physical abilities. Other responses to fear are nausea, extreme calmness and even paralysis.*
What are some long-term health effects of living with fear? *Heart disease, stress and anxiety. Fears can escalate to phobias.*

- C)** How did each character overcome their fears in the film?
- D)** Have you ever overcome your fear? How? e.g., *Step by step, self talk, talking your self through the situation.*
What can you do in the future? *Talk to your family and friends, develop a step-by-step plan including those who can support you and carry out your plan; tell your story to others, and write your story to share with others.*
- E)** What is the source of the misunderstanding in this episode?
T-Bear and his father are reluctant to admit their fears.
- 2** ➤ **A)** What are the elements of a news story? *News stories usually answer the 5 Ws: Who? What? Where? When? Why?*
B) What do news reporters do to make sure that the stories they write are accurate? *They try to get the story from several sources.*
C) What do journalists and news media do when they make an error in reporting? *They print or broadcast a retraction or correction.*
D) How do the media shape our views of Aboriginal people? What is the media's role in stereotyping?
E) What are the stereotypes that are presented in this episode of *Wapos Bay*? Comment on the media's role in perpetuating stereotypes in the show.
F) What is a sound bite? Is there a relationship between the way that the news is presented in "sound bites" and stereotyping?
- 3** ➤ **A)** Describe the *Wapos Bay* environment. How does the environment relate to their way of life and cultural traditions?
B) How have Aboriginal communities prevented devastating forest fires in the past?
Controlled burning in the spring season.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Tell and/or write a story of a time you were afraid. How did you overcome it?
- News reporting is a form of storytelling. Brainstorm the criteria for what makes a story "newsworthy." Write a news story about events in your school and community; be sure to use several sources.
- The APTN reporter perceived the situation in *Journey Through Fear* as a stereotypical "Aboriginal protest." Write and present the story as it actually happened, including how Jacob and T-Bear's fears led to lying that caused a major misunderstanding.

Aboriginal groups across North America understood the power of the media, beginning with the Wounded Knee conflict in South Dakota in the 1970s. By staging protests in strategic locales, Aboriginal groups have been able to gain increased support for recognition of Aboriginal rights to land and resources. So there can be some element of truth in stereotypes, but it is important to continue questioning the beliefs we hold about particular groups of people.

- Research historical protests that have garnered national media attention such as Wounded Knee, Oka and Ipperwash. What was the source of the conflict? How did the protest affect the outcome for Aboriginal groups?
- Invite local Aboriginal leaders to address the question: What are the most effective methods for Aboriginal groups to gain support for their causes? Develop reasoned responses based on presentations and other research.