

Copyright © 2015 Pearson Canada Inc., Toronto, Ontario.

All rights reserved. This publication is protected by copyright and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise.

Permission to reprint copyright material is gratefully acknowledged. Every effort was made to trace ownership of copyright material, secure permission, and accurately acknowledge its use. For information regarding permissions, please contact the Permissions Department through [www.pearsoncanada.ca](http://www.pearsoncanada.ca).

The information and activities presented in this work have been carefully edited and reviewed. However, the publisher shall not be liable for any damages resulting, in whole or in part, from the reader's use of this material.

Feedback on this publication can be sent to [editorialfeedback@pearsoned.com](mailto:editorialfeedback@pearsoned.com).

Pearson Canada Inc.  
26 Prince Andrew Place  
Don Mills, ON M3C 2T8  
Customer Service: 1-800-361-6128

1 2 3 4 5 WC 19 18 17 16 15  
Printed and bound in Canada

Publisher: Elynor Kagan  
Research and Communications Manager: Mark Cressman  
Managing Editor: Angelie Kim  
Coordinating Editor: Meredith Oberfrank  
Developmental Editor, Teacher's Resource: Carol Wells  
Developmental Editors, Student Books: David MacDonald, Anne MacInnes, Monica Schwalbe  
Copy Editors: Erin Akerman, Anita Levin  
Proofreaders: Allana Amlin, Kathleen ffolliott  
Permissions Editor: Sue Petryckewycz  
Manager, Project Management K–12: Alison Dale  
Project Manager, Production: Jon Maxfield  
Cover and Interior Design: David Cheung, Zena Denchik, Alex Li  
Cover Image: Kristian Seculic/Getty  
Composition: Lapid  
Vice-President, Publishing: Mark Cobham

**PEARSON**

ISBN 978-0-13-386591-2

# Well Aware

Teacher's Resource | 5

**Dr. Linda M. Cameron**

**Linda Millar**

**PEARSON**

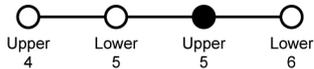


## Invitation to Learning

# Welcome to the Circle

by Larry Loyie with Constance Brissenden

### Level



### Text Type

- Information

### Genre

- Non-Fiction

### Line Masters

- LM 17: Parent/Caregiver Invitation—*Welcome to the Circle*

### TEACHER TIP

*Welcome to the Circle* presents a First Nations look at ways of being in the world. Encourage students to try to picture this way of life and its teachings as a way of discovering *empathy*. Among Aboriginal peoples, empathy is described through the phrase “walk a moon in my moccasins” which means “to understand me, live my life.”

### Purpose

- To celebrate community by learning to be self-regulated mindful listeners, readers, and writers—all skills that will help students to understand their place in the world and how their actions affect not only themselves but those around them
- To learn about the culture and life lessons of the Cree of the boreal forest and to allow students to apply some of what they learn to their own sense of belonging and well-being

### Content Focus

- Mindful Listening/Self-Regulation (pp. 66, 70)
- Aboriginal Knowledge and Connections (p. 67)
- Expository Reading and Writing (p. 68)
- Oral Language (p. 70)
- Celebrating Community (p. 70)

## What You Need to Know

### Mindful Listening/Self-Regulation

Mindful listening assists self-regulation by sorting out the sounds and sensory stimulants that surround us. We need to be mindful of the way we focus on, filter, attend to, and respond to what people are communicating. We also need to be aware of things that are significant in our environment to keep us safe.

How do we pay attention when we are sitting in class and confronted with sights, sounds, smells, sensations, our own thoughts, and more while we are trying to pay attention to, for example, a group member sharing his or her ideas? A mindful listener is able to direct attention to what matters at the moment so he or she can really hear what is being said and be able to respond appropriately. *Welcome to the Circle* takes this a step further as it demonstrates the importance of mindful listening in the Cree philosophy and its relationship to connectedness.

**See:** Centering Activity, p. 66; Activity #4: The Cree Talking Circle, p. 70

### Aboriginal Knowledge and Connections

The author of *Welcome to the Circle* shares traditions and a world view as a Cree of the boreal forest. This section of the Invitation to Learning helps students to appreciate, understand, and learn more about the Cree ways of thinking and knowing that have been recognized as powerful tools in promoting emotional well-being. Students also make important connections to their own culture and heritage, which in turn is an important part of identity and emotional well-being.

**See:** Activity #1: Let’s Discuss, p. 67

## Expository Reading and Writing

---

*Welcome to the Circle* is an example of **expository text**, meaning it is not a story, but rather it is **providing information**. This Invitation to Learning introduces students to various expository text features so they can make meaning, understand, and apply what they have read, as well as use this learning in their own writing.

The text invites students to engage in expository writing after discovering what is involved in the process of researching, making decisions, working together, and producing a form of writing that informs.

**See:** Activity #2: Expository Text Detective, p. 68; Activity #3: Research Report, p. 69

## Oral Language

---

Cree author Larry Loyie tells us on p. 4 of his book that “*We all have the right to be heard.*” He informs us about how Aboriginal peoples provide opportunities to speak and be heard, to listen and respect each other through traditions such as the talking circle, the talking stick, the medicine wheel, and more. Students learn about these traditions and have opportunities to practise mindful listening skills.

**See:** Activity #4: The Cree Talking Circle, p. 70

## Celebrating Community

---

Identifying the individuals who can play a role in supporting young people is critical to their emotional and social well-being. *Welcome to the Circle* models the importance of celebrating strong, respected, and connected communities. This Invitation includes activities to help students tap into these valuable resources. Larry Loyie also reminds us on p. 25 that “*Laughter is excellent for both mental and physical health. It lowers blood pressure, reduces stress, and causes other healthy changes in the body. Sharing a laugh also helps people connect with one another and makes it easier to deal with difficult situations.*” For many of us, getting together with our families and friends is an ideal way to reap these benefits.

**See:** Activity #5: Healthy Gathering, p. 70

## Curriculum Connections

The activities in this Invitation to Learning have connections to Language, the Arts, Health and Physical Education, and Character Education.

## TEACHER TIP

These notes provide a “menu” of ideas and strategies. Timelines and the choice of options to pursue under each step are left to your discretion, as you know your students best.

# Teaching Notes

---

## A. Before You Begin

**Centering:** *How do I prepare for this learning experience?*

To begin, read aloud the italicized lines of poetry (*Will you walk with me...*) at the bottom of p. 2 of *Welcome to the Circle*. The author, Larry Loyie, a Cree of the boreal forest, invites us to walk with him in a “sacred circle together with all of life.” Somehow it feels like a personal invitation. What is this sacred circle?

Invite students to arrange themselves in a circle sitting on the floor. Take time to settle and begin to breathe slowly, in to the count of three and out for three, in and out. With eyes closed, have them imagine that they are sitting on the boreal forest floor. Say: *The sun is filtering through the trees, the birds are singing, the leaves are rustling, but quietly. There is soft drumming in the distance ... regular beats that are calming.*

After a minute or two, have one or two students take turns reading the lines or do it as a choral reading. Everyone can repeat the last two lines together quietly. Take time to remember to breathe at the ends of the lines.

## B. Introducing the Text

**Contemplating:** *What is this text about, and why is it important to me?*

Have students examine the cover of the text. Ask:

- *What word stands out in this title? Why do you notice this right away? How does the word “Welcome” make you feel about reading the text?*
- *When you think of a circle, what do you think of?*

Now have students flip through the text. Skimming and scanning a little bit of text helps students get an idea of what to expect, such as whether there are graphics to enhance the narrative, whether the book is at their independent reading level, or what pragmatic cues might be available. This is what we do in bookstores before we buy—a lifelong reading strategy.

Ask students to think-pair-share what they anticipate this text will be about.

The author of this book, Larry Loyie, has an interesting website. Explore his heritage and the other books that he has written. Ask: *Has anyone read any of these books? If so, what are you expecting to see in Welcome to the Circle?* Award-winning titles for this grade level and related to our text are *As Long as the Rivers Flow* (a read-aloud that tells the story of Larry at age 10 before he goes to residential school) and *The Moon Speaks Cree—A Winter Adventure*.



www.pearsoncanada.ca/  
wellawareauthors

## C. Reading the Text

**Connecting:** *What do I already know, and what do I need to know?*

As a reader of this particular text structure (descriptive text), it is important to look for the main idea and then note the descriptions. Suggest that students take note of information that is new to them to help them comprehend this text (or use any approach students are familiar with, such as using sticky notes to flag details, etc.).

Assign students into mixed-ability groups and designate sections of the book for them to go through and make notes or use sticky notes for key ideas and descriptions. Learning how to do this now will help with all research assignments. Doing it collaboratively will enable stronger students to assist ELL or less-able learners.

Have the students comment on the following:

- *How did you identify which parts were key ideas or descriptions? What clues or evidence did you use?*
- *What ideas did you find most interesting or important? Why?*
- *How might you use what you read in your own life experience?*

Explain that the activities that follow will help them to make these connections and to learn more about the importance of the circle to Aboriginal culture.

## D. After Reading: Reflecting About the Text

**Confirming:** *How do I practise what I have learned?*

### Activities Related to ... Aboriginal Knowledge and Connections

---

#### Activity #1: Let's Discuss

This book invites inquiry. It is important to note what you are learning but also to record and follow up on questions that might arise.

Begin with the talking circle and explain that the circle is not only a symbol but also physically supports active listening and respect for others around you.

Connect to **Discussion Starter #1:** *This book mentions the rules that are in place so talking circles can be performed in a respectful way. What do you think might happen if there were no rules? What rules do your classroom and school have that encourage people to show respect? Ask students what the advantages of rules are in daily life. Why do we need them?*

#### Discussion Starter #1

Connect to **Discussion Starter #2:** *Receiving an eagle feather is a high honour. Who do you think is worthy of an eagle feather? (The person can be someone you know personally or a celebrity.) Why do you feel this person deserves to be honoured? Ask volunteers to share and explain their choice.*

#### Discussion Starter #2

### Discussion Starter #3

Connect to **Discussion Starter #3**: *The author introduces storytelling as an important way to teach others. Share an example of something important you learned from a story, novel, or movie.* To extend students' understanding of the importance of storytelling in Aboriginal cultures, share these words from Mohawk writer Robert Cutting: Stories connect us to our past, as well as showing ways to be here in the present. They are the history and cultural avenues of all the nations.

### Discussion Starter #4

Connect to **Discussion Starter #4**: *The author says that many Cree believe that people should bring a calm heart and thoughtfulness when they visit a medicine wheel. Where do you feel the most calm and thoughtful? Why?* Ask students to share ideas about how this could be an actual place or a place we can go to in our minds. Invite them to make connections to what they have learned about self-regulation and coping strategies they use when they need to feel better.

### Focus On

Self-Regulation

## Activities Related to ... Expository Reading and Writing

---

### Activity #2: Expository Text Detective

*Welcome to the Circle* is a **descriptive expository** text that tells us about the subject in the heading and elaborates and illustrates. Also in this text there are text features that help us to expect information to unfold in a certain way. For example,

- it begins with a table of contents that informs us not only of the pages but the topics we can expect;
- it includes a note from the author;
- the titled sections are in bold font;
- Subtitles are in smaller font;
- the poetry is usually at the beginning of the section;
- the sections are generally one or two pages;
- there are graphics that support the text;
- there are “Did you Know” boxes that supply additional information; and
- there is a separate page of discussion starters.

There are different kinds of expository text structures that are possible. Invite students to be “expository text detectives” and explore some expository texts in the classroom to determine what structure they follow (textbooks are generally expository). Draw on students' prior experience with expository text to discuss examples of the following text structures:

- **Cause and effect** presents how an event or fact brings about another event or result.
- **Comparison and contrast** analyzes similarities and differences among concepts and events.
- **Description** explains an idea or concept.

- **Question and answer** presents a problem with a solution.
- **Simple listing** arranges a group of facts, concepts, or events.
- **Time order** organizes information into a chronological sequence.

Ask students how they think the structures and approaches in *Welcome to the Circle* suit Loyie’s purpose.

### Activity #3: Research Report

Expository writing requires first deciding on a topic that really interests you, then doing research from as many resources as you can, followed by making notes and organizing them. In *Welcome to the Circle* there are many ideas and invitations for a research/inquiry project that will emerge. Some examples are

- Studying one of the Aboriginal traditions
- Getting to know more about the Cree or another Aboriginal nation
- Studying an animal
- Finding an Aboriginal hero and learning all you can about him or her

Have students choose a topic and a text structure from the list above or one that interests them. The challenge is to work with a partner to research about the topic, making notes along the way. Remind them to list the sources for all information researched.

When they have gathered their information, invite students to present their research. Here are some ideas for presentation formats:

- Report in booklet form with pictures, drawings, etc.
- PowerPoint presentation
- News article
- Written interview
- Video format

**Note:** All projects will be **expository**, not narrative (not a story).

After sharing these pieces of expository writing, discuss the following as a class:

- *How is writing an expository piece different from writing a story?*
- *Is it more difficult or easier? Why?*
- *What steps in the process did you enjoy the most?*
- *What are some jobs that require writing expository material?*
- *What did you learn about Aboriginal peoples from this activity?*
- *What connections can you make with your own lives? Do you share some of the same beliefs and traditions?*

### TEACHER TIP

Students could be encouraged to research both historical and modern Aboriginal heroes.

There are many people who have made a difference in Aboriginal—and Canadian—life, both past and present.

- *How has this activity made you feel about the beliefs and traditions of Aboriginal peoples? Explain.*

Remind students that they will do a great deal of expository writing as they move through the education system. Developing skills for it early on can help reduce stress when they encounter assignments throughout their school years.

## Activities Related to ... Oral Language

---

### Activity #4: The Cree Talking Circle

The talking circle tradition symbolizes completeness, equality, consideration, and respect. Everyone in the circle must be focused on and listened to with respect and care. Everyone in the circle has a chance to speak. Revisit the lines at the top of p. 3 of the text that begin with “*Let’s sit together in the circle...*”

Reread the protocol suggested by Loyie in the section The Talking Circle and post the rules.

Choose a topic and decide on an object to pass from speaker to speaker. Students might discuss a current event, responses to a story, good health habits, homework, bullying, the Internet, etc. Choose something that many students could have an opinion about. Have them share their views in the talking circle. Ask:

- *Did the talking circle work well? Did you feel heard? Were you able to focus when others were speaking?*
- *Are there some other rules you would like to add?*
- *What would make us responsible members of the talking circle? What should a talking circle sound like?*
- *Why does it matter that we are heard? How does that affect our mental health?*

## Activities Related to ... Celebrating Community

---

### Activity #5: Healthy Gathering

Organize a community “healthy gathering.” Explain that getting together as a community to celebrate traditions and cultures is an important way to create understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of all cultures. Occasions like this help us feel we are part of a group and accepted; this fosters emotional and social well-being.

Send home **Line Master 17: Parent/Caregiver Invitation—*Welcome to the Circle*** outlining the celebration and inviting family and friends to take part. Each family will be invited to bring an item that is characteristic of their culture—a picture, story, artifact, or piece of clothing that expresses and celebrates their heritage.

*Welcome to the Circle* celebrates Cree traditions and welcomes everyone to explore those traditions. From this, students can learn how important it is to celebrate



www.pearsoncanada.ca/  
wellaware

Line Master 17

diversity on many other levels. For example, students in your classroom might want to help new students feel welcome and accepted. They may also want to find ways to celebrate diversity within your community.

You can make the event as simple or as complex as you wish. Here are some ideas:

- Have students research the various countries represented in their classroom and community, and place a star for each on a large map of the world.
- After researching the countries, have students create posters that reflect each country's culture.
- Research the word “welcome” in many languages. Using various computer fonts, have students create welcome signs and then post around the room.
- Ask students to bring in music from various cultures and play it in the classroom and at the gathering.
- Create sign-up lists and gather responses from the letters home to ensure that there is the required space, music, audio-visual equipment, etc., to prepare for the sharing event.

Enjoy! Celebrate! Learn! Debrief by asking

- *What did you learn from this experience?*
- *Do you think that having this celebration helped us to understand other cultures? Explain.*
- *If you were new to our classroom, or new to our country, how do you think you would feel?*

Remind students that everybody needs to feel appreciated and respected in order to feel good about him- or herself. Ask them what they can do to make sure that happens every day in their classroom.

## **E. A Step Further: Additional Learning Activities**

**Creating:** *What are some other ways I can use what I have learned?*

The goal of this section is to extend students' learning across the curriculum and beyond the classroom.

### **Language, Storytelling, Cultural Appreciation**

---

Revisit the Storytelling section on p. 26 of *Welcome to the Circle*, focusing on the second paragraph in particular. Help students make connections to what they have learned about empathy and thinking about our feelings and our relationships with others as a part of our mental health. Ask why living in harmony with the earth and feeling connected to our past is part of our emotional well-being.

In Share *Your Story* (p. 28), Loyie says that we all have a story to tell. He then invites students to choose an animal, think about what makes it special, and then imagine how the animal might have come to have the appearance it does. Have students create a story, either individually or in pairs, following three steps:

1. Research the characteristics of the animal.
2. Be creative and imagine how the animal might have come to look like it does.
3. Think about what lesson can be learned from your story.

Alternatively, students could work on creating a story that they would like to pass on to their children and grandchildren someday. Remind them that these stories are very important, and encourage them to think about “the circle of life” and how Aboriginal peoples believe that all things in life are connected. Remind students that there is a lesson in each of their stories that will help both themselves and others to be strong, balanced, and respectful of each other, themselves, and nature. Consider sourcing some stories to read as examples. Here are some possible topics:

- Why the beaver has a flat tail
- Why the eagle can see so well
- Why the owl is called wise
- Why the fox is called sly
- Why the snow goose is white

When students have completed either activity for Share *Your Story*, share the stories and their messages as a class and consider binding them in a book for the school library or reading them to earlier grades. Debrief this rich storytelling experience by asking:

- *What did you learn about yourself from this activity?*
- *What did you learn about nature?*
- *Do you think that being around nature and thinking about these lessons in life might help you to be less stressed? Explain.*

Encourage students to share their stories at home.

## Throughout the Learning Experience— Celebrating “I can!”

Celebration occurs at various points throughout the learning experience. See p. 7 of this resource for a discussion of celebrating learning.

An activity celebrating learning might ask students to complete the sentence “I can ....” This will help to promote confidence, self-efficacy, and self-concept. Here are ways you can incorporate celebration into this Invitation to Learning:

- Each morning, welcome the students in a different language.
- Search for ideas from the Ontario Ministry of Education Grade Five Social Studies supplement, *Celebrating National Aboriginal Day*.

## The Parent/Caregiver Connection

One of the messages in *Welcome to the Circle* focuses on the importance of family and community connectedness. It has important lessons from Aboriginal cultures about welcoming people to a sense of community and connectedness, and it would be good for all of us to take a lesson from this way of thinking.

By embracing all cultures, students and families will feel welcome, appreciated, and celebrated. This can be very important for new Canadians, as well as students who may be new to the school or who represent a variety of different cultures, religions, or nationalities.

One way to do this is to invite the students and their families to participate in a “Family Gathering.” This may be accomplished through Activity #5: Healthy Gathering on p. 70 and the invitation letter to families on **Line Master 17: Parent/Caregiver Invitation—*Welcome to the Circle***. It is important to process the event afterward as directed in the activity.



[www.pearsoncanada.ca/  
wellaware](http://www.pearsoncanada.ca/wellaware)

Line Master 17

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

We are having a celebration and YOU are invited!

As you may have heard from your child, we have been working with a text titled *Welcome to the Circle*, written by Canadian First Nations author Larry Loyie with Constance Brissenden. Please feel free to visit the website at [www.firstnationswriter.com](http://www.firstnationswriter.com) to learn more about this book and the array of other books this author has written.

Among other exciting learning opportunities, this text and the accompanying lessons remind us of the importance of connecting to and learning from our friends, neighbours, and families. As part of our efforts to make all children and their families feel respected, welcomed, and appreciated, we are having a celebration and we are asking for your help.

On (date) \_\_\_\_\_ at (time) \_\_\_\_\_, you are invited to join us at (location) \_\_\_\_\_ for an hour of celebration, stories, and cultural expression.

Please read the form below and indicate if you can attend and whether you would like to share something with us. Then return it with your child and we will begin planning our celebration! Please note: There is no need to bring anything. This is just an invitation to do so if you wish.

\*\*\*\*\*

I will / will not be able to attend the celebration. (please circle)

The number attending will be \_\_\_\_\_.

I will bring an artifact, item of clothing, story, or picture to share. (if so, please describe)

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to speak to the children and share a story, tradition, or other information that is important to our heritage. (if so, please describe)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks so much. We look forward to learning more about you and your family!

Sincerely,