

JANUARY 14, 2021

# JACOB FAITHFUL

How to Incorporate Indigenous Music Education Into Your Curriculum



## OVERVIEW:

### Connect through Music

Jacob's hope and dream is to instill in your mind that incorporating Indigenous First Nations music into your education system is attainable with the limited resources that you have. *It is attainable.* He commends each and every person who is trying.

He encourages us to connect with your local elders, respect the cultural differences and significance of Indigenous culture. Music that has a strong root, contains a lot of passion and represents your territory is very infectious and has the ability to touch everybody's soul on a cosmic level connecting us to one another.

- Music is the perfect medium for connection
- Respect the cultural differences
- Learn the significance behind Indigenous instruments and ceremonies
- Become in tuned with your students, use the power of music to connect and support one another
- Quick Tips on where to go from here (Learn who your neighbors are)



## Understand the cultural differences

Understanding the cultural differences will help you make a better connection. Knowing and respecting the differences will help you to develop more meaningful relationships cross-culturally.

### The Handshake

The handshake is a show of respect and it shows that I respect you. In western culture a firm handshake is typical. In Indigenous culture a soft and warm handshake is used to demonstrate equality and respect, where as a firm handshake depicts authority and inequality.

### Eye Contact

This is another demonstration of respect between individuals.

In Western culture, direct and intentional eye contact will indicate I am paying attention and focusing. In Indigenous culture listening is the most important indicator that you are paying attention. To the extent that it is typical to drop your gaze downward in order for you to shift your focus to your ears. Nodding of the head, a still body, and face turned down is an indication that great focus and attention is being given.



### Volume of your Voice

Loud, direct projection illustrates confidence and an acceptable way to share your knowledge in Western society. Whereas in Indigenous culture, knowledge is protected, spoken softly and the more important the topic the quieter your volume. This represents humility.

Look for these clues, recognize and adjust your own behaviors to become more culturally sensitive to build a mutually respectful relationship with others.



## Indigenous Story Telling

*Answers will often be imbedded within a story*

Jacob shared with us that if you get the privilege to ask an Elder a question, do not be surprised if you receive a story as an answer. Often times you will need to contemplate what you have been told with the story.

You will need to decipher the answer that you seek because once you have a chance to reflect on it, you realize you have been given the answer to so many things that you have ever even pondered!

To watch the Replay on SMEA's YouTube Channel [Click Here](#)

## Indigenous Instruments

### First Nation's Flute

Scientists have discovered that the First Nation's northern flute has a frequency of 432 Hz, the documented fundamental electromagnetic "beat" of Earth. Jacob explains that it has a healing property and a strong connection to your body. It helps you to be connected. He encourages you to listen to this music and play it for your students, as it does wonders for yourself. He gets emotional each and every time he plays it.

Jacob lead us to close our eyes, inhale all of the good in our lives, exhaling everything that is negative and played us a song, it was amazing!

### Drum

The stick represents all of male entities (spirit) while the drum (made of hide and wood) represent all female entities. This is the only time when a male may strike a female. It is said that when you make the sound of the drum and sing the songs with the drum it can only be described like holding your own child for the first time. In actuality when you sing and drum it is as if you are creating life. There is a deep romantic story behind the drum. When you hit the drum it represents Mother Earth's heartbeat.



### Round Dance

Jacob shared the story below which describes the significance of the round dance. This is a sacred dance that unites us with our past and connects those of us who participant in it.

Jacob wants to share that is it culturally appropriate to share in the Round Dances and to attend a Pow Wow. If you want to experience more in depth music, you must attend an Indigenous ceremony in order to fully receive it.

## Evolution of the Round Dance

*As told by Jacob Faithful*

The story of the round dance and where it came from is based on the deep love between a mother and daughter. They grew up together and they were so close to each other. When the daughter was of dating age, she decided to stay and help her mother take care of the family. As the daughter grew to her child bearing years her mother grew ill. The daughter devoted herself to care for her ailing mother. When the mother passed away the daughter was past her child bearing years. Her grief was so intense, she would walk around at night and pray to see her mother for one last time.

*In Cree beliefs and culture, we believe that night time when the world gets quieter spirits travel and do the Creator's work, the Eagle spirit does the healing of what is needed. The trees talk to another, there is so much connecting that is happening at night. It is an important time. At night time all of the Native people all over the Cree territory don't go outside and be loud, they respect the ways of the natural laws.*

One night the daughter seen something, it was her mother hovering above the ground with a message. She asked her daughter to look up and take note of the Northern Lights, that is the grass of the Creator's world where we are dance the Round Dance. The Round Dance is a place where we join hands and we dance in a circle, and we sing songs and we are immediately uplifted and we connect.

If you do this correctly, the creator will allow us to come down and dance with you. So we can be with you.

You will need to prepare a feast, put a bowl aside for me (us). You must take that bowl to the fire. And in that fire we will come and get our food, it is important for that food because when we come down from the Heavens to the Earth we feel the human characteristics of tiredness and hunger once more. I will need food and energy, and I will not be able to stay long as I will tire. When you Round Dance you must not do this too long. You must end at certain respectful hour so that I can go home to the Creator.

The mother grabbed onto her daughter's hands and said you have to sing these kinds of songs and then all of a sudden beneath them you could hear the heartbeat of the Mother Earth. She instructed her daughter if she did this correctly, and share this with the world the creator would allow spirits to come and be with you for a short time. With these beat of the drum and the sound of these songs we get to come and be with you for a short while. This is what we give you, this is what the creator has allowed to happen.

***"There is a deep significant reason for what we do and how we do it - and it deserves that respect." Jacob Faithful***

## How can a Music Educator Help?

Jacob played another song, Angel Eagle, for us. This song has been written in memory of Tyler, who lost his struggle against mental health. At the ceremony where they were laying Tyler to rest his brother noticed four eagles flying above and when he seen them he noticed a calm come over him. He thought to himself, I think these are angels who came to take my brother home. Tyler's mother encouraged the brother to write a song about his experience, and he said I think I have one already. He starting singing with his drum and that is what came out. Indigenous music, as well as any music has the ability to connect.

It is important to understand that we all play a role in our lives. We all are in a position at some point to be a significant clutch for someone in your life, to be someone's Angel Eagle. The significance of that song is that we all need to look for the signs when someone needs someone to talk to. As a teacher working with students it is important



to recognize if your student is struggling. Be someone's Angel Eagle by using your ability to listen. The answer is connection. As music teacher's you have the most wonderful tool, music. Music has no color, no race, it is universal. You will never meet an Indigenous person who doesn't respect music.

**Connect through music.**

***"We hold music to such a high standard and have a deep cultural respect for it."***

**Jacob Faithful**



## What Should a Music Educator Do

*Quick Tips from Jacob*

- Learn about the First Nation's communities that are in your area. You will be not be turned away, Indigenous communities want to get to you know too!
- Learn the history of your own territory. You can read a lot in a book but nothing is as good as talking to a person.
- Find an elder who is willing to talk with you.
- Check if your school division has an Indigenous liaison.
- Respect and understand why some music is acceptable to be shared while other music is not. More traditional culture music is only acceptable if you are at a ceremony to receive it.