

Making Northern Spirit Flutes

- Making Native American Flutes With Your Senior Students -



“Bring me a hollow reed,” said the Creator, “and I will teach you to make a flute.”

Manitoba Music Educators Conference

October 21, 2011
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Presenter: Rich Dubé
2505 Cumberland Avenue South
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2A1
Phone (306) 343-6037
Email: fluteman@sasktel.net

(These notes are a gift to all interested in the Native American Flute. Please feel free to share what you have learned, spreading the joy of the Northern Spirit Flute.)

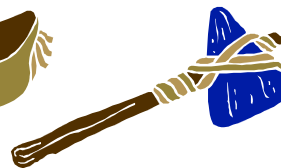
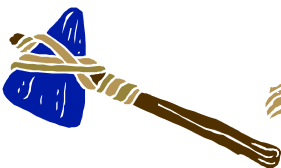


Table of Contents

A Few Thoughts On Protocol and Working With First Nations Children	2
Songs of the Spirit – “Rich’s Thesis Research”.....	3
Before You Start – Safety First.....	3
Steps for Organizing Your Class to Make Northern Spirit Flutes.....	4
<i>Pre-Class Preparation</i>	4
<i>Materials for Each Flute</i>	4
<i>Tools & Items You Will Need to Build Flutes</i>	4
<i>What You Need for Painting</i>	4
<i>Class Preparation & Setup</i>	5
<i>Northern Spirit Flute Drilling Diagram – A 2009</i>	6
<i>Flute Design Planning Sheet</i>	7
<i>Flute Case Planning Sheet</i>	8
<i>Fingering Charts</i>	9
<i>Honour Song</i>	10
<i>Flute Letter to Parents</i>	11
Resource List	12
<i>Books</i>	12
<i>Videos</i>	12
<i>Wooden Flute Makers</i>	12
<i>Links & Performers</i>	12

A Few Thoughts On Protocol and Working With First Nations Children

First of all, I would like to thank you for attending my workshop on how to make a Northern Spirit Flute with your students. Coming to a session specific to First Nations culture, speaks volumes about who you are and how you care about reaching students who are the most at risk of not reaching their full human potential. I am extremely hopeful and optimistic that we have reached a turning point in human consciousness and world history, a point where we can look beyond the color of our skin, religious background, and individual cultures to be more accepting and understanding of each other. The reality for us in Saskatchewan is that the majority of our students will soon be of Aboriginal ancestry: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. I believe the best way to move forward is to embrace this reality and enjoy it. If we take time to engage our Aboriginal students in exciting projects, they will be drawn to attending school and learning more about life through music.

I have had the great privilege of working with and learning from some pretty amazing kids, families, and adults over the past 16 years. For 10 of those years, I taught at Pleasant Hill Community School in Saskatoon. The school was made up of over 95% Aboriginal kids, most being of First Nations ancestry. For a time we had Elders at our school, Roland and Marina Duquette. Not having experienced First Nations culture growing up, it took some time for me to feel comfortable and/or brave enough to learn about proper protocol when working with First Nations children and their families. When I did gain the confidence to bring tobacco to Elder Roland Duquette, he put me at ease right away and made me feel like I was having a conversation with my grandfather. I sensed he appreciate the respect I was showing to him and his culture, as well as the fact I was taking time to learn and receive some guidance from him.

It has been my experience that as long as I treated people the way that I would want to be treated or I would want my own children to be treated, I have been very well received in the First Nations community. If you are still at the point of feeling somewhat unsure or uncomfortable speaking with an Elder, I would recommend asking a First Nations friend or colleague for some guidance and advice to start off with. I would strongly encourage you to do this before starting to make Native American Flutes with your students. I would highly recommend attending a Pow Wow and Sweat Lodge. Our school division is beginning to offer seasonal Sweat Lodges to help people connect with First Nations culture and spiritual traditions. It is a great way to start or continue on a journey towards greater understanding and appreciation of what our First Nations brothers and sisters have to teach us and share with us.

If you are interested in learning more about my experiences working in the inner city of Saskatoon you can read my masters research. I conducted my thesis on teaching students at an Urban Aboriginal high school how to make and play the Northern Spirit Flute. The flute making was so well received, I was invited to stay an extra month and team teach a combined class of over 30 high school students how to make and play their own Northern Spirit Flutes. The research can be located online at <http://library2.usask.ca/theses/available/etd-04252007-220909/>. You can read and listen to audio clips from conversations I had with one of my former principals, a former caretaker, and Kenneth Charlette former Director of the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company, as well as hear students playing their Northern Spirit Flutes. My thesis has also been published by VDM Publishing in Germany and is available for purchase in hardcopy format, if you prefer. I have provided a few excerpts from my research below. I wish you much joy playing your Northern Spirit Flute.

– Songs of the Spirit –

Attending to Aboriginal Students' Emotional and Spiritual Needs Through a Native American Flute Curriculum *“Research from Rich's Thesis”*

“What I really saw was at breaks and at lunch time when at that point where there was no supervision . . . rather than the normal of them running haphazardly being children, there they were sitting in little groups practicing, playing their flutes. It was such a calming effect. I could see it in the kids that they were really into what they were doing. And that's what impressed me the most is that they really cared about what was going on.” Larry Mintzler, Caretaker

“And then as I watched the kids starting to build the flutes I watched their interest start to rise in the whole thing because this whole program was 100% theirs and the flute was 100% theirs because they built it, they knew everything about it, they knew how it worked. I was particularly interested in watching our senior kids who would not connect in any other way to the school start to connect through the music program and through the flutes that they were building and playing and coming to school basically to do that. The funny thing was the spin off from that was that they were actually getting better marks in the other grades, in the other classes because they were coming to school more often to build the flutes and learn how to play the flutes.” Doug McDonald, Principal

“What I notice with the students is sort of that buddy system with their flute. It's sort of like, somebody that you can carry with you and be with you. I notice they carry their flutes around a lot. It's with them all the time . . .even sitting in the stairway towards the gym there and just playing it, softly by themselves.” Mary Lee, Elder

“The arts are a part of the human makeup and cannot be denied” and “every human being has it within themselves to be an artist” Kenneth Charlette

“The flute arrived yesterday in New York at my mom's house. It was good timing since my wife and I also arrived in NY yesterday. The flute is in fine shape. The flute has a fantastic full sound! I'm very impressed with both the clarity and volume. I played the flute for my wife (who has more of a musician's ear) and she really liked the sound. She's heard most of my 45+ wooden flutes, so that is indeed quite a compliment. I have tried a few embellishments so far and the flute seems to respond very well. I also applaud your decision to use ABS plastic rather than PVC. It seems that there are definitely some potential hazards with PVC. Thanks for a terrific flute and wonderful customer service!” David B., Northern Spirit Flute customer Fall 2009

“You've got a great product here! I'm very satisfied with the ones I have.” Russ W., Northern Spirit Flute customer Fall 2009

Before You Start – Safety First

IF YOU ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE USE OF THE HAND TOOLS OR THE OPERATION OF THE POWER TOOLS, PLEASE SEEK THE APPROPRIATE SAFETY ADVICE AND/OR PROPER TRAINING IN THE USE OF THIS EQUIPMENT BY A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

Steps for Organizing Your Class to Make Northern Spirit Flutes

Pre-Class Preparation

1. Print up and send out the letter to parents regarding the reason for and cost of making Northern Spirit Flutes.
2. Glue the Roost on each of the flute tubes (2 to 3 minutes per flute). ***Only adults can do this step as the glue used dries quickly and will bond skin. It is precise work.
3. Print off the drilling sheets in color or highlight each of the different sized holes (1 – 7/32 inch hole; 2 – 1/4 inch holes; 3 - 9/32 inch holes) in a different color if you print the drilling sheets in black and white.
4. Cut the leather latigo lace to lengths of 23 inches using a pair of scissors. The leather is used to tie down the Bird on the Roost of the flute.
5. ***Pre-inservice your adults on how critical it is that they establish the center of the brad point bit into the center of the dimple for drilling. This is achieved by tilting the drill sideways then standing it straight up and down for drilling.
6. Double check the list of equipment needed to make your flutes.

Materials for Each Flute

1. Prepared Northern Spirit Flute Tube
2. Molded Roost
3. Two Piece Plug (*In-plug & Out-plug connect together*)
4. Mouth Piece
5. Bird
6. Leather Strap
7. IC-Gel Super Glue (1 Tube will do 30 Flutes)

Tools & Items You Will Need to Build Flutes

1. 3 Hand Drills Corded or Cordless (Canadian Tire, Home Depot, etc.)
2. Brad Point Bits 7/32", 1/4", and 9/32" (Available at Lee Valley Tools or Northern Spirit Flutes)
3. Hand Counter Sink Tool (Available at Lee Valley Tools or through me)
4. Drill Stops For Each Drill Bit (Available at Lee Valley Tools or Northern Spirit Flutes)
5. Box of Thin Q-Tips Used to Clean Up Excess Glue When Gluing the Roost
6. Scissors
7. Razor Knife (Hardware Store)
8. Triangular or Square File (Home Depot or Northern Spirit Flutes)
9. Piece of Doweling cut to length to put Plug in place (Northern Spirit Flutes)
10. Piece of Doweling longer than the flute to push plug through if it gets inserted incorrectly or to clean out any debris that may be in the flute (Northern Spirit Flutes)
11. V-Jig To Hold Tube in Place for Drilling (Northern Spirit Flutes)

What You Need for Painting

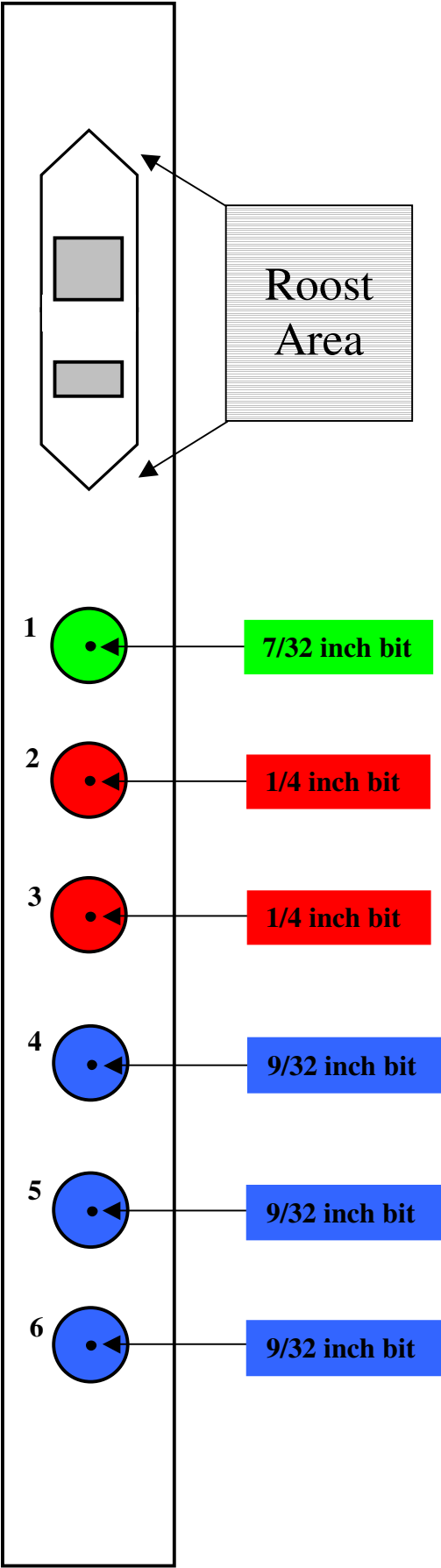
1. 220 Grit Sandpaper
2. Large and Small Detail Paint Brushes
3. Gesso (Undercoat to help paint stick to the flute from an art store)
4. Good Quality Acrylic Paint
5. Water Based Varathane to Topcoat and Protect the Paint
6. *Flute Stands Made Out of a Piece of 3/4" Doweling and 4" x 4" x 1/8" Piece of Hard Board*

Class Preparation & Setup

1. Drilling Stations

- a. Set up a long narrow table at the front of the class for your 3 drilling stations.
 - b. Set up three chairs behind the table for the adults who will be operating the drills.
 - c. Plug in the extension cord and power bar for drills. It works best to run drill extension cords on the side of the table the students will be on because you will be turning the drill handle toward for student so they can press the trigger to drill the holes in their flutes.
 - d. ***Be sure you have pre-inserviced your adults on how critical it is that they establish the center of the brad point bit into the center of the dimple for drilling. This is achieved by tilting the drill sideways then standing it straight up and down for drilling. (***)**PLEASE SEE HOW TO VIDEOS via website or YOUTUBE**
2. Set Up Small Table for Flute Building Parts & Flute Tubes
 - a. I use a box to put the flute tubes in and tall yogurt tubs to put the molded pieces and cut leather straps in.
 3. Write down the steps you will be doing on the classroom whiteboard.
 4. Explain to students and adult helpers each of the steps they will be going through to make their Northern Spirit Flute.
 5. Explain to students that once they are done drilling the smallest 7/32 inch hole in line 1 they are to move to the end of line 2. When they are done drilling their two 1/4 inch holes they are to move to the end of line 3. When they are done drilling their three 9/32 inch holes they are to move to the end of line 1.
 6. Organize the students in 3 equal lines.
 7. Begin drilling holes.
 8. Once all holes are drilled have students countersink their holes and clean them out with a small triangular or square file. (I do the 1st hole and have them feel the difference between a properly countersunk hole and one that has not been done.)
 9. Ask for a student volunteer to offer their flute tube to demonstrate how students are to put their flutes together.
 10. Have students line up to pick the pieces they need to assemble their flutes: 2 plug pieces (in-plug & out-plug), mouthpiece, bird, & leather strap.
 11. Once students have pushed their two plug pieces together, have them line up to push the plug into the Roost end of the flute by putting the plug skinny side up on a table and pushing the flute down onto the plug. Students then place the piece of doweling on the table and press the plug into place between the Slow Air Chamber hole and the True Sound Hole.
 12. Have students put the rest of the pieces together;
 - a. Attach the Mouthpiece leaving a 1/8 inch gap. Make sure students do not put the mouthpiece in all the way until they are done painting their flutes. This makes it easy to remove the mouthpiece for painting.
 - b. Attach the Bird by placing it on the Roost using the notch to line it up properly.
 - c. Tie the Bird down with three wraps of the leather strap and making the 1st step of tying your shoes. ***Do not tie a double knot as the leather will stretch. It is much easier to quickly just snug up any slack with only the 1st step of tying your shoe done.
 13. Let students have some fun blowing/playing their flute.
 14. Teach students how to hold their flute correctly at the right angle (45 degrees) and to blow slow gentle air into their flute.

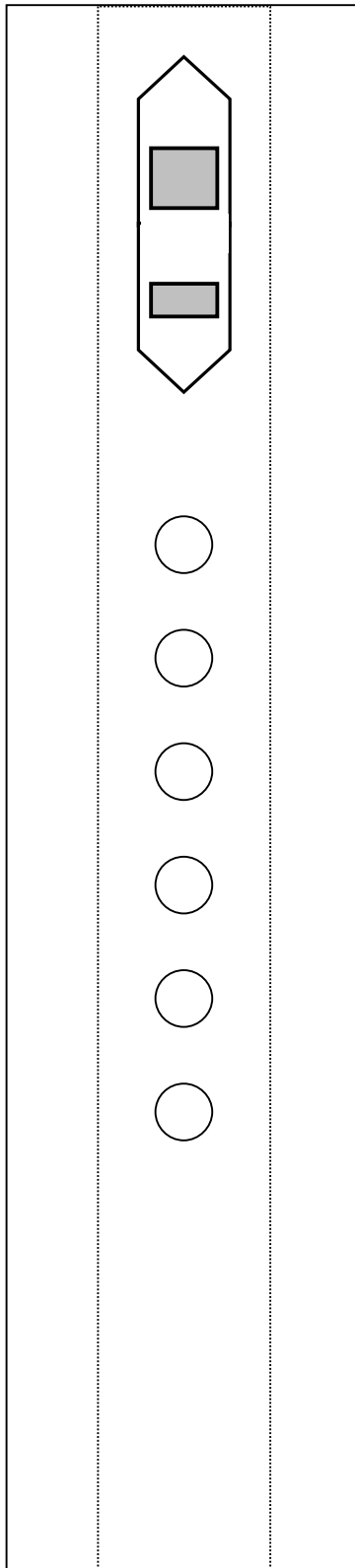
Northern Spirit Flute Drilling Diagram – A 2009



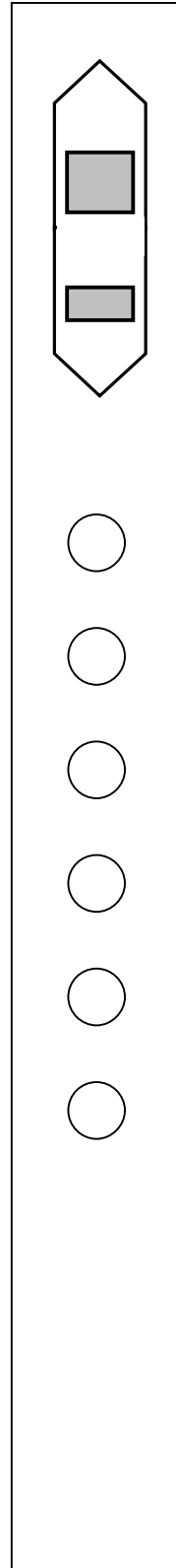
Flute Design Planning Sheet

Class: _____ Name: _____

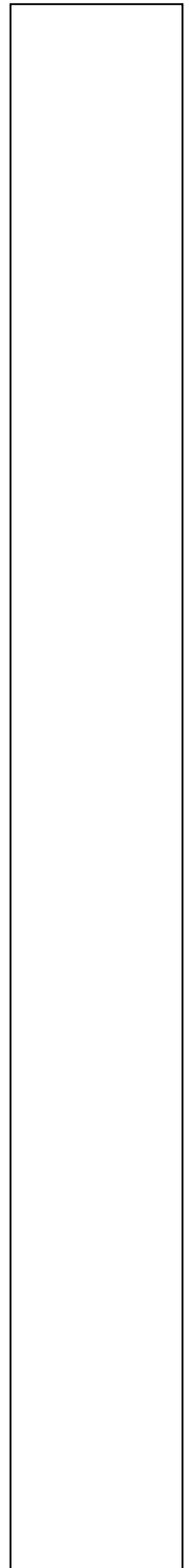
BACK FRONT BACK



FRONT



BACK

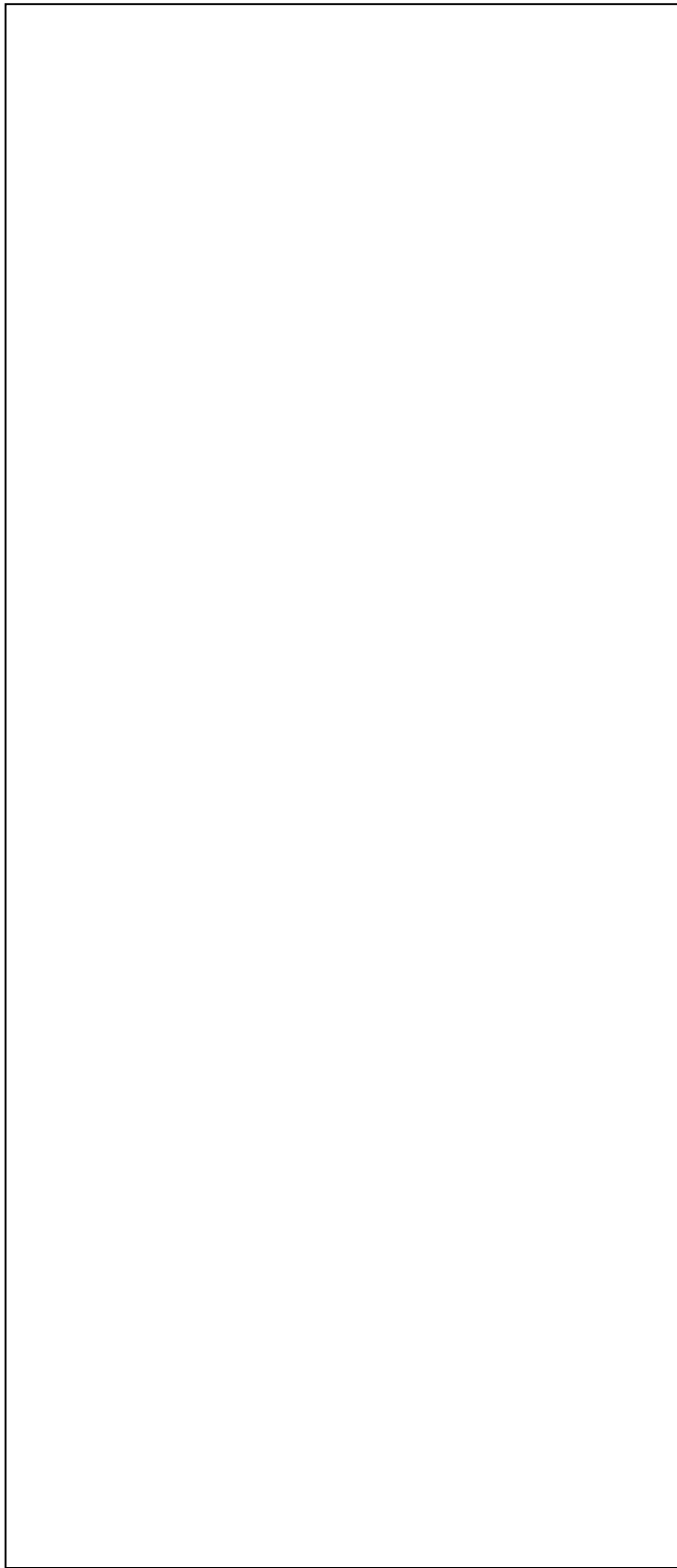


Flute Case Planning Sheet

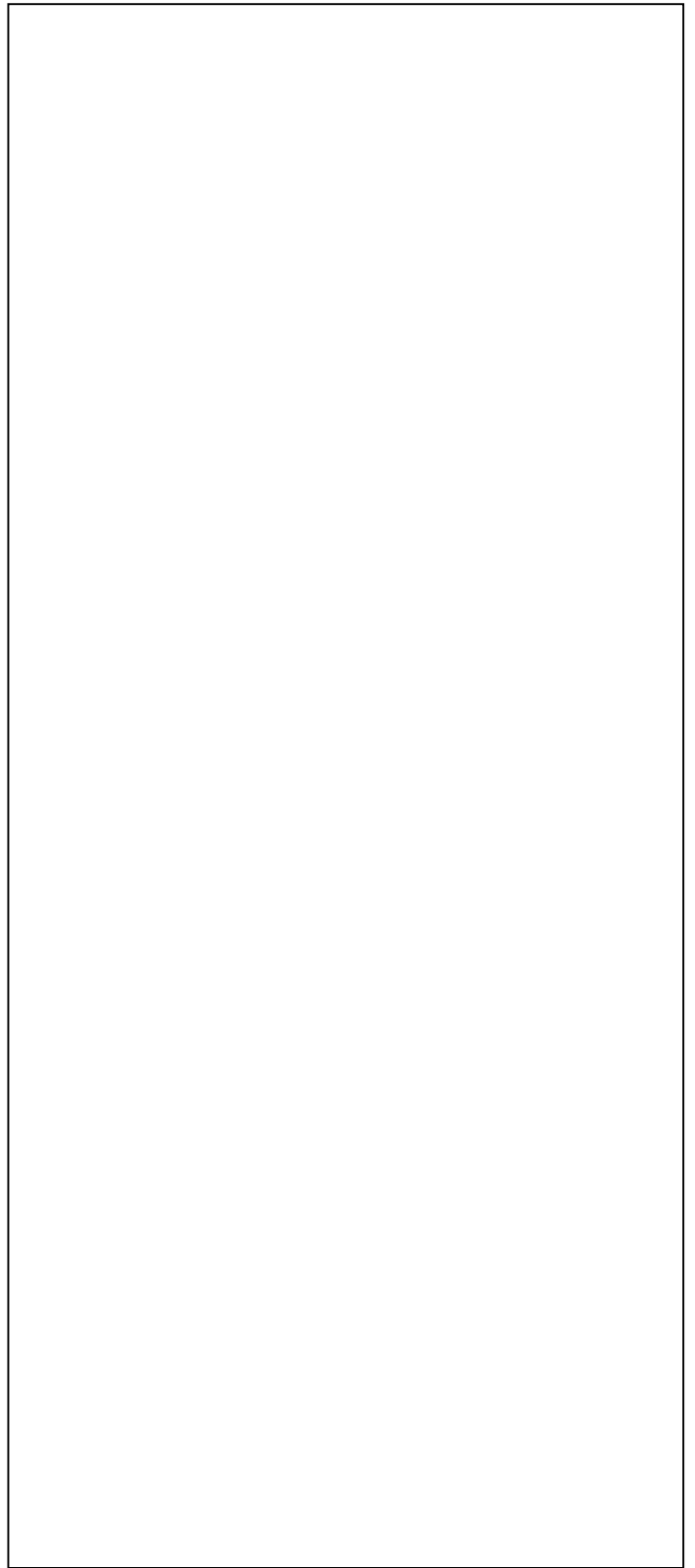
Class: _____

Name: _____

FRONT



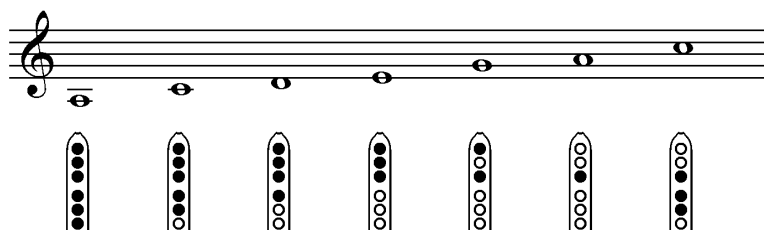
BACK



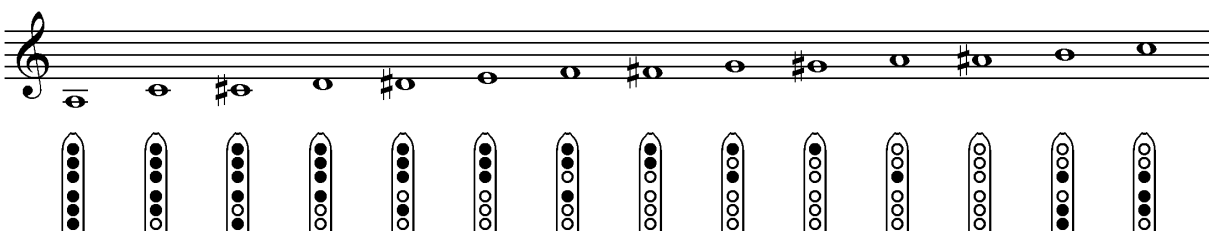
Fingering Charts

This basic fingering chart is based on the Northern Spirit Flute, a food grade ABS plastic version of the Native American Flute. Once you are familiar with the natural scale it can be used to improvise and create your own melodies. *****Please note that fingerings to play certain pitches may vary from flute maker to flute maker will vary on hand made wooden Native American Flutes.***

Northern Spirit Flute Fingering Chart 2009



Natural Scale



Chromatic Scale

"Finger diagrams courtesy of Clint Goss, www.NAFTracks.com"

Watch for the Songs of the Spirit Curriculum due out in Fall 2010. Email fluteman@sasktel.net to be first on the list to receive your copy of this comprehensive Native American Flute curriculum.

Honour Song ©Rad Music 2003

We thank you. We ho-nour you.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Detailed description: This block contains two lines of musical notation. The first line has four groups of notes. The first group is 'We' (1 note), the second is 'thank' (2 notes), the third is 'you.' (3 notes), and the fourth is 'We ho-nour you.' (4 notes). Each note is represented by a vertical bar with a dot above a horizontal line and a circle below. The notes are arranged in a sequence that follows the rhythm of the lyrics.

With our hearts, with our song, we ho-nour you.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Detailed description: This block contains two lines of musical notation. The first line has four groups of notes. The first group is 'With our hearts,' (4 notes), the second is 'with our song,' (4 notes), the third is 'we' (1 note), and the fourth is 'ho-nour you.' (4 notes). Each note is represented by a vertical bar with a dot above a horizontal line and a circle below. The notes are arranged in a sequence that follows the rhythm of the lyrics.

Honour Song B section ©Rad Music 2003

Ho-nour you. We will ho-nour you.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Play B section twice then return and play A section

Detailed description: This block contains two lines of musical notation. The first line has three groups of notes: 'Ho-' (1 note), 'nour' (2 notes), and 'you.' (3 notes). The second line has four groups of notes: 'We' (1 note), 'will' (2 notes), 'ho-' (2 notes), and 'nour you.' (3 notes). Each note is represented by a vertical bar with a dot above a horizontal line and a circle below. To the right of the notation is a dashed box containing the instruction: 'Play B section twice then return and play A section'.

Flute Letter to Parents

Dear Grade 6, 7 and 8 Parents/Caregivers,

To enrich the school music program, I have been offering Native American Flute instruction in my grade 6, 7 and 8 Music classes.

What Is A Native American Flute?

A Native American Flute is a wooden flute, which is known to have been, used by First Nations people from across North America. In Canada the flute was played by the Algonkin, Assiniboine, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Cree, Fox, Haida, Huron, Iroquois, MicMac, Ojibway, Okanagan, Omaha, Ottawa, Sauk, Seneca, Sioux and Thompson people.

There are many different types of flutes played by various First Nations people. Some were made of wood and others were made from bone. Your child will learn to play a Native American Flute that is made out of PVC tubing which has E as its lowest note.

Reasons Why Your Child Should Learn To Play The Native American Flute

1. *The Native American Flute is an inexpensive legitimate musical instrument.*
2. *Playing the Native American Flutes gives your child the opportunity to participate actively in music.*
3. *It teaches your child to read music.*
4. *The Native American Flutes lends itself to music making in the home.*
5. *It teaches an appreciation of music from Canada's First Nations people.*

Building Our Own Flutes

Over the next two weeks we will be building our Native American Flutes out of food grade ABS plastic tubing and molded parts. Students will be able to purchase the flutes they make for **\$12.00**. The flutes will be very sturdy and they will provide a lifetime of musical enjoyment. I encourage students to purchase their flutes so that they will have an instrument at home to practice on.

Practice Time

Some of the regular music periods will be used for Native American Flute practice. But if your child practices for 15 minutes or more per day at home, needless to say, he or she will progress more quickly.

I encourage all Grade 6, 7 and 8 students to join together in this classroom activity. Native American Flutes may be purchased from me for **\$12.00** during the next two weeks. Please have the **exact** change.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at 683-7490.

Sincerely yours,

Music Teacher

_____ in _____ class, needs a
name of child *home room teacher's name*

Native American Flute I have enclosed cash for the amount of **\$12.00**.

Parent's/Caregiver's Signature *home or work phone #*

Resource List

Books

The Art of the Native American Flute, R. Carlos Nakai

FLUTE MAGIC, An Introduction To The Native American Flute (1997), edited by Dr. Kathleen Joyce-Grendahl, that covers history, designs, Flute Music Tablature and a number of songs for both the five and six hole flute (all 12 of the songs on *VOICES* have sheet music in the *FLUTE MAGIC* book.), by Tim Crawford

INAFSA Songbook Volume 1, arranged and compiled by Gary Stokum and Dr. Kathleen Joyce-Grendahl for the International Native American Flute Association, 310 Ash wood Drive, Suffolk, VA 23434, USA, Email: INAFSA@AOL.COM, <http://www.worldflutes.org>

Hymns for the Native American Flute, arranged and compiled by Gary Stokum and Dr. Kathleen Joyce-Grendahl for the International Native American Flute Association, 310 Ash wood Drive, Suffolk, VA 23434, USA, Email: INAFSA@AOL.COM, <http://www.worldflutes.org>

Understanding the Gift - The Native American Flute, by John Vames and Molly Moon Arts Publishing, 8513 East Mulberry Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Voices of the Wind – Native American Flute Songs, [traditionally notated book comes with CD of flute and recorder versions of the songs], Bryan Burton, World Music Press, PO Box 2565 Danbury CT 06813-2565 USA 1-800-810-2040. ISBN 0-937203-88-2 Book/CD Set (Comes with notated music, CD of recorder and flute versions of songs, lessons plans and a suggested listening list. This is an excellent starting point for the performance and study of the Native American Flute.)

Myth, Music and Dance of the American Indian (Student SongBook, Student Workbook and Teacher Book w/CD), Ruth De Cesare, Ph.D, Alfred's Publishing Company, 16320 Roscoe Blvd., P.O. Box 10003, Ban Nuys, CA 91410-0003 USA, www.alfredspub.com
Pacific, Missouri, 63069-0066, USA

Oregon Flute Store, www.oregonflutestore.com, or Email: info@oregonflutestore.com

Videos

*** *Songkeepers 2010 – a saga of five Native Americans told through the sound of the flute*, Americas Flute Productions. 1999 – available through the Northern Spirit Flutes. ******I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS VIDEO*****

****All One People – The most beautiful song I have ever taught my students. Great for National Aboriginal Day or anti-racism or multi-cultural events. The CD is in CD Extra format meaning you can play it on a regular CD player/blaster or put it on your computer to access both the audio and 30 printed PDF files including the sheet music for piano (Keys of C, F & G), guitar, recorder and Native American Flute, ready to print overheads, Cree phonetic pronunciation guide, 21 lesson plan and class activities including links to Mary Lee's "Tipi Teaching" and the United Nations declaration on human rights, etc.*

Toubat: A journey of the Native American Flute, Sundance Media Group for Indigenous Pictures & the Oregon Flute Store. 2001 – available through the Oregon Flute Store

Presenting Kevin Locke, promotional video for Kevin's performances <http://www.kevinlocke.com/>
Native American Flutes (Instruments you can purchase, video on making your own flutes and resources such as books and CD's), Echoes Past, Lee LaCroix, <http://www.echoespast.com>

Wooden Flute Makers

Butch Hall - <http://www.butchhallflutes.com/> (I have two of Butches flutes. They play well.)

Spring Shine – <http://www.native-american-flutes.com/> (Canadian lives in B.C.)

Tom Stewart - <http://www.stellarflutes.com/> (I have one of Tom's flutes. It plays well but not the octave)

JP Gomez - <http://www.heartsonflutes.com/>

Ken Light - <http://www.aoflutes.com/main.htm> (R. Carlos Nakai's Flutemaker)

Links & Performers

International Native American Flutes Association <http://www.worldflutes.org/>

Oregon Flute Store has Native American Flutes for sale and a wide variety of books and resources for the Native American Flute – <http://www.oregonflutestore.com/>

Clint Goss presents sessions on the Native American Flute. He is the designer of the flute font I used for the fingering charts. He has many more links on his website. <http://www.clintgoss.com/resources.html>
Joseph Naytowhow – story teller & Native American Flute player 1-306-261-6674
Delia & Bryan – contact Pete Chief at Queen Elizabeth School 683-7490 for contact information
Kevin Locke - <http://www.kevinlocke.com/>
Jason & Kevin Chamakese (306) 984-4803
Colby Tootosis