

# Teacher Guide

## Whitman Mission National Historic Site – The Cayuse Perspective

Native culture and Native history have often been excluded in the telling of the history of Waiilatpu (Whitman Mission). The Whitmans and the Oregon Trail have been romanticized and overstated. Truthfully telling this history requires the inclusion of multiple perspectives. This guide has been created in collaboration with Tamastlikt Cultural Institute (TCI), on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR).

**Subject:** Social Studies, Humanities, History

**Grade Level:** 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th

**Duration:** 3-5 class periods

**Overview:** The focus of this guide is the history and culture of the Cayuse and the implications of the Whitman Mission. This guide contains three sections that serve as supplements to the park visit.

1. The first section is a question and answer (Q and A) resource for teachers to deepen their knowledge of the subject, particularly through a Cayuse perspective.
2. The second section is a lesson plan designed for classroom use focusing on primary sources from contemporary Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people. This lesson requires listening to recordings from the “Homeland Heritage Corridor” audio tour. The Home Heritage Corridor is currently available to purchase at the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute.
3. The third section is a list of helpful essential and dialogic questions relating to the themes of the park visit.

### Objectives:

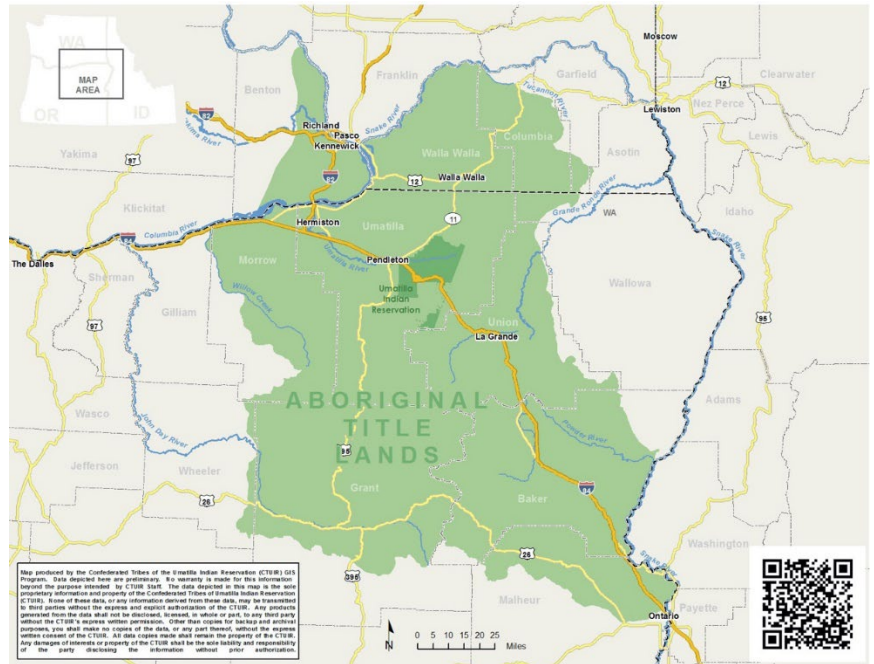
- Students will be able to **identify** historical and modern characteristics of the Cayuse
- Students will be able to **evaluate** historical events that led to the addition of Oregon territory to the United States
- Students will be able to **describe** the basic principles that guide Cayuse culture
- Students will be able to **compare and contrast** differences in land management between the Cayuse and early European (white) immigrants.
- Students will be able to **locate** the homeland of the Cayuse Nation

## Teacher “Q and A”

### 1. Who are the Cayuse?

The Cayuse have lived in this place, their homeland, for tens of thousands of years. Sections of Cayuse homeland are shared with their closest neighbors and relatives: Umatilla, Nez Perce, Walla Walla, Palouse, and Yakima peoples. The Cayuse also share certain cultural tenets, values, and practices with these same Plateau Sahaptin speaking cultures. They called themselves *líksiw* in the Cayuse language. In the Nez Perce language they later adopted, they were known as *weyíletpuu*, swaying people. The name, Cayuse, was derived from French traders referring to the *weyíletpuu* as Cailloux, or “people of the stone rocks.”<sup>1</sup>

They provide stewardship of the natural systems of their homeland to this day. Many of the Native place names have specific ecological information within the name itself.<sup>2</sup> Cayuse cultural values and knowledge of the land have allowed them to thrive in this area for approximately 16,000 years, if not longer. Today, Cayuse people continue their stewardship practices and cultural values that have been passed down for millennia.



The old Cayuse language is considered a language isolate.

Many modern Cayuse people speak the Cayuse Nez Perce dialect, which they began to transition to in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> For example, In the Cayuse language the name for horse is *túunəp*, but in Nez Perce language the term for horse is *šikəm*. These languages came from the land. They demonstrate Cayuse understanding and appreciation for the land.<sup>4</sup> Cayuse families are still abiding by *tamáalwit*, the set of laws that define the relationship between people and the land around them. *tamáalwit* has governed Cayuse stewardship of the land for thousands of years and will continue guiding future generations of Cayuse.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. Where are the Cayuse now?

Cayuse people live all over the world, including in the largest cities and remote rural areas. They also continue to live in their homeland of the Columbia River region near the Blue Mountains, a place they have lived for thousands of years (10,000-15,000). The

<sup>1</sup> (Robert H. Ruby, The Cayuse Indians, 1972)

<sup>2</sup> (Society, Foreigners in Native Homelands, 2019)

<sup>3</sup> (Eugene S. Hunn E. T., ČÁW PAWÁ LÁAKNI They are Not Forgotten, 2015)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> (National Park Service, 2017)

Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people make up the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Northeastern Oregon. The Umatilla reservation today represents a small fraction of their traditional homeland. The Cayuse continue to fish, hunt, dig, and harvest in “usual and accustomed places” which includes places beyond the reservation boundaries. Some of those places include but are not limited to: the Grande Ronde River valley, the Blue Mountains, the Elkhorn Mountains, the Wenaha River, the John Day River, the Snake River, the Payette River, the Wieser River, and even places as far away as the plains of Montana and Yellowstone.<sup>6</sup> Within the Umatilla Reservation and surrounding areas, Cayuse people are teachers, managers, farmers and ranchers, attorneys, tribal office leaders, and hunters who continue to educate the public and ensure the promises of the 1855 treaty are upheld.

There are many widely known modern day Cayuse people including actress Elaine Miles, National Park Service Director Chuck Sams, and WNBA and WNCAA basketball stars Shoni Schimmel and Jude Schimmel.

### **3. Prior to European contact, were the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people nomadic?**

No, nomadic implies ‘wandering.’ Prior to European contact, the Cayuse had many homes, but their movement was strategic and well planned. They lived a lifestyle of subsistence and moved according to the seasonal round. The seasonal round was a predetermined movement based on the locations of foods that were in season. It was also connected to *tamáalwit*, the divine law of Cayuse culture. The way in which Cayuse people gathered foods was part of how the Cayuse expressed their values; they continue these practices today despite having had to adapt to European encroachment and genocide. It was common to establish winter villages along the larger rivers where fish were plentiful.<sup>7</sup> Winter was also a time for celebrating, praying, dancing, preparing, and listening to stories from elders. In the spring, wild celery (*wewíumn*) was one of the first sought-after foods.<sup>8</sup> In the summer, camas (*qémès*) would be collected, and the bulbs would be prepared in a variety of ways. Several berries would be ready throughout the summers. A few that were commonly collected were serviceberries (*kíkéeye*), chokecherries (*tims*), wild currants (*kát*), and huckleberries (*cemítx*).<sup>9</sup> The summer also saw large gatherings at places like Celilo Falls where there was opportunity to trade with other Plateau people, or Coastal people.<sup>10</sup> These traditional foods continue to be harvested by the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people thanks to their ancestral knowledge.

The range of the Cayuse extends well beyond their homeland. After the Cayuse acquired horses in the 1700’s, they traveled as far south as Mexico and groups regularly traveled across the Bitterroot Mountain range to hunt bison in the Yellowstone Valley and trade with Salish, Crow, Cheyenne, and other plains people.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> (Eugene S. Hunn E. T., ČÁW PAWÁ LÁAKNI They are Not Forgotten, 2015)

<sup>7</sup> (Conner, Lewis and Clark through Indian Eyes, 2006)

<sup>8</sup> (Trailtribes.org, n.d.)

<sup>9</sup> (Eugene S. Hunn E. T., ČÁW PAWÁ LÁAKNI They are Not Forgotten, 2015)

<sup>10</sup> (Trailtribes.org, n.d.)

<sup>11</sup> (Karson, 2006)

### **Who were the Whitmans?**

Narcissa and Marcus Whitman were Presbyterian missionaries living in the Cayuse Nation from 1836-1847. Their mission was sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). They established their mission site in the present-day Walla Walla Valley. Over the course of eleven years the missionaries had little success in recruiting converts and never seemed to have much interest or knowledge about Cayuse culture. Their actions and demeanor were often considered ungrateful by their hosts, the Cayuse.<sup>12</sup> In 1847, both Whitmans were killed in a Cayuse attack on the mission.<sup>13</sup>

### **How did the Cayuse and Whitmans interact?**

The Whitmans were not the first white (European) people the Cayuse encountered. Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Cayuse had already begun indirect trade relationships with companies from Spain and Britain. Each of these foreign nations were competing to control the commerce of the Columbia River region.<sup>14</sup> In 1805-1806, the Walla Walla, Umatilla, and Cayuse people received the Lewis and Clark expedition as guests and allowed them safe passage through their land.<sup>15</sup> When the Whitman's arrived in 1836, they too entered a nation outside of the United States boundary: the Cayuse Nation, or *weyíletpuu*. The Cayuse allowed the Whitmans to live at Waiilatpu because the Cayuse were interested in learning more about the Whitmans.

It is important to note that the Cayuse and Whitmans coexisted for several years. During this time the Cayuse, and other Plateau cultures, were dealing with epidemics such as measles, smallpox, and dysentery which decimated a large portion of their people.<sup>16</sup> The correlation between epidemics and the arrival of the Whitmans became one of the main sources of friction between the Cayuse and the Whitmans. Marcus Whitman was attempting to be a *twéet*, or healer, which in Cayuse tradition carried serious consequences. If a *twéet* attempted to heal a sick person who did not get better, the *twéet* could be put to death.<sup>17</sup>

While the Cayuse sought to learn from these newcomers, there is little evidence that the Whitmans felt the same way. This apparent lack of interest and respect for the Cayuse became a frequent source of tension. Over the course of a decade, the Whitmans did not learn the language of their hosts and did not understand the customs and beliefs that guided Cayuse culture. In addition, they did not listen to Cayuse leaders who asked them to close their mission and trading business that was bringing more disease to their country.<sup>18</sup> The Whitman's failed to understand the land and culture they were visiting, choosing instead to only see the value of their

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<sup>12</sup> (Schofield, *Selling Your Father's Bones*, 2009)

<sup>13</sup> (National Park Service , n.d.)

<sup>14</sup> (Stern, 1993)

<sup>15</sup> (Conner, *Lewis and Clark through Indian Eyes*, 2006)

<sup>16</sup> (Boyd, 1994)

<sup>17</sup> (Karson, 2006)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

own culture. This is a prime example of why it is crucial to learn about one another and cultures outside of your own.

### **Does the Oregon Trail connect to this place?**

The Oregon trail ran just south of Waiilatpu, the village site known to the Cayuse as *páašxa*. Some immigrants traveled on a branch from the main Oregon Trail to Waiilatpu. The Oregon Trail impacted Cayuse people by cutting through the Grande Ronde River valley and Umatilla River Valley, part of traditional homeland. The Cayuse saw thousands of immigrants hunting game, leaving trail debris, damaging water sources, and struggling to survive on their journey. The Oregon Trail also brought disease to Cayuse country and the results were devastating to the population. Between 1843-1846, thousands of immigrants traveled through Cayuse country on their way to the Willamette Valley. The disruption of daily life caused by the Oregon Trail was in direct correlation with the growing negative effects of multiple epidemics experienced by Cayuse people.<sup>19</sup>

In the early 1840's, the Whitman's suddenly abandoned their missionary work and transformed into an aid station for Oregon Trail travelers, thereby breaking their original agreement with the Cayuse. Rather than focusing on converting Native people to Christianity, Marcus Whitman sought to support American settlement in the West.<sup>20</sup>

### **What is the national significance of this history?**

The news following the attack on the mission site in 1847 did not provide Native perspectives and context that would more accurately describe what had happened at the mission.<sup>21</sup> Racist stereotypes about Native people fueled the nation's ambition for land acquisition. Misleading narratives drew conclusions that future mission sites, and therefore American expansion, required United States military protection. The deaths of the Whitmans provided the United States Government further rationalization to colonize the West. In 1848, Oregon was made a U.S. territory, thereby accelerating the arrival of Anglo-American settlers.<sup>22</sup> The events at the mission in 1847 also led to direct conflict between the United States government and the Cayuse and other Plateau nations. The Cayuse War began after the mission attack and lasted from 1847-1850. After the Whitman killings and before the treaty negotiations of 1855, the Cayuse were continually harassed and attacked by American settlers, local militias, and the army. In 1850, the Cayuse were pressured to give up five men to take responsibility for the Whitman killings. Even though the events took place outside the jurisdiction of the United States and the trial was biased against the Cayuse, all five men were convicted and sentenced to hang in 1850.<sup>23</sup> Today they are known as the "Cayuse five," and their descendants continue to search for their remains.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> (National Park Service, n.d.)

<sup>21</sup> (Tate, 2020)

<sup>22</sup> (Koenig, 2021)

<sup>23</sup> (Lansing, 1993)

By 1850, American settlers had colonized so much of the west that the federal government began holding treaty negotiations to reduce or eliminate Native land holdings. In 1855, the treaty making began for the Cayuse in the Walla Walla Valley. Along with the Umatilla, Walla Walla, Nez Perce, and Yakima people, the Cayuse navigated the treaty process that would secure their sovereignty.<sup>24</sup> The first proposal at the treaty council was for the Cayuse to share a reservation with the Spokanes, Nez Perce, the Walla Walla, and Umatilla in modern day Idaho. However, the headmen and leaders of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla were able to negotiate for their own location, today's Umatilla Indian Reservation. The treaty acknowledges sovereignty for the nations of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla. It also recognizes access and rights to gather and hunt at "usual and accustomed places." Although these details are positive results, the treaty also ushered in an era of forced assimilation and cultural repression while drastically reducing the size of Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla lands.<sup>25</sup>

When discussing this treaty and today's reservation it is critical to remember that the laws of this treaty and federal legislation do not erase or replace the laws and connection the Cayuse have had with their homeland for thousands of years. The relationship between the Cayuse and the land is eternal and the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla people will always be here.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> (Eugene S. Hunn E. T., ČÁW PAWÁ LÁAKNI They are Not Forgotten, 2015)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

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## Lesson Plan

### Central Focus

Students will explore Cayuse culture by listening to primary sources from the *Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Homeland Heritage Corridor* audio. The CD is currently available through the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute. Students will hear stories and history from modern day Cayuse people while considering the values that have guided Cayuse people through millennia. Students will need to practice critical listening skills and form their own analysis based on what they hear. The following lesson plan is intended to preface the visit to Whitman Mission National Historic Site so that students will have a better understanding of Cayuse people and Cayuse culture before they visit the park.

**Subject/Grade level:** Social Studies/History 4-8

**Duration of Lesson:** two class periods of 45-60 minutes

### Content Objectives

1. Students will be able to **describe** the basic elements and cultural tenets of Cayuse culture.
2. Students will be able to **evaluate** Cayuse stewardship of the land.

### Materials

*Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Homeland Heritage Corridor CD or online audio files*  
*Student journals*

### Vocabulary

Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla peoples, Plateau Indians/Natives, treaty, reservation, culture

### Oregon State Standards

Geography: 4.7,4.9

Multicultural Studies: 4.7, 4.11

Historical Knowledge: 4.11, 4.14, 8.27, 8.28

Economics: 8.14

Multicultural Studies: 8.3, 8.27, 8.28, 8.31

### Washington State Standards

History: H1.6-8.4, H1 6-8.6, H2.6-8.6

Social Studies Skills: SSS2.4.2, SSS2.5.1, SSS3.4.1 SSS1.6-8.1, SSS1.6-8.2

### Procedures

1. Use the 2-column format below to lead a discussion with your students after they listen to different tracks of the Homeland Heritage Corridor audio recordings. For the teacher side of the lesson plan, the *italicized* words represent questions or phrases that the teacher will say to the class. Differentiation is highlighted in either **blue** or **red** to represent sections that include differentiated learning options.



## **What the teacher will do to engage students.**

1. The teacher will ask the class if they know that they have Native American neighbors, or if they are aware that they live in or near the homeland of the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla people. This is a good time to remind students that there are many different Native groups on the continent and that each have their own values and cultural practices.

*Did you know that you live in (or near) the homeland of the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla people?* (Teachers should remember to practice wait time in order for students to have the time to consider the question)

*Did you know that they have lived here for approximately 15,000-16,000 years? How long has the United States existed? Did you know that Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla people still live here?* (Allow approximately 10-15 minutes for discussion).

These questions will create a class discussion that could go in many directions. It is important for the teacher to know enough about Cayuse culture in order to guide a class discussion that can provide some background information and context for students so that they can be prepared to analyze some oral history from the Homeland CD. Much of the background information will also be derived from the primary sources of the CD.

## **What students will do**

1. Students will consider the question asked by the teacher and will have time to consider the question before answering. They will engage in a classroom discussion to begin the class. They will have to consider the question:

*Did you know that you live in (or near) the homeland of the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla people?*

2. After the initial class discussion, the teacher will tell the students that today they are going to be listening to contemporary Cayuse people (primary sources) in order to better understand the basic cultural tenets that have allowed the Cayuse to thrive in this area for thousands of years.

*Before we listen to some primary sources from modern day Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people, we will be breaking into groups (2-4 per group). We will be listening to the first three tracks of this Homeland Heritage audio. After each track, you will respond individually in your journals to an essential question relating to the track. The last 15-20 minutes of class, you will compare your answers as a group and share out to the rest of the groups.*

This is a good opportunity to use the map from the homeland corridor audio so that students can recognize the geography that will be discussed.

3. The teacher will begin by playing track 1 (4:42 minutes) and 2 (8:20 minutes) of Disk 1 from the *Homeland Heritage Corridor*. After listening to the first two tracks from Disk one, the teacher will say:

*Now respond to one or more of the following questions in your journals:*

- *What do Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people describe as being valuable?*
- *What is valuable to you?*
- *What does it mean to be a good neighbor?*

These questions are intended to get the students to think about value and land use. It will allow them to compare their own idea of what is valuable in an economic sense compared to the audio tracks from the homeland audio. Allow 5-10

minutes for students to write in their journals. 2. Students listen to the plan for the day.

3. After listening to Track 1 and 2, students will answer one or more the following essential questions in their journals:

- *What is valuable to Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people?*
- *What is valuable to you?*
- *What does it mean to be a good neighbor?*

For the journal responses, students who need to demonstrate their learning by drawing can also opt to do that, or they may tell the teacher verbally rather than writing. Speech to text devices may also be used to demonstrate learning or to receive the audio clips for the activity.

Students will respond in their journals individually and will have an opportunity to share their journal entries with their group towards the end of class. **English language learners or students who need language support can use sentence starters such as: The Cayuse found \_\_\_\_ valuable because. . . . Or \_\_\_\_\_ is valuable to me because... To be a good neighbor means. . .**

4. Then begin playing track 3. After listening to track 3 (8:54 minutes), the teacher will ask the following question:

- *Who is responsible for taking care of the land? Why?*
- *How do you know how to treat the land?*
- *How is history recorded?*

If class time allows, the teacher can play track 4 (8:35 minutes) for additional context and background information for students to answer the 5 essential questions of the lesson.

The remaining 15-25 minutes of class can be used for groups to share their journal entries with one another. This is an important assessment opportunity for the teacher. The teacher should survey the room for discussion and understanding. When groups have had enough time to form their responses, the teacher will ask each group to share their collaborative responses.

The teacher will say:

*Now that you have had some time to share your answers with your group, take some time to formulate a group answer to share with the rest of the class. Please share 2 answers out of the 5 essential/dialogic questions, (Time may dictate the number of answers.)*

#### **Closure: What Teacher Will Do**

The teacher will ask students to turn in their journal entries as an exit ticket. This will serve as the for formative assessment.

4. Students will listen to track 3 and answer the following three questions in their journals:

- *Who is responsible for taking care of the land? Why?*
- *How do you know how to treat the land?*
- *How do the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla record their history?*

If class time allows, students may listen to track 4 to increase their understanding of Cayuse culture.

Students will get together with their pairs or groups and share their journal entries with one another.

The students will cooperate with one another and formulate a group answer to each two of the five essential questions. They may choose the answers they would like to share with the other groups in the class.

**This is a good opportunity for English language learners to be placed in a group that can assist in interpretation and language demands.**

#### **Closure: What Students will do**

Students will turn their journal entries as an exit ticket to demonstrate what they have learned.

## Possible Essential Questions (4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade)

These essential questions are intended for a post park visit because students will need proper background information to formulate quality responses. The questions can be used as class discussion starters, journal entries, essay writing, or other classroom activities where questions are useful. The objective of these questions is to challenge students to reach higher order thinking; students should grapple with the background information they have learned while at the park, or in the classroom, and synthesize their own answers using evidence to support their claims.

Essential Question(s)	Dialogic Question(s)
1. How should you treat the land? 2. Who is responsible for taking care of the land? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you know where you are?</li> <li>• Where does your food come from? Specifically, before your food reaches the supermarket, where does it originate? Do you know all the places you get your food?</li> <li>• How do you know how to treat the land?</li> <li>• How does the land play a role in who you are?</li> </ul>
3. What does it mean to be a good neighbor? 4. How do you coexist with neighbors that have different values than you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think of a time when you have encountered someone who believes differently than you.</li> <li>• How do you feel when someone believes differently than you?</li> <li>• What could the Cayuse or Whitmans have done differently?</li> <li>• How do you know if you are a good neighbor?</li> </ul>
5. How do we choose what has value in our society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is valuable to you? What makes something valuable to you?</li> <li>• How do you feel when someone doesn't value something that you feel is important?</li> <li>• Why do we choose to protect certain things?</li> </ul>
6. How do you create change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why would you want to change the way something is?</li> <li>• When was a time you wanted to change the way people are treated by society?</li> </ul>
7. What makes people want to change the way others live?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When should you think about changing the way you live?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
8. What is culture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has shaped you into who you are?</li> <li>• What are important parts of your community's culture?</li> <li>• Have you ever adopted something from another culture?</li> <li>• How should you treat people from a different culture than yours?</li> </ul>
9. What happens when a disturbance takes place in a community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we react when something unexpected happens to people around us?</li> <li>• What are ways to respond to unexpected events?</li> <li>• What role could do you play in your community when an unexpected event takes place?</li> <li>• What's an example you have seen of your community working together?</li> </ul>

