

Native Culture

Revised CIK 2017

OVERVIEW:

As students discover how the Yuhaviatam utilized the local forest for survival, they will hear Yuhaviatam creation stories, use a mano and metate, and have an opportunity to try their hand at fire starting using a bow drill.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

-) Have an understanding of the Yuhaviatam culture and history in this area.
-) Identify local edible plants and describe their uses.
-) Describe the Serrano culture in terms of artifacts, ecofacts and oral tradition known to archeologists.

VOCABULARY:

Archeology
Hunter/Gatherer
Oral Tradition

Artifact
Mano
Yuhaviatam

Ecofact
Metate
Culture

MATERIALS:

8 quarter-sized items
4 Manos
4 Metates
Charcoal or acorns (for grinding)
4 laminated pictograph cards
Laminated Serrano Creation Story Set
Bow Drills (one set per pair)

PROCEDURES:

1. Introductory Activity: Keep It Hidden (found in Activity Glossary) (Native 1)
 - A. Circle up students. Conduct activity.
 - B. Debrief: Why would the Yuhaviatam play this game? (for fun) How did we learn that this was part of their culture? (oral tradition)
2. What is Culture?
 - A. Ask students to define **culture**. Culture is a set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices of an organization or group.
 - B. What attitudes, values and goals are unique in the **Yuhaviatam** culture? Discuss respect for nature, familial bonds, and reverence for the grizzly bear (they understood this animal to be their ancestors reincarnated, sent to watch over the tribe).
 - C. What practices are important in the Yuhaviatam culture? One is teaching lessons through **oral tradition**, using legends about animals, constellations, and other facets of their daily life to explain morals to the tribe. The legends were more than stories; they were a way to educate, to pass on beliefs, a lens through which social life was organized.
 - i. Activity: Serrano Creation Stories (found in activity glossary)
 - ii. Debrief: How do you think this legend could help create understanding for the Yuhaviatam's surroundings? Are there any cautionary tales/stories with morals that you've been told? Are there stories about your family that are important to you? Why do you remember that story more than other anecdotes you've been told?
3. Studying the Yuhaviatam
 - A. What clues do we have, other than oral tradition, to help us understand how the Yuhaviatam interacted in the Big Bear Valley? Introduce the science of **archeology**.
 - B. Contrast **artifacts** (human-modified tools and evidence like pottery, basketry and arrowheads), with **ecofacts** (natural sources that have not been modified for use and show signs that relate to human behavior). In the past decade, archeologists have found evidence of a Yuhaviatam hunting camp near

Baldwin Lake. They found artifacts of grinding stones and arrowheads, and ecofacts of jasper and obsidian (most likely traded from other tribes)!

- C. Return to a circle and introduce **mano** and **metate**. Explain its use in Yuhaviatam cooking, especially to grind up acorns or pinion nuts. Is it an artifact or an ecofact?

i. Activity: Using a Mano and Metate (found in the Activity Glossary)

Note: Explain the importance of leaching tannic acid from acorns before eating. Do not let students eat acorn pieces.

- ii. Debrief: How would you describe the speed of this process? Do you think the Yuhaviatam wasted any of the food they took time preparing? Giant granite boulders served as metate for the Yuhaviatam in the Big Bear area. Why do you think archeologists might find three or four grinding surfaces clustered together? (socialization while grinding)

- D. If mano and metate help us understand what the Yuhaviatam gathered, then arrowheads suggest that they also hunted. What demands could weather place on the **hunter/gatherer** lifestyle? Explain how the Yuhaviatam migrated down into Yucca Valley in the winter, and returned in the warmer months following the rising elevation levels of plant blooms.

- E. Explain the use of pottery and basketry as important tools for the hunter/gatherer lifestyle. Yuhaviatam pottery made from clay base, basketry woven from willow. The Yuhaviatam were such fine basket weavers that coil-style willow baskets were woven tightly enough to hold water! The Yuhaviatam were known around the whole region for their skills in basket weaving

- F. Finally, evidence appears to show that the Yuhaviatam used pump-style drills to create friction and form small coals.

4. Experiment: Bow Drills (Native 2)

A. Demonstrate Bow Drill.

B. Conduct experiment.

- C. Debrief: What do these fire-starting methods provide? Warmth, cooked food, protection. What are some challenges you may have had with the pump drill or bow drill? Need practice and strength. What are some other ways you can make fire?

5. Wrap Up

- A. [*What?*] Concisely review the major points of the lesson, all the way back from the introductory activity.
- B. [*So what?*] What was important for you to discover from the lesson? Why was it important for all of us to take this class?
- C. [*Now what?*] What can you now do with this information? What changes can you make in your life? What can you teach to others? Who will you tell? What will you say?
- D. Pass out beads after all students have contributed.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

Special Needs: The experiment requires significant fine-motor skills. Encourage partners to work together on one element at a time if necessary.

Weather: Active precipitation may make it difficult to maintain dry bowdrill sets to try and make smoke.

Yuhaviatam Creation Stories

One of the most important Yuhaviatam stories was their creation story:

The origin of the Yuhaviatam people begins with two brothers, Pakrokitat and Kukitat, who lived in the skies. The two of them decided to create humans for the earth. Pakrokitat, being the elder brother, spent many nights creating the people of the earth. But Kukitat hated how the humans looked (Kukitat thought that humans should have eyes in the backs of their heads and have webbed feet) and the brothers fought incessantly over who had the better ideas, skills and abilities. Their fights were small at first, exchanging insults and namecalling, but the fights became violent and the most epic battles between them ensued over many moons, until finally, Pakrokitat was killed, and Kukitat was all alone.

After Pakrokitat's death, Kukitat began to become bitter. He was alone except for the humans his older brother had created. He began to divide the people who had settled around Mt. San Gorgonio into different nations. The people began speaking different languages, developing new customs, and dividing into smaller and smaller nations. It wasn't long before these nations noticed these differences, their different ideas, and just like the sky brothers Pakrokitat and Kukitat, they starting warring with each other.

After a while the nations began to believe that the source of their grief and warring was Kukitat and decided that they should unify and kill him. Kukitat knew that he was going to die and gave instructions for his cremation which was to take place at Hatauva. Hatauva (meaning "The Eye of God") was a crystal dome of quartz visible in the East end of Big Bear Valley. Unfortunately, it was slightly destroyed years ago by some gold miners, who thought that its presence indicated gold.

Coyote, who was almost always causing trouble, was sent away on a fake errand during the cremation ceremony, but he returned early, and found all the animals standing in a circle of mourning. He snuck in, by squeezing through Badger's legs, and stole Kukitat's heart – the source of Kukiat's power - during the ceremony.

With the trickster Coyote having Kukitat's power, the people continued to fight. This time, they fought until there was only one man of the Yuhaviatam clan left. After the battle, his wife gave birth to a son. Unfortunately, the man died before his son was born, so the son grew up with his mother's people on his mother's side of the mountain and he was the last of the Yuhaviatam. After many years the son became a man, and once he was an adult, he decided to return to his ancestral country, his father's side of the mountain. He married two Muhiatnim sisters. Over time, this one son began the small group that grew large enough to once again become the mighty Yuhaviatam nation.

One popular story that varied from tribe to tribe, but that many tribes told was the “Twelve Great Paths of the Moon”.

A long time ago, Father Sky and Mother Earth had a child named Moon. As Moon grew bigger and bigger out among the basket of stars, the Sun Dogs came, and took turns biting him. Snap, snap, they bit, until the moon was crescent shaped. Even as a crescent, the ragged little Moon continued to shine brightly in the sky.

At that time Spirit Walker guided all the Two-Legged and Four-Legged Creatures. She was worried about Moon. She told all the creatures of the earth to dance around the fire. The men were to dance with Deer, the women with Corn, and the children with Turtles. On the Night When Red Leaves Fell, the creatures looked up. The Moon was growing bigger! It grew and grew until it had a full, happy face, but then the Sun Dogs chewed on it again and whittled it down until it was crescent shaped again.

From then on, the Two-Legged Creatures and the Four-Legged Creatures got used to the growing and the dying of the Moon. The Sun Dogs would continue to chew and, every once in a while. Father Sun would cast a black shadow on Moon’s round face. So the creatures continued to dance to help Moon grow and decided to give each of these Moons a name.

These names are still known today:

January is called Man Moon

February is Big Wind Moon

March is Ash Moon

April is Planting Moon

May is Corn Planting Moon

June is Corn Tassel Coming Out Moon

July is Sun House Moon

August is Lake Moon

September is Ripe Corn Moon

October is Leaves Falling Moon

November is Corn Depositing Moon

December is Night Fire Moon



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