**Water Box Wishes**

An activity inspired by **Joanne Robertson’s “The Water Walker”**
and the **Junior Water Walkers**

*We’re all born of water, we’re all connected with the water, we’re all related in that way. Even though we’re not related by blood, we’re related by water. So water is very precious for us.”* - The late Josephine Mandamin-ba

Joanne Robertson’s “The Water Walker” follows the story of a determined Ojibwe Grandmother (Nokomis) Josephine-ba Mandamin and her great love for **Nibi (water).** Nokomis walks to raise awareness of our need to protect Nibi for future generations, and for all life on the planet. Her work has inspired people of all ages to answer one question when it comes to the threats facing water: what are you going to do about it? Together through this activity, we’ll find out!

**Instructions:**

1. Choose a box or create one using origami. Sit and think about your wishes for the **Nibi**.
* The Anishinaabe people of the Great Lakes region often use **The Four Sacred Medicines (Tobacco, Cedar, Sage & Sweetgrass)** to smudge with. Think about things that are meaningful in your life to place along with your wishes.
1. Now, write/sketch one of your favorite memories with **Nibi**. This could be a moment you wish you could experience again or one you wish to share with those you love. When you’re done, place it in the box.
2. The first pillar of the (Junior) Water Walkers program is ***connect***, followed by reflect, respect, and protect. Remember, we won’t be convinced to respect and protect water without having a strong personal relationship with it.
3. Reflect on items you have that remind you of your memory of **Nibi.** If you can, place them in the box.
* Ideas include plants from your special place, photos, rocks from a visit to the shore, etc.
1. Leave your water box somewhere special to you. Over the next hour, day, month, or year, return to the box & continue to add wishes for **Nibi.**
* Keep connecting with **Nibi** and store those experiences here. Each reflection is a wish for the water to keep flowing. Feel free to add other wishes too: places you hope to see, prayers for **Nibi**, etc.
1. Now that you have your water box full of wishes, what will you do to protect it?
* Grandma Josephine-ba led water walks around the basin. What gifts already exist inside you? Maybe you will write, dance, vote, plant, or clean-up for the **Nibi**. Write down one action you can take to protect our water on your box as a commitment and reminder.

**How to make your own origami box**

<https://readingmytealeaves.com/2021/10/make-your-own-origami-masu-box.html>

**Other activities from the Great Lakes, Great Read website:**

1. **Learn about the Junior Water Walkers**- Inspired by Nokomis Josephine Mandamin, The Junior Water Walkers have taken up her cause to protect water. Over 180 classes from around the Great lakes, across Canada and throughout the world are continuing her work.
<https://sites.google.com/tbcschools.ca/juniorwaterwalkers/home?authuser=0>
2. **Write about your water experiences.**

- Nature journaling is a wonderful way to sit and enjoy the Great Lakes and to take time to reflect. Bring along a small notebook when you visit your local water body. Take a look around you and observe what you see. These observations can be captured in your notebook with narrative writing, poetry or sketches. Be sure to note the date, time, temperature, weather of your reflection. Not sure how to start? Begin with these: “I notice… I wonder… This reminds me of…” And add a drawing, a sketch, a doodle. It’s your nature journal.

1. **Color the Great Lakes**
- Explore the Great Lakes coloring book and create your own masterpiece: <https://www.seagrant.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Full-booklet.pdf>
2. **Rhyme time**
- Write down as many words as you can about water: cold, flowing, wet, splash, bubble, grass, reed, worm, eel, sand, mud, dirt, beach, shore, stone, etc. Lay them all out and create a poem out of the words.
3. **Take a Water Walk**- Take a walk in your neighborhood, a local park, near a local water body. Observe what you see- what animals, what plants, and what you hear and smell. What do these sights, sounds and smells remind you of? How do you feel?

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