

CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Student Success Initiative

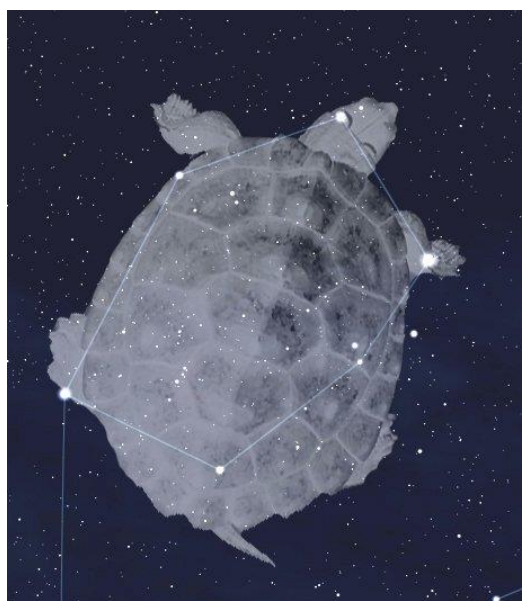
1500B Cumberland Street - Cornwall, Ontario - K6H 7B7
Phone: 613-933-1720 Toll-Free: 1-800-267-7136 Fax: 613-933-7966
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2020-2021 Indigenous Theme: Skyworld Teachings

November is the Month of Makinak: The Turtle

The stars luminate the longer nights in November which makes stargazing even more beautiful. Our CDSBEO Indigenous Theme of [Skyworld](#) is up and running! (If you



missed *October's Learning Experiences*, click here:

[October Star Story](#) ou en français: [Légendes](#)

[Célestes](#)) This month, the focus is on [The Turtle](#)

[Star](#) (often referred to as Cepheus).

*Important Note!

Our goal is to highlight the stories of the stars from the perspective of the people on whose land we gather, and ensure we decolonize our educational approach as much as possible. Therefore, from this point on, we will refer to the Turtle Star as

[Makinak](#) (the Cree word for Turtle).

Makinak: The Turtle Star. Accessed October 7th, 2020.
https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2Fmegwatzke%2Fstatus%2F999275324369260545&psig=AOvVaw3mHQhua1_BU8glm_GUHSVj&ust=1602177786258000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=2ahUKewiNjee_6

Minds On!

As a group, watch Cree scientist, author and astronomer Wilfred Buck's video on the [Makinak Story](#). Engage in whole group discussion to check for understanding:



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- What other shape do the 5 stars make? Why is this interesting when looking at star clusters?
- Prior to the coming of the Europeans, what was Makinak used for?
- What are 2 other animals that Wilfred Buck mentions? What month are they most visible? Why do you think certain animals are associated with particular months?
- Comment on how the turtle shell can chart the passing of time.

Challenge

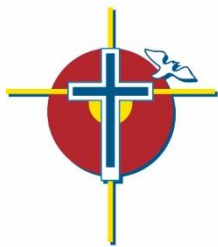
Again, this month our CDSBEO students are challenged with stepping outside under the stars. Makinak is a constellation that can be seen all year long from anywhere in Canada, and it can be easily found by using last month's experience with The Fisher Star! Extend the line from the pointer stars of the Fisher Star through Polaris (The North Star). Makinak is just North of this! Students are once again encouraged to record their observations:

- What time did they go outside?
- What was the weather like?
- Was the sky clear?
- Was it easy to spot?
- Did they see any other familiar constellations or star patterns?

Encourage students to go stargazing for Makinak a few times this month. Use the Stargazing Chart that was started in October, or begin a new one: [Stargazing Chart](#).



Spring Constellations. Accessed October 13, 2020.
<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/depts/parks/DistanceLearning/Spring%20Constellations.pdf>



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Discussion

- Could you find Makinak?
- Could you see the turtle shape in this constellation?
- What wonderings did you have while examining the sky and stars?
- How did you feel about your stargazing and charting experience?
- What are some considerations to keep in mind that helps to make this experience more meaningful?

OPTION:

Use the [November Star Map](#) to closely examine the November night sky. Can you apply the Indigenous constellation names to the star clusters we have discussed so far (Makinak, The Fisher Star, The Great Bear)? After examining the map, visit the sky again – did the map make it easier to spot Makinak?

AS AN ASIDE...

Why consider the stars from an Indigenous perspective? Wilfred Buck maintains that “we come from the stars...” Check out this short OnCore video, [Connected to the Sky](#), that highlights just how important (and FASCINATING!) it is to consider the stars from an indigenous viewpoint.

Activity

- Is it strange that there is a turtle in the sky? This adapted story of ["The Turtle in the Sky"](#) offers an explanation of this! Read together!
 - Does the story identify any important characteristics of the Turtle?
 - What do you think is the “takeaway” or moral here? (Or, for older students, what is a possible theme?)
 - How does the story connect with the purpose of the turtle shell?
 - Can you connect this story with Wildred Buck’s video on Makinak?



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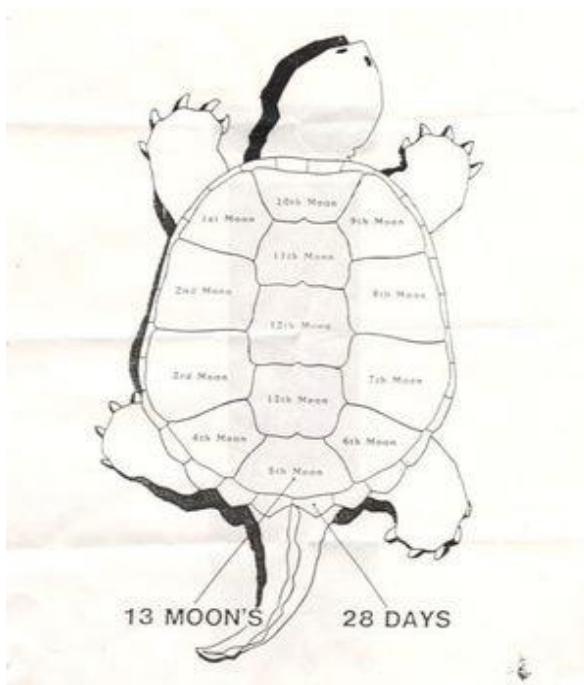
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Extension Possibilities

“The turtle, or Makinak, has 28 outer markings on its shell corresponding to 28 days per lunar month and 13 sections inside same as the number of full Moons in 1 year” (Buck, *Star Stories*).



Davies, Carrie-Anne. Personal Website: Weebly.
<https://www.cadavies.com/turtle-island.html>. Accessed October 15, 2020.

1. Use the [13 Moons Resource](#) for a little more background information on the importance of a turtle for many Indigenous People.
2. Using the blank [Turtle Back](#) page, students could:
 - Complete additional research about the lunar calendar
 - Create illustrations representing each of the moons (literal or symbolic)
 - Use as a visual for a presentation about a certain part of the lunar cycle
 - Use as a visual to accompany the “Turtle in the Sky” story



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3. Use Wilfred Buck's video "Makinak Story" or the "Turtle in the Sky" as a creative writing example. Students could:
 - Extend the story
 - Use as inspiration to create their own story
 - Create an illustration/visual to highlight important aspects of the story (theme, a specific symbol, moral) in a picture-book format
4. Much of our information about Makinak comes from Wilfred Buck. He is a member of Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Can you find his home on a map?
5. Check out the Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Corporation [EOCCC Call to Learn, Act & Reflect](#) for a lesson that corresponds to Makinak. The specific Makinak resources begin on page 33.

Stars and stories from the sky "are part of a complex system of spiritual beliefs. Knowledge of the stars is found in many aspects of culture including storytelling, symbolism and religious traditions... In ancient times, these indigenous astronomers used this knowledge to help guide the day-to-day affairs of their communities" (Buck, Star Stories).

Stay tuned for our the CDSBEO Indigenous Team's monthly challenges
and enjoy a few evenings under the stars! 



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Buck, Wilfred. *Star Stories of the Cree and Ojibwe*. Friday, October 15, 2010.

http://www.mississauga.rasc.ca/archives/2010-10-15_Buck.pdf. Accessed October 13, 2020.

Indigenous Astronomy: The Anishinaabe of Central North America. Canadian Heritage Information Network, 2003.

<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/edu/ViewLoitDa.do?method=preview&lang=EN&id=5186>. Accessed October 8, 2020.

Kreyche, Andy. *Turtle in the Sky: A Mash-Up of Native and Personal Myths*. 2016.

<https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ips-planetarium.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/TurtleInTheSky.pdf> Accessed October 7, 2020.



Makinak: The Turtle Star. Accessed October 7th, 2020.

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2Fmegwatzke%2Fstatus%2F999275324369260545&psig=AOvVaw3mHQhua1_BU8glm_GUHSVj&ust=160217786258000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=2ahUKEwiNjee_6LsAhUa06wKHTv8CvAQr4kDegUIARDDAQ