

Teacher Guide
Corn Husk Dolls
13 Moons Unit (Art, Literacy and Social Studies)

Lesson #11

Moon #10: Skamonkas (Corn Harvest Moon)

Intended Grade Level: 1/2

Preparation for the Activity:

This activity is both instruction, construction, and contextualization of the corn husk dolls, an Indigenous toy, and a part of the process of enculturation. Prior to this activity, have the students talk about different dolls and/or toys that they use in their lives. This can be done orally or written. Connect this discussion to Indigenous toys and explain that Indigenous toys traditionally were made by using natural materials like corn husks, animal bones, and birch bark. Identify corn husks with the students and that they are collected (harvested) from corn stalks (*Adaptation/supplement: use photos of corn stalks to show the origin of the stalks used for doll making)

Focus Questions (these are here to help guide one's teaching. Students should be able to answer these questions by the end of the lesson):

1. How many corn husks should we collect to make one corn husk doll?
2. What season does someone collect corn husks?
3. Why do you think we don't put a face on our dolls?

Lesson Affordances (these are some of the big ideas students can take away from the lesson):

1. Fifteen corn husks are needed to make one corn husk doll.
2. Corn husks are collected in what is now called Fall after the corn harvest has happened.
3. Faces are not put on the corn husk dolls in remembrance to not focus too much on how our appearance looks.

Duration:

- 40-45 minutes

Materials:

- Corn husks (about 15 husks per doll) *these can be found in craft stores or may be available during the Fall at various farm stands and stores
- Twine/String/Yarn
- Water soaking tub
- Paper Towels
- Scissors

Process:

This activity can begin by asking the following introductory question: "What is one of your favorite toys that you have at home?" Allow for 5 minutes to have the students respond to the questions before introducing the corn husk dolls. To give context, have students refer to what month it would be on the

Abenaki 13 Moons calendar. After creating the corn husk dolls, collect and display the dolls in the classroom.

Prior to constructing the corn husk dolls, use the following link

<https://www.anejennison.com/new-page-1>, to show the Northern Woodlands story of the doll with no face retold by Anne Jennison. Be sure to summarize the story and emphasize that the doll is made without a face in remembrance of considering other's feelings rather than focusing too much on how we look.

Corn Husk Doll Steps and Photos:

Step 1: Prior to construction, let the corn husks soak in a water tub for about 10 minutes. After these 10 minutes take the cornhusks out and use a paper towel to dab the husks dry.



Step 2: Lay 10 of the dried corn husks flat and bundled and fold them in half to form the body of the doll. Take a piece of string or twine and tie it around the corn husks about an inch from the top to form the head of the doll.



Step 3: Split the bottom portion of the corn husks into two equal parts to make two legs for the doll and tie strings around either the middle, the bottom, or at various parts of the legs to make pants, skirts, or other types of legs.



Step 4: Take another five corn husks and fold them in half to create a straight line. Insert these corn husks into a self-made hole in the torso of the doll to create arms. The husks can also be braided if desired, to create braided arms. Take some twine/string and tie around the ends of husks that make the arms to form hands.



Finished products and other variations:

