

**Andean Mythology, The Planets, and Nature
(Lesson plan: Grades 3 – 5)**

Overarching Andean Ideas:

- 1. Oral tradition 2. Duality in nature 3. Sense of Place**

**STANDARDS, COMPETENCIES, & PERFORMANCE
ACTIVITIES / ASSESSMENTS**

- 1. Communication:** Communicate in Spanish.
- 2. Cultures:** Gain Knowledge and Understanding of the Cultures of the World.
- 3. Connections:** Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information.
- 4. Comparisons:** Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture.
- 5. Communities:** Participate in Communities at Home and Around the World

A. Students will be able to say the Spanish vocabulary for planets, stars, constellations, ordinal numbers, and words from nature from the mythology books.

B. Students will be able to share myths of other cultures that they already know exist.

C. Students will be able to sing a song about the planets and ordinal numbers in Spanish.

D. Students will look at a painting of a myth about the condor (Tigua painting) and pick out things in nature that are of interest to them (art appreciation) and communicate their feelings about a traditional Andean painting.

E. Students will recognize these mythical artifacts in the story that will be read to them with traditional Andean music playing in the background to set the tone.

F. Students will listen to 2 – 3 myths of the Andean culture (Practicing Oral traditions)

1. Llama myth of Peru

2. Myth of Machu Picchu (El Sueño) The Sleep

3. Myth of Quinoa

G. Students will recognize Andean myth elements in nature from the painting and from the myth read out loud to them.

H. Students will create a story of their own myth with a constellation in the sky that represents their story. (Either it will be written or told orally)

I. Students will represent their myth constellation with star symbols on a black piece of construction paper with white chalk. (A star /constellation drawing)

J. Theatre finale: Students will act out a short play by embodying the planets and speaking to one another in the target language (Spanish).

Questions to be answered

1. **What is a myth?** A traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining some natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. (Other words for myth: tale, story, folktale, saga, legend, fable, mythology)
2. Do you know any myths?
3. Why do myths exist in cultures around the world?
4. Do you have any myths in your family heritage?
5. What are several recognizable elements in an Andean myth?
6. For children 2nd or 3rd grades and up perhaps introduce the question: What is the difference between myth, story, fairytale, legend? For instance, if they offer a family story or a legend instead of a myth, it presents an opportunity for this type of critical analysis.
7. What is the difference between myth, legend, history and oral history? (**Legend:** a traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but unauthenticated.) (**History:** the study of past events, particularly in human affairs or the whole series of past events connected with someone or something.) (**Oral History:** the collection and study of historical information using sound recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge of past events.)
8. **Andean Ways of Knowing:** Options to consider when teaching textbook definitions of history, oral history, myth, and legend. What would happen if you allowed the question to guide inquiry and a broader exploration of these topics?

*“The idea that **inquiry-led approaches** contest single definitions. In fact, they don’t necessarily look for definitions or conclusions at all, but simply create more and more provocative questions that keep us wondering. This example of wondering together, constant dialogue, being awestruck by things in the world—is part of the Andean ways of knowing and thinking. Oral traditions defy the linearity of official historical accounts as well as the single author perspective and assertion of fact. Instead they offer many voices telling the stories and this allows for shifting and changing narratives that jump from historical time to mythic time and then into the future. They contest the idea that there is only one valid perspective or only one story or truth about the past to tell. You may want to consider not using the textbook definitions and have open discussions on the following.” Michelle Wibbelsman*

- a. In what ways do oral traditions not only tell a different version of a peoples’ experience, but capture it in a different way altogether?

Elements of myth and nature: Vocabulary to choose from in their myth in the target language (Spanish)

La Naturaleza	Los Planetas y las estrellas	Ordinal #'s
1. Condor: El Condor	Mercurio	primero
2. Puma: El puma	Venus	segundo
3. Serpent: La serpiente	La Tierra	tercero
4. Sun: el sol	Martes	cuarto
5. Wind: el viento	Jupiter	quinto
6. Fire: el fuego	Saturno	sexto
7. Water: el agua	Urano	septimo
8. Earth: La Tierra	Neptuno	octavo

9. Lake: el lago	Pluton	noveno
10. Llamas: La llama		decimo
11. Mountains: las montañas		undecimo (décimo primero)
12. Moon: la luna		duodecimo (décimo Segundo)
13. Sheep: la oveja		
14. Clouds: las nubes		
15. Myth: el mito		
16. Stars: las estrellas		
17. Rainbow: el arcoiris		

Song of the planets: La canción de los planetas

Mercurio, Venus, La Tierra, y Marte.

Jupiter, Saturno y las estrellas

Urano, Neptuno, Pluton, tambien.

A veces no es siempre la verdad, EL SOL!

Concepts to consider when teaching mythology:

1. How does the way we title or label things change our approach to the story?
2. In what ways would changing this from “the Inka believed that llamas could talk” to “once upon a time when llamas could talk” affect the way students engage the story and consider its truth value?
3. Andean moral insight—what exactly is the way people should behave? Opportunity to talk about *runakuna* (fully human beings) as a process of becoming.

4. Ethnic, occupational and also moral geography. What does geography have to do with *alli kawsay* and *mana alli kawsay*? What makes a good life for beings? Discussion on what is a good life and how geography and affect what makes a life good to people.
5. How is greed defined in Andean cultures? Because the Andean traditional way of living is sharing and in community, greed for oneself is looked upon very badly amongst Andean indigenous groups. People use the barter system and hold community *mingas*, times when they work together on share plots of land. Life is worked out in reciprocity where people help each other and share in everything.
6. Animals can talk! Redefines our notion of community inclusive of “non-human people” or alternatively redefines humanity. Interesting that the llamas can also communicate with the divine and here operate as a form of mediators. Ideas taken from Whitten’s essay in Santos-Granero’s book “Images of Public Wealth...” and Catherine Allen’s essay “When Pebbles Move Mountains” to help with better understanding....

“Ayni, a basic form of reciprocity, has also been called the ethos of indigenous Andean culture (D. Núñez del Prado 1972). Oscar Núñez del Prado comments that life is an ayni, and must be returned at death (1973). At the most abstract level, ayni is the basic give and-take that governs the universal circulation of vitality. It can be positive, as when brothers-in-law labor in each other’s fields; or it can be negative, as when the two men quarrel and exchange insults. This circulation -- be it of water or human energy -- is driven by a system of continuous reciprocal interchanges, a kind of dialectical pumping mechanism (Allen 1988:93).

Every category of being, at every level, participates in this cosmic circulation. Humans maintain interactive reciprocity relationships not only with each other, but with their animals, their houses, their potato fields, with the Earth, and the Sacred Places in their landscape.” Santos-Granero

“Gradually the person is drawn from this decontextualized play into a network of adult interactive relationships. An adult person's basic responsibility in life is to use acquired skills in order to participate in the web of reciprocal exchange. Throughout adult life, the internalized saint is paid out through skilled work -- producing spun thread, woven cloth, plowed fields, cooked food, dances, chewed coca, and so forth. Adults consume the products of each other's' skilled work; I consume my fellows' work (through its products), while my own work is consumed by my fellows. Failure to participate in this circulatory ayni leaves one unable to die properly; one becomes a kukuchi, or condenado -- trapped in a rotting body and consumed by the desire to eat one's closest relatives. The kukuchi's insatiable, cannibalistic appetite exposes it as a kind of microcosm gone wrong and collapsed-in upon itself.”

“Certain Sacred Places are intimately connected with the welfare of domestic animals.”

“INQA is the name for the original model of every being, according to Quechua mythology. The inqa does not simply provide a model, in miniature, for the living creatures it represents; as a prototype it gives rise to the animal itself in its vitality as well as its physical form. A household's prosperity is intimately connected with its inqaychus, which store the fertility and vitality of the herds. They are described as caring protectors (khuyaqkuna) and are passed from generation to generation.”

“In Andean ritual, synecdochal thought works on a world which is premised on consubstantiality; all beings are intrinsically interconnected through their sharing a matrix of animated substance.” Catherine Allen from Pebbles Move Mountains

“These textual strategies are active, interactional techniques for changing the lived-in world; they include synecdoche (or envelopment of the whole as part of a larger whole), play with dimensionality and are premised on the assumption that all beings are intrinsically interconnected through their sharing a matrix of animated substance. It follows that all action is interactive because all beings are animate; activity is dialogic and governed by reciprocity. It also follows that the world is subject to transformation; specific life forms are transitory expressions of a single underlying substance. Specific creatures exist only as long as their interactive relations with the world maintain and support their given forms. Finally, all representations (verbal, plastic and graphic) are themselves active agents in this world of becoming. They do not just encode -- they embody and enact -- human thought, memory and desire.” Catherine Allen from Pebbles Move Mountains.

7. Consider adjectives carefully to try to match Quechua adjectives as closely as possible. In Quechua literature we would probably find a reference to “mana alli kawsay”. Notice that the phrase comments on a way of life and not on the people themselves. How is this different from Western and Judeo Christian tendencies to label or characterize the people rather than only their actions?

“(Sumak Kawsay means something like “beautiful life” or “beautiful life force,” and it incorporates such concepts as deep knowledge, especially as revealed in

male shamanic gnosis and performance, and the strong visionary creativity of female master potters. The Canelos Quichua concepts of community, conviviality, kinship, integration with nature and supernature, and a shunning of capitalist wealth accumulation are all subsumed under the rubric of sumaj causai. By contrast, the basic meanings of buen vivir (living well), used literally as the “good life,” are based on capitalist wealth accumulation, albeit for a common good.)” From Whitten in the Santos Granero book