



## THE FIRST STRAWBERRIES

By Joseph Bruchac

Long ago, when the world was new, the Creator made a man and a woman. They lived happily together for a long time until one day they quarrel and the woman leaves in anger. The sun decides to help the man by placing ripened raspberries, blueberries and blackberries in her path. Finally, when the sun sends strawberries, the woman stops to taste them, allowing the man to catch up and seek her forgiveness.



**WITS Connection:** Talk it out, Seek help

### Questions and Activities

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#### PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

- Find out more about author Joseph Bruchac on his website [www.josephbruchac.com/](http://www.josephbruchac.com/).
- This book is based on a Cherokee legend. Teach students about the Cherokee people. *The word Cherokee comes from the Muskogee word meaning "speakers of another language." Cherokee People originally called themselves Aniyunwiya ("the principal people") but today they accept the name Cherokee which is spelled and pronounced "Tsalagi" in their own language. For more information, visit [www.native-languages.org/cherokee.htm](http://www.native-languages.org/cherokee.htm).*
- Learn more about strawberries at [www.witsprogram.ca/pdfs/schools/books/the-first-strawberries/strawberry-facts.pdf](http://www.witsprogram.ca/pdfs/schools/books/the-first-strawberries/strawberry-facts.pdf).
- Have students list things we get from strawberries such as jam, jelly, Jell-O, drinks, cakes, breads and ice cream. Select the most popular strawberry uses to make a class graph.



#### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. What is the woman doing in the picture on the cover of the book?
2. Why do you think she is picking these flowers?
3. What time of year do you think it is?
4. Do you think this is a happy or sad story?



#### POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. What was life like for the man and woman at the beginning of the story? *They were happy.*
2. Why did the man become angry? *He was hungry and wanted his wife to feed him.*
3. How did the man express his anger? *He spoke in a "cold voice" and said, "I am hungry. Do you expect me to eat flowers?"*
4. How did the woman respond? *She became angry too and said, "You hurt me." She left her husband and walked in the direction of the sun.*

5. How could the man and woman express their anger differently? *The man could have talked it out with a different tone of voice. The woman could have asked for help in preparing food.*
6. Who did the man talk it out with in order to seek help with his problem? *The man discussed his problems with the sun.*
7. How did the strawberries help the woman to forgive? *The sweetness of the strawberries helped her remember how happy she was before she quarreled with her husband.*



## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

- Make a list of natural resources used in the story such as various fruits, clothing, and any others students observe in the illustrations.
- Discuss how nature (i.e. the sun and berries) taught the people to forgive each other. Ask students how people in the story felt about nature.
- Encourage students to retell the story by making stick or paper bag puppets of the characters (i.e. man, woman, sun, different types of berries) and using them to retell the story in a puppet show.
- Have a strawberry farmer visit the class to discuss how strawberry plants grow and propagate by tubulars rather than seeds.
- Using the other berries in the story, have the children graph their favourites.
- Have the children tell about times they have forgiven someone. Children could be given scenarios to role play.
- Read "Strawberry Moon" from the book *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back: A Native American Year of Moons* by Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London. Discuss how the Senecas respected nature and especially strawberries.

## Notes: