



NURSERY SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Spiritual development has to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live. There are many components to spirituality including beliefs; a sense of awe, wonder and mystery; experiencing feelings of transcendence; a search for meaning or purpose; self-knowledge; relationships; creativity; and feelings and emotions (MFNERC, 2015).

Chart for Spiritual Development

Concept	Examples
Feels and recognizes love in human relationships	<p>Ask families to send in a family picture to display in the classroom.</p> <p>Use positive guidance with children, reminding them of what you want to see them do rather than what not. Focus on using positive directions and strengthen that bond of respect and empathy (ex. Say “toys stay on the ground” rather than “don’t throw the toy”).</p>
Feels and recognizes beauty in nature	<p>Go for a nature walk and ask children what they see, hear, smell, feel and taste when possible (such as berries).</p> <p>Encourage children to bring back something they really liked (a cool rock, stick, pinecone).</p> <p>Take class outside. Sit with children under trees and continue lessons in an outdoor space. All lessons inside the classroom can be brought outside.</p>
Feels and recognizes joy in engaging in positive activities (playing, helping, creating, etc.)	<p>Ask children to help create play ideas or areas in the classroom.</p> <p>Open multiple play areas and activities, so children can choose where they want to play.</p> <p>Display children’s creations in the classroom (art, lego, take a picture of a tower in the block area, costumes in dramatic play, etc.).</p> <p>Acknowledge when a child is helping someone (ex. Thank you ___ for helping me sweep, it’s faster with help).</p>
Beginning to recognize and take part in applicable rituals (songs, prayer, meals, worship, mindfulness/meditation, etc.) appropriate to age and family/community culture	<p>Have a staff sit at the snack/ lunch table with the children that are eating. The staff should encourage group conversations with the children.</p> <p>Create classroom rituals (morning share, stretches,</p>

	<p>songs, community practices such as prayer and/or smudging)</p> <p>Find ways to increase energy (dancing, playing games, physical movement) and calm energy (yoga, meditation, breathing, reflection) throughout the day to regulate children's emotions and engagement in classroom activities.</p>
<p>Basic recognition of a positive relationship within concepts larger than self (Higher Power, Universe, Humanity, or Nature, etc.), though very basic at this developmental stage and dependent on ecological context</p>	<p>Recognize the needs of the whole class. Seek parental feedback for ways to best acknowledge this for everyone (generally time with nature and learning from the land is recognized by everyone).</p>
<p>Familiar with cultural/moral stories (biography, lore, scripture, etc.) relevant to family's spiritual culture, though during early childhood their interpretation may be more fanciful than intended in the original telling.</p>	<p>Encourage children to talk about, dramatize and use various mediums such as paint/drawing/playdough to depict their beliefs and the teachings they bring from home.</p> <p>Listening to Storytelling - invite guests into the classroom to read stories or share stories. Guests could include school-aged children, family members, community members, and Elders.</p>
<p>Increasing understanding of moral right/wrong, with motivation moving from extrinsic to intrinsic (progressing from avoiding trouble, to being "good"/"nice" person, advancing later to ethical integrity)</p>	<p>Moral Storytelling - Tell simple stories to the children about social situations (<i>Wisikejack/Nanabozho/Unktomi or Inktomi</i>). Ask children what they think the character should do or what could happen (Ex. A's block tower fell down, they feel frustrated. They look at B's tower and it's very tall. What should A do? What happens if A knocks down B's tower?).</p> <p>Seek out children's books that have a moral message to use in the classroom (ex. <i>The Circle of Caring and Sharing, Trudy's Healing Stone, The Hoop Dancer's Teachings, The Eagle Feather, Have you Filled A Bucket Today, The Giving Tree</i>).</p> <p>If a child has a challenge with following a rule, talk to them about it (ex. What's going on? Tell me what is happening. Why do we have this rule in the classroom? What can we do next time this happens?).</p>

Reference

Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC). *Manitoba First Nations Guide to Support Early Learning*. Winnipeg: Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc., 2015. https://mfnerc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/SupportEarlyLearning_small.pdf.

