



Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message

written by Chief Jake Swamp
illustrated by Erwin Printup

About the Book

Genre: Nonfiction

Format: Paperback, \$10.95
32 pages

ISBN: 9781880000540

Reading Level: Grade 2

Interest Level: Grades PreK–5

Guided Reading Level: M

Spanish Guided Reading Level: L

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
3.3/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD520L

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Gratitude, Nature and Science, Sharing and Giving, Food, Families, Environment, Animals, North America, Geography, Human Impact On Environment, Environmental Sustainability, Native American / Indigenous Interest

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/giving-thanks

leeandlow.com/books/gracias-te-damos

SYNOPSIS

For as long as anyone can remember, Mohawk parents have taught their children to start each day by *Giving Thanks* to Mother Earth. Also known as the Thanksgiving Address, this good morning message is based on the belief that the natural world is a precious and rare gift. The whole universe – from the highest stars to the tiniest blade of grass – is addressed as one great family.

Now readers of all ages can share in this tribute to the environment, adapted especially for children by Chief Jake Swamp, whose efforts to share this vision of thanksgiving take him all over the world. Chief Swamp's inspirational message, along with Erwin Printup, Jr.'s unforgettable landscapes, make *Giving Thanks* a timeless celebration of the spirit of nature.

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

BACKGROUND

The Thanksgiving Address from the Author's Note

The words in this book are based on the Thanksgiving Address, an ancient message of peace and appreciation of Mother Earth and all her inhabitants, that are still spoken at ceremonial and governmental gatherings held by the Six Nations. These words of thanks come to us from the Native people known as the Haudenosaunee, also known as the Iroquois or Six Nations–Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca, Tuscarora. The people of the Six Nations are from upstate New York and Canada.

Additional Information about the Thanksgiving Address and the Haudenosaunee

To read an English translation of the full version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving address, see https://americanindian.si.edu/environment/pdf/01_02_Thanksgiving_Address.pdf.

To learn more about the Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-n-SHOW-nee), consult the comprehensive educator guide compiled by the National Museum of the American Indian Education Office: <https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/HaudenosauneeGuide.pdf>.

Teaching About Native Peoples in Past and Present

Learning for Justice has several resources dedicated to culturally responsive teaching with Native history in their “With and About” toolkit that provides resources to assist educators in designing and delivering more culturally responsive instruction to and about Native peoples (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/summer-2017/toolkit-for-with-and-about>). The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian’s curriculum, Native Knowledge 360, has lesson plans and materials for educators that provides educators and students with new perspectives on Native American history and cultures <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>. The Native American Heritage Programs has a page dedicated to Culturally Responsive Curriculum (<https://lenaprograms.info/teacher-parent-resources/culturally-responsive-curriculum/>) as well as other pages, such as “10 Things You Don’t Know About Native Americans” to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions about modern Native people (<https://lenaprograms.info/teacher-parent-%20resources/stereotypes-debunked/>).

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Explain that the book you will read is based on words some Native American cultures use at ceremonial gatherings. What ceremonial words, speeches, poems, etc. do you know? Are there times of your day when you say certain words as part of your routine? What are their significance?
- What does it mean to offer gratitude or thanksgiving? What are some things you are thankful

for? Why is it important to talk about gratitude?

- What do you most appreciate about the Earth and our environment?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, illustrations, author's notes, and glossary.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what the Good Morning message says
- what ideas about nature and the environment are included
- how the illustrations show the ideas in the text

Encourage students to consider why the author, Chief Jake Swamp, would want to share this book with young people.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word. (Many of the Spanish words can be found in the book glossary, but there are also some that are not included. Students could be encouraged to create a log of these words—they will not be listed here.)

Content Specific

Mother Earth, grasses, bare feet, fruit, berries, herbs, forests, Four Winds, four directions, thunder, full (moon), dew, Spirit Protectors, Great Spirit

Academic

human being, honor, thanksgiving, force, thirst, living things, sustainers, sweetness, medicine, healing, precious, shade, warmth, gentle, breathe, shining, sparkling, twinkling, sprinkling, past, present, peace, harmony, gifts

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the address say about being a human being? Who does it say we should thank for our lives? What does the picture show?
2. Why does the address thank the water? What does the picture show?
3. Why does the address thank the grass?
4. Why does the address thank food from the earth? What foods does it give as examples? What foods do you see in the picture?
5. Why does the address thank the animals and birds?
6. Why does the address thank the trees?
7. Why does the address thank the Four Winds? What do you see in the picture?
8. Who does the address thank? What do each of the names represent? Why does the address thank each one?
9. Why does the address thank the stars?
10. Why does the address thank the Spirit Protectors and the Great Spirit?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Why do you think the address refers to earth as “Mother Earth?” What other things from nature are referred to as people? Why do you think this is?
2. Would you have included any other reasons to thank any of the things listed? (For instance, would you thank food from the earth, or trees, or animals, for any other reasons?)
3. What patterns or themes do you notice in the reasons the book gives for thanking different things?
4. Why do you think the address thanks things in the order it does?
5. How might the Spirit Protectors “show us ways to live in peace and harmony with one another?”

6. Preview the full version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving address at https://americanindian.si.edu/environment/pdf/01_02_Thanksgiving_Address.pdf. Why do you think the author wanted to adapt these words into a children's book version?
7. Read the author's note that accompanies the glossary. Why do you think the author included a version of the words in the Mohawk language even though some readers do not speak that language?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Make a list of things you learned from reading and talking about this book. Then, make a list of questions you still have about the book and the Haudenosaunee people. Share your questions with a partner and discuss how you might seek answers.
2. How did reading this book impact your feelings about the environment? What are three ideas or goals that will stick with you?
3. Write a letter to someone or something for which you are thankful. Include specific reasons for your feelings.
4. Write a recommendation to someone who you think should read this book—maybe someone who will like it, because they already really appreciate the environment, or someone who should read it because they don't yet have that appreciation. Give specific reasons why the person should read the book.

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. The Spanish version, *Gracias te damos* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/gracias-te-damos>) presents ample opportunity here to encourage students to engage with both languages. Have one student read the English translation and one student read Spanish translation (if applicable in your classroom). Both students who are reading the translations should be biliterate in both English and Spanish. Ask students to compare their experiences. What was it like reading the story in English? What was it like reading the story in Spanish? Have students discuss the different translations and how they are similar/different.
3. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.

4. Have students give a short talk about something they are thankful for. If needed, provide a framework like, "Thank you _____, for _____. You _____."
5. The book contains some content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. Make, or have students help make, picture or photo cards to represent some of the items referenced in the book. As you read it, assign a student to hold up relevant cards for each page.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. Discuss and/or learn more about the many benefits of a regular gratitude practice. Learn about different gratitude-based practices, such as thank you notes, a gratitude jar, daily gratitude reflections, gratitude journals, etc. As a class, choose a practice to trial in your classroom. After using it for several weeks, reflect on the experience. Find more specific ideas and discussion prompts at <http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2016/12/simple-powerful-gratitude-practices.html>.
2. Learn more about the author, Chief Jake Swamp, using the information provided at the end of this guide. What can you tell about Chief Swamp as a person from this information? How does he have a strong sense of his cultural identity? Why is this important? As a class, discuss what you each know about your family's culture and how that impacts your identity. What else would you like to learn?
3. The book begins with the words, "To be a human being is an honor." Discuss with students what this statement means to them. What should humans do to live up to this honor? Make posters or a list with this phrase as a title. (For instance, "To be a human being is an honor. Resolve conflicts peacefully.") Display them and notice when you're able to live up to these statements as a class.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- Summarize the book by making a list on chart paper of everything for which the address expresses thanks. Add small picture cues if appropriate for your students. Continue the list, or start a new list, about what students are thankful for in their own environment.
- Compose your own “Good Morning Message” as a class. Read it to start each school day. If you’d like, share it with your school community, for instance on the morning announcements.
- Consult the “Selective Bibliography and Guide for ‘I’ is not for Indian: Portrayal of Native Americans in Books for Young People” to read more about recommended titles, titles to avoid, and additional guidelines in choosing culturally responsive Native texts for students (<http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/ailabib.htm>). Read books that meet these criteria in the following categories:
 - Find books that feature Native people in the present. Lee & Low titles include *This Land is My Land* (leeandlow.com/books/this-land-is-my-land) by George Littlechild, *Kiki’s Journey* (leeandlow.com/books/kiki-s-journey) by Kristy Orona-Ramirez and *When the Shadbush Blooms* (leeandlow.com/books/when-the-shadbush-blooms) by Carla Messinger with Susan Katz.
 - Find books that present Native people accurately such as *Buffalo Song* (leeandlow.com/books/buffalo-song), *Crazy Horse’s Vision* (leeandlow.com/books/crazy-horse-s-vision) by Joseph Bruchac, *Stone River Crossing* by Tim Tingle (leeandlow.com/books/stone-river-crossing), and *Indian No More* (leeandlow.com/books/indian-no-more) by Charlene Willing McManis with Traci Sorrell.
 - Find biographies of Native people, such as *Quiet Hero: The Ira Hayes Story* by S.D. Nelson (leeandlow.com/books/quiet-hero) and *Jim Thorpe’s Bright Path* (leeandlow.com/books/jim-thorpe-s-bright-path) by Joseph Bruchac.
 - The Native American Heritage Programs website also has a list of recommended reading for children through adults (<https://lenapeprograms.info/book-list/>).

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- Have students learn more about the Haudenosaunee people, history, and culture, using excerpts and photos from the National Museum of the American Indian Guide for Educators (<https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/HaudenosauneeGuide.pdf>). Divide students into small groups and have each group study a section of the guide, such as the Peacemaker story, clan system, wampum, housing, and games. Have groups share their findings with the rest of the class.
- Use the maps provided in the educator guide above to discuss where Haudenosaunee people live today. Mark these locations on a full map of North America. Read the profiles of examples of Haudenosaunee people today in the educator guide. Find where they each live on a map.
- Revisit the page that discusses the Four Winds:
 - Talk about cardinal directions North, South, East, West on a map. If you have access to a compass, or compass rose outdoors, talk about these directions from your classroom or school yard. Have students imagine wind blowing on their faces from each direction. Based on what you know about what lies in each direction from where you stand (e.g., the ocean, a business, a farm), what smells would you expect wind from each direction to bring?
 - Learn more about the Iroquois story of how the Four Winds were named, and relate it to the book illustration. Read one adaptation of the story here: <https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/HowTheFourWindsWereNamed-Iroquois.html>.
 - Make a three-column chart listing some of the aspects of the environment this book thanks, possible ways these things could be harmed, and ideas for protecting each thing. As a class, choose one or more ways you can contribute to protecting the environment.
 - Read about the Tree of Peace planted at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, a project led by Chief Jake Swamp, at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/tree-of-peace.htm>. How does this project reflect the themes of the book?

Art, Media & Music

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- Choose an item from the book or something else you feel thankful for. Create an illustration to show this idea and write a sentence starting with “Thank you, _____, for...”
- Study how the illustrator represented the ground, the water, and the sky. What do you notice? Create your own artwork showing a place in nature you enjoy and try using color and line in similar ways.

- Flip through the pages to notice how the illustrator showed the changing light on each page. What different techniques did he use? Have students create pictures of the same place at two different times of day with markers or paint, experimenting with how to show the differences in light.

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- As a class, compose a short blurb for families that describes the book and the discussion you had at school. Have students ask their families what they are most thankful for. Share and make connections between responses at school.
- Ask families or other community members who have particular gratitude-based traditions to share information about their traditions with your class, in person, in writing, or via a virtual visit. Make connections to the content of the book and Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address tradition.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chief Jake Swamp (Tekaronianeken) was a founder of the Tree of Peace Society, an international organization promoting peace and conservation. Chief Swamp delivered the Thanksgiving Address throughout the world, as well as at the United Nations. He was born on the Akwesasne Mohawk Reservation in upstate New York, and lived in Hogansburg, NY where he worked as a cultural adviser for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Child and Family Services. *Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message* was his first picture book. He passed away in October 2010. More information about his accomplished life as an honored Mohawk nation chief and diplomat is included in his obituary, printed at <https://thetrackingproject.org/remembering-jake-tekaronianeken-swamp/>.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Erwin Printup is a Cayuga/Tuscarora painter who received a degree in fine arts from the Institute of American Indian Art, in Santa Fe, NM. Born in Niagara Falls, he now lives in Lewiston, NY. *Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message* is his first picture book. To find out more about Printup's career, visit <https://nativerootsartistsguild.com/listings/erwin-printup/>.

REVIEWS

"A simple, tender celebration of good fortune... Swamp has made the [Thanksgiving] address accessible to all ages... Printup deploys, apparently, all the colors in nature in rendering the serenely sleek, stylized illustrations." —*Kirkus*

"A powerful way of acknowledging the connectedness of the whole universe, this salute to Mother Nature is reverent and simple, filled with phrases that acknowledge our privilege and bounty to be human in this great world... The richness of the earth is colorfully depicted... from the vast to the sublime.." —*Children's Book Review Magazine*

Ordering Information

General Order Information:

leeandlow.com/contact/ordering

Secure Online Ordering:

leeandlow.com/books/giving-thanks

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

By Mail:

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New York, NY 10016

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