



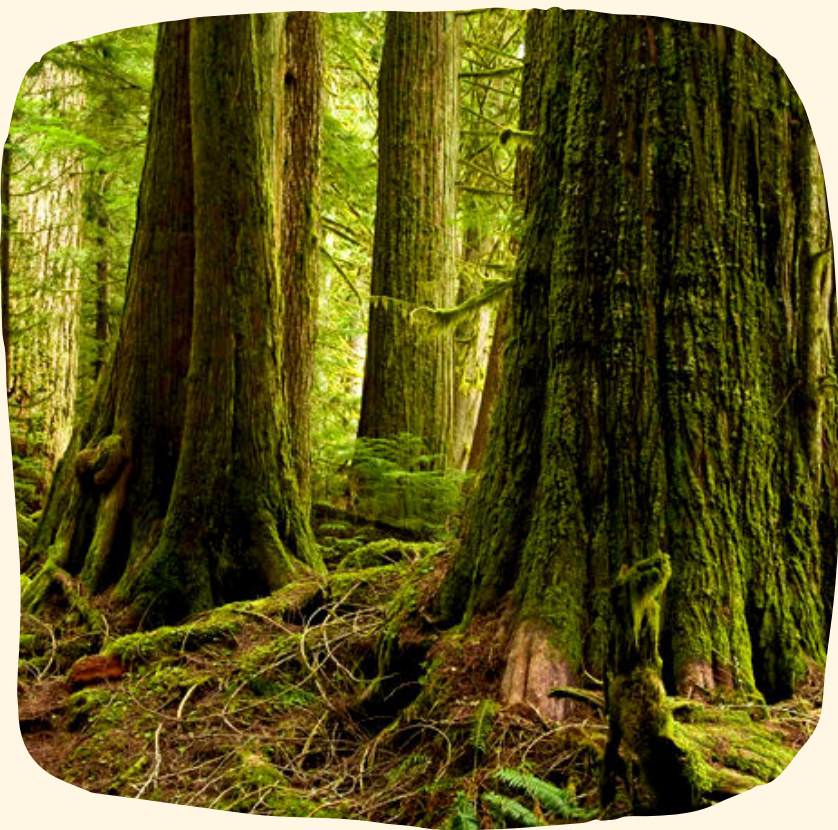
# Reflections on the Cedar Tree

Presented by Sesemiya (Tracy Williams)

A fun learning activity that will teach you about the cultural and spiritual significance of the Cedar Tree amongst Indigenous communities of the Pacific Northwest!

All ages

## INTRODUCTION



In her Artist Vignette video, Sesemiya (Tracy Williams) demonstrates the long-standing Indigenous practice of cedar harvesting. Cedar harvesting is a sustainable, sacred practice that has been practiced by the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) people since time immemorial. Trees that have been modified by cedar harvesting are still able to grow and to thrive.



## THE CEDAR TREE

Two species of cedar trees are native to the land known colonially as British Columbia: Yellow Cedar and Western Red Cedar.



Red Cedar bark is lightweight and rot-resistant. Both cedars grow in this local temperate rainforest climate. Yellow Cedars grow at subalpine elevations in damp coastal forests, whereas Red Cedars are common both on the coast and in the moist slopes and valleys further away from the coast (<https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/cedar/>).





Cedar trees have many uses, and each part of the tree is valuable. Sesemiya explains that there are different Skwxwú7mesh words for different parts of the tree, and that each of these parts can have different uses. The wood from cedar trees can be used to make canoes, that the bark can be used to make clothing, and that the roots can be used to make waterproof baskets and baby baskets.

## REFLECTION



As you reflect on this video, we invite you to enter a nearby forested area. Take note of the trees around you: What kinds of trees are there? Are there any cedar trees? What do you know about this land? What don't you know? Who shares this space with you?



Feel free to gently touch or interact with the stones, trees, leaves and plants around you. You can place your skin against a tree and feel the texture of its bark. Pay attention to the sensations in your body. What do you smell? How does the ground feel beneath you? What is different about being on a pathway or on dirt to being on pavement or a sidewalk? How does the light filter through the trees? If you are able to, take note of what you hear in the space. Birds? Animals? Human voices?

Take a moment to reflect on your relationship and responsibilities to the land you are on, and to the life that surrounds you.

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