Subject Area & Grade: Grades 1-8 Visual Arts

Curriculum Link: *Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing* - apply the critical analysis to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of art works and art experiences

Learning Goal: Students are learning to analyze a painting by identifying symbols and explaining how the artist communicates ideas about Chief Joseph Dreaver's life, leadership, and service

Lesson Activity: Tell students that they will be looking at a painting of Chief Joseph Dreaver and learning about his life. Click on the video link below and watch until the 2:20 mark. Pause the video and discuss the following questions:

- What have you learned about Chief Joseph Dreaver?
- What words would you use to describe him?
- Why do you think he is remembered today?
- What questions do you still have about him?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK9Vx_puW4A&t=256s

Click on the link below to display the painting of Chief Joseph Dreaver. The painting, titled *Dreaver*, was created in 2010 by Mike Holden, a Saulteaux-Cree visual artist from Cote First Nation in Saskatchewan who is now based in Edmonton. The artwork was painted using acrylic on canvas and is part of the collection at the Canadian War Museum.

https://www.warmuseum.ca/remembrance-day-resources/dreaver

Ask students the following discussion questions to help them analyze the artwork and uncover its meaning:

Meaning of the Symbolism in the Painting / Artist Message Questions

- ➢ *Why do you think the artist showed Chief Joseph Dreaver looking upward?*

(Looking upward symbolizes Chief Dreaver's hope, strength, leadership, and pride. It shows that he was respected and believed in a bright future for his community.)

- ➢ What is the significance of war paint?

(War paint symbolizes the blessings, support, and protection Chief Dreaver received from his family and community. It shows that he was not alone and carried their support with him.)

- ➢ *What might the war bonnet/headdress tell us about Chief Joseph Dreaver?*

(The headdress represents Chief Dreaver's leadership as Chief of Mistawasis and his service in the Canadian military. It shows that he held important responsibilities in both roles. The war bonnet, or headdress, is a sacred gift that is earned and is traditionally reserved for respected leaders and individuals who have demonstrated courage, service, and commitment to their community.)

- ➢ *What do the medals represent?*

(The medals displayed on his uniform recognize and honour his bravery and military service as a soldier. They also symbolize his dedication, sacrifice, and commitment to serving both his country and his people. The first medal on his uniform is the Military Medal. The Military Medal was awarded to soldiers who showed great bravery during battle. It was one of the highest military honours a soldier could receive for courage.)

- ➢ *Why do you think the artist included a heart?*

(The heart represents Chief Joseph Dreaver's caring nature and his deep love and commitment to protecting his people. It also symbolizes his ability to forgive Canada despite the unfair treatment and lack of support that many Indigenous veterans experienced when they returned home after the war.)

➢ *Why do you think the artist chose to partly hide the Canadian flag?*

(It shows that Chief Joseph Dreaver was proud to serve Canada, even though Indigenous Peoples did not always have the same rights and opportunities as other Canadians at that time.)

➢ *Which symbol do you think is the most important? Why?*

Possible answer: There is no single correct answer. Students might choose:

- the medals because they show bravery
- the heart because it represents care and forgiveness
- the headdress because it represents leadership
- the flag because it represents service to Canada

Finish watching the video. Afterward, have a class discussion about what you learned and use the inquiry questions below to guide your thinking.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK9Vx_puW4A&t=256s

Inquiry Questions:

1. *What does this painting tell us about who Chief Joseph Dreaver was?*

Possible answer: Students might learn that he was both a soldier and a chief, that he received medals for bravery, or that he worked to support the rights of Indigenous peoples after his military service.

2. *Which symbol in the painting best represents Chief Joseph Dreaver's life and legacy? Use evidence from the artwork to support your thinking.*