

ELCC ADVISORS' BOOK CLUB



Our Book Recommendation:

Birdsong by Julie Flett

Synopsis

Birdsong by Julie Flett follows Katherena as she moves to a new home in the spring, a season symbolizing renewal and new beginnings. As she settles into her surroundings, Katherena forms a meaningful friendship with Agnes, an Elder who lives next door. Over the course of the four seasons, Katherena observes the changing natural world and comes to understand how these seasonal shifts reflect Agnes's stage of life. Through their relationship, Katherena learns the importance of community and caring for one another.



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Age

Recommendation:

Preschool, Kindergarten and
School-Age

Why We Love It

Birdsong reminds us that each season holds purpose and meaning. When children are invited outdoors daily to engage with the land, they experience seasonal change through real-time, hands-on learning. The natural world offers a rich sensory landscape where children can observe shifting weather patterns, notice changes in light and temperature, listen to evolving soundscapes, and explore a wide range of textures, scents, and materials. Each season brings different animals, plant life, and rhythms, reinforcing the understanding that all elements of the natural world are interconnected. Through these experiences, children come to see that nothing exists in isolation and that each season unfolds exactly as it should, offering unique opportunities for learning, reflection, and relationship-building with the land.

Métis Connection

Seasonal activities have long shaped the daily lives and work of many Métis families and communities in Ontario. Depending on the place and time of year, this could include maple-sugar harvesting, fishing, hunting, trapping, gathering, farming, and other land-based activities.

In the Sault Ste. Marie area, OntarioMétisFacts.com notes that historic Métis river lots included sugar bushes, reflecting the importance of spring maple-sugar harvesting in community life. Birdsong offers educators an opportunity to explore these seasonal connections with children by paying attention to changes in weather, plants, animals, and the natural world throughout the year. The story can also support conversations about how families and communities learn from and adapt to the seasons over time.



English	French	Michif-Fransè
flower	fleur	fleur
bird	oiseau	wézo

Nurture children's natural linguistic curiosities. Be a co-learner with the children in your early learning environment using the NEW Michif-Fransè app.

Let's Chat About the Book!

Join us on the MNO Education Hub's "ELCC Professionals" discussion area! See you there! Don't have the app? Download it by scanning the QR code.



The Michif-Fransè app!

Android



IOS



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Composting Extension Activity

Do you compost in your early learning environment? This can be as simple as adding a kitchen-sized compost bin to your snack or lunch cart for children to use for leftover food, or as elaborate as finding a spot on your property to compost. Either way, composting with children from an early age teaches them the importance of everyday acts towards sustainability and caring for the earth. To help children see the composting process, watch "Making a Homemade Composter" on YouTube, then make one in your early learning spaces.



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HDLH Foundation Well-Being

Composting encourages mindful relationships with food, waste, and the land, reinforcing the idea that caring for the earth is an act of caring for ourselves and our communities.

HDLH Foundation Belonging

Through acts of giving and connection children discover that they are part of something larger than themselves and that their ideas, creativity, and care matter.

Artwork for a Senior Extension Activity

Katherena and Agnes form a meaningful bond through their shared appreciation of the natural world as inspiration for their art. Educators can invite this same sense of connection into early learning environments by gathering natural loose parts and thoughtfully incorporating them into art areas, encouraging children to explore texture, form, and creativity through process-based art experiences. When Katherena gifts her artwork to Agnes at the end of the story, Agnes reflects that it is "like a poem for her heart." In the spirit of this moment, educators might consider supporting children in sharing their artwork with a local Elder, a retirement home, or a community centre to nurture empathy, reciprocity, and intergenerational connection, particularly for those in their winter season of life. Check out some inspiration at The Artful Parent.

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