



Discover Who You Are: *Guiding Voices*



Grandmother Josephine Mandamin

“The water is sick...people need to really fight for that water, to speak for that water, to love that water.”

Who is Josephine Mandamin?

- Josephine Mandamin is an Anishinabe elder from Thunder Bay.
- Grandmother Josephine is concerned about the state of our bodies of water and the danger of not doing anything to preserve this irreplaceable resource.
- She speaks of the impact of polluted water, on the health, as well, as on the way of life of the Indigenous peoples.
- During her lifetime, she has seen the Great Lakes nearly ruined. The fish have been killed by invasive species, the harbours poisoned, and now the water is evaporating because of global warming.
- In 2005, more than 60 scientists concurred with a report that said the Great Lakes ecosystem is so overstressed that it's nearing “irreversible” collapse.
- In 2003, Mandamin was “moved by the spirits” to speak out for the Great Lakes, so she picked up her copper pail and started walking. She decided to circle the lakes and tell people that “the water is sick ...”
- Every spring since that time, Mandamin and a small band of followers have walked in order to bring attention to concerns about the water.



What is she currently doing?

Currently, Josephine:

- Continues to develop awareness of the dangers to our water supply.
- Has made a Sacred Water Walk along the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes to raise awareness of oil spills by train derailments across Ontario and Québec and spills from ships on the Great Lakes.
- Received the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation.
- Led the Menominee River Water Walk. The Menominee River is in danger of contamination from the Back Forty Mine.





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Teacher Notes - Josephine Mandamin

After viewing the video segment, research and discuss the following:

- Positive points to having industry on the Great Lakes
- Negative points to having industry located on the Great Lakes
- Interesting information about having industry on the Great Lakes

Suggested Tasks:

Saving the Water (Junior)

CGE An effective communicator who listens actively and critically to understand and learn in light of gospel values.

Oral Communication Expectations - Junior

1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the information and ideas in a variety of oral texts by summarizing important ideas and citing important details.

Reading Expectations - Junior

1.6 Extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights to other familiar texts, and to the world around them.

Action: While listening to the video, students jot down points of interest. They locate or are provided with current articles on water pollution and jot down key information. Students compare and present their findings. Students may write a letter to Grandmother Josephine on one of the following topics: thanking her, asking her questions or telling her how they feel about water pollution.

Protecting Our Water (Grade 7)

CGE A responsible contributor who respects the environment and uses resources wisely.
An effective communicator who reads, understands and uses written materials effectively.

Natural Resources Expectations - Grade 7

Describe ways in which technology has affected our use of natural resources.

Locate and record relevant information from a variety of primary and secondary sources.

Action: Facilitate a discussion on what it means to be a steward of the environment. How does Grandmother Josephine demonstrate the concept of stewardship? Each student selects the name of a Great Lake and researches information on location, environment, region, interaction and movement. Through their research, students search for any programs of stewardship that protect the Great Lakes. Students produce a graphic and oral presentation for their classmates.