



# TWINNING 2020

## Cultural Exchange Activities

**These cultural exchange activities** are ways that you and your unit can explore the meaning of “culture” and learn more about your Twinning partner! These activities are also designed to help you maintain a connection with your Twinning country. You can even use them to learn about other Twinning countries that Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada (GGC) is paired with or even to learn more about our Canadian culture! Additional research on your Twinning partner may be required, depending on the activities that you choose to do.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To explore your own culture and how it relates to others
- To understand that some aspects of culture are visible while others are less obvious
- To recognize and celebrate similarities and differences between different cultures
- To learn more about your provincial Twinning partner
- To learn about other Twinning countries paired with GGC, and other Member Organizations (MO's)

#### Materials:

- Chart paper or white board
- A copy of the story Hiawatha (see page 2)
- Markers/crayons
- Magazines/print-outs
- Blow up beach ball

### WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture refers to a group of people's shared beliefs, ideas, behaviours and materials. Culture encompasses everything from traditions, lifestyles, economics, religion, politics, literature, cooking, food, dance, art, etc.

Culture is a learned process from generation to generation; we learn our culture from the people who surround us. For example, a person is not born with the behaviour and language of a Canadian, a Japanese person, or an aboriginal person. These identities are created and shared by our family and friends, and the environment that surrounds us. There are many different types of culture all over the world. It is important to celebrate and embrace them so we can become responsible citizens of the world.



## ACTIVITY 1: STORY TELLING

The best way to learn about another culture is to begin with understanding your own; what your culture is and how it can relate to others! The story Hiawatha is a Canadian aboriginal folktale that reflects Canada's indigenous culture. It is the story of a young boy creating music from the sounds of nature. As a unit read the story together.

### HIAWATHA:

When Hiawatha was small, he lived with his grandmother Nokomis. He always wanted to sing. Nokomis told him: "you must go into the forest and listen to the birds sing, and you must learn to imitate them." Then, each morning at dawn, Hiawatha set off for the woods to listen to the birds, but he could not reproduce their songs. Once more his grandmother told him: "you must try again."

The next morning Hiawatha returned to the forest: he listened and listened to the birds, and tried to imitate their songs. Suddenly he heard extraordinary music coming from far away. Walking slowly, he followed the echo and arrived at a large waterfall. It was this waterfall that had produced the music. Soon, Hiawatha began to sing and he called the song "Laughing Waters" He carved a flute and played his song.

Consequently each time Hiawatha returned to the woods, he always took with him his flute. He played and sang to the birds his song about the laughing waters. And that was how First Peoples obtained their music.

- Source: [www.native-drums.ca](http://www.native-drums.ca)

This story reflects a certain component of Canada's aboriginal culture and history. Many Canadian aboriginal communities use storytelling to pass on family histories, traditions and cultures. This story is an example of that.

Once you've read the story, review the following questions with your unit and generate a short discussion.

1. What does "culture" mean to you?
2. How did this story make you feel?
3. Did this story make you think about your own culture? Family background?
4. Is this culture different from yours? How?
5. What words would you use to describe your own culture or family?

Invite the girls to act out words, images, and stories that reflect their own culture or family, for example, acting out a family tradition, celebration, activity, game, etc. They can then compare their own stories and experiences with the one just read and share with the group.

You can share this story with your Twinning partner, and ask them to share a story that reflects their heritage with your unit!



## ACTIVITY 2: MAPS!

Split your unit into two separate groups: A and B. Have group A draw a map of Canada (just a general outline is fine, or you can print out an outline as seen [here](#)). Have group B draw an outline of a map of your Twinning country. Group A should then fill in the map with words and images that reflect Canada. Group B should fill in the map with images and words that they think reflect their Twinning partner. These images can be words, drawings, photographs, magazine cut-outs, anything you want. Guiders may want to bring in magazines for girls to use, or print out images of Canada and/or their Twinning partner, to help fill the maps. Do some research on your Twin (and Canada!) with your unit. Here you can learn about the types of food, clothing, rituals, etc. that are common in your Twinning country so you can assist group B in filling in the map. This will also be a great way to share information about your Twin with your unit, and learn even more about Canada. Then come together as a whole group and discuss the images and words that were drawn on each map. Are there similarities between the two maps? What is really different about them? Compare the two and have a discussion about the things that make up both cultures.

This activity could also be done with a unit from your Twinning country; invite them to draw their own map of Canada, while you draw a map of their country, and compare. You can also contact your provincial Twinning lead and learn how you can potentially mail your map to a unit in your Twinning country.

### CANADA



### SOUTH AMERICA





### **ACTIVITY 3: ICEBERG**

Another way to explore different people's experiences and cultures is by using the "iceberg" metaphor. On a large piece of sheet paper or white board, draw an outline of an iceberg (note that the majority of icebergs are actually below the water).

Icebergs are often used as a metaphor to explore culture. As is shown by the drawing, icebergs have a visible section above the water, and a large section below the water that cannot be seen. Culture is like this in that certain characteristics or behaviours can be seen, while many cannot. Below is a list of different features of culture. Say each feature one at a time and ask the group if they think that feature is visible or not. If they think it is visible, write it on the drawing of the iceberg above the water line. If they think the feature is not visible write it below the waterline. Pick and choose which features are age appropriate. Not all will be applicable to your unit. Girls can do this activity on their own, or in small groups.



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|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Religious beliefs       | 9. Child-raising beliefs |
| 2. Art work                | 10. Eating habits        |
| 3. Values and beliefs      | 11. Music                |
| 4. Literature              | 12. Styles of dress      |
| 5. Language                | 13. Holiday customs      |
| 6. Foods                   | 14. Friendships          |
| 7. Sense of humour         | 15. Personal space       |
| 8. Gestures; body language | 16. Family               |

Like an iceberg, the visible part of culture is only a small part of a much larger whole. How does this relate to your Twinning country? Are there things that you have learned about your Twinning partner that might fall above the waterline on this iceberg that are visible? What about the things that might be below the waterline that are not visible? Do some research on your Twin and find a typical game that might be played at a unit meeting. You can first try their Guiding website, contact your provincial Twinning lead through your provincial council, or visit the WAGGGS web pages for your respective Twinning country (see below for their separate links). Games and activities are not something you would see "above the water" in this iceberg analogy. Complete the game or activity and see how it differs from something you might do with your unit in a typical meeting!

### **WAGGGS MEMBER ORGANIZATION WEB PAGES:**

Guyana: <http://www.waggs.org/en/world/organisations?mo=59&x=11&y=14>

Chile: <http://western.waggs.org/en/organisations/34>

El Salvador: <http://western.waggs.org/en/organisations/46>

Peru: <http://western.waggs.org/en/organisations/106>

St. Vincent and the Grenadines: <http://western.waggs.org/en/organisations/116>



### **ACTIVITY 4: TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE!**

What do you already know about your Twinning country? Test your knowledge, and learn more about it as you go. This activity may require some preliminary research on your Twinning country.

Write questions on a beach ball in permanent marker (see suggested list below). Write as many as you can fit on the beach ball.

Ask your girls to stand in a big, open circle. Have one girl volunteer to go first, and throw the beach ball to her. Tell her to look at the ball, and ask her to answer the question that is closest to her right thumb, or any finger you choose. She should answer the question and then throw the ball to another girl in the circle. Continue this until everyone has had a chance to answer one or more questions. You may need to assist girls in answering the questions.



Suggested questions:

- What is the name of your Twinning country?
- What language is spoken in your Twinning country?
- What is the official name of the Guiding organization in your Twinning country?
- What is the capital city of your Twinning country?
- Name any city or place in your Twinning country
- Name a popular food eaten in your Twinning country
- Name a colour that appears on the Guiding uniform in your Twinning country
- Is your Twinning country next to an ocean?
- Name a branch of Guiding in your Twinning country
- Name a plant that can be found in your Twinning country
- Name an animal that can be found in your Twinning country
- Describe the weather in your Twinning country
- Describe the scenery/landscape in your Twinning country

Feel free to tweak these questions and/or to add more questions based on the knowledge of your unit.



### **ACTIVITY 5: LET'S CELEBRATE!**

In Canada, there are many different days that people celebrate. For example, many girls celebrate their birthdays by having birthday parties. This often includes a fun day of games and activities such as bowling or a pizza party, followed by birthday cake, gifts from family and friends, and sometimes even loot bags. Canadians also celebrate other important days like Canada Day, Victoria Day, anniversaries and family reunions!

Celebrate your Twinning country by hosting a meeting that is entirely themed or based on a holiday or tradition in their country. Have girls prepare a certain meal or snacks that are traditional in your Twinning country. Make decorations that reflect your Twinning partner and create a play list of songs from the local style of music, and/or local musicians. Have girls learn and sing Guiding songs from their Twinning partner or play local games or learn dances, etc. You can find this information from your provincial Twinning lead. Use this as a way to further incorporate learning about customs that might be found in your Twinning country!

