



## RedRover Readers and Early Ages Gathering to Learn Empathy Through Stories (EAGLES) Program

**GRADE(S):** 3-5 **SEL ALIGNMENT:** Self-awareness; Social Awareness; Self-management; Responsible decision-making

# GOOSE GIRL

Written by Joe McLellan and Matrine McLellan, illustrated by Rhian Brynjolson

**TIME:** 60 minutes (reading and discussion - 30; activity - 30)

**MATERIALS:** Anchor text ("Goose Girl")

### KEY CONCEPTS

- Why do people feel a sense of connection to animals? How can this help us in life?
- How can sharing our stories about how we feel with others help us?

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

You may want to do a land acknowledgment before this reading and lesson to determine what land you are on. [Native-land.ca](https://native-land.ca) is an app to help map Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages.

### BEFORE READING:

As a class, discuss the following topics:

- Icebreaker activity: As students are arriving, you could provide a mystery bag filled with nature items and ask the students to guess what each item is.
- Share the book cover with the students, and ask them to observe the illustration. Ask, "What do you notice?" The title of this book is Goose Girl. Ask, "What do you think this book will be about?"
  - Allow students to form their own ideas; they can revise their ideas as you read the story.
- Clarify: Cree is a language spoken by the Cree tribe in Northern Ontario, Canada.

### DURING READING:

Read the book to the class. Pause on different pages and discuss the story.

- Read the page starting with, "One night after her 10th birthday," and ask, "Look at the illustration of Marie watching the geese. How do you think she feels in this illustration? Why do you think she feels this way? What about her face tells you what she is thinking?" And "Have you ever watched animals, and if so, why?"
- Read the page starting with, "Her dad and brothers..." and ask, "Look at the illustration of Marie and her mother. How do you think Marie feels?" Why do you think she feels this way?"
- Read page starting with, "One evening, while she was watching her geese," and; tell students the authors choose to include Cree language, spoken by the Cree tribe, in the story. "Ni danis" means "my daughter." Ask, "Why do you think the authors chose to do this?"
- Have the students look at the illustration on page 15, with two geese up front and Marie and her mother in the background. Ask, "How do you think the mother is feeling? Why do you think she feels this way? How do you think Marie is feeling? Why do you think she is feeling this way?"
- After reading the page starting with "After Marie had said her prayers," ask, "Why is Marie given the name Niskaw?"
- Read the page starting with, "One morning the room became very bright." Tell the students, "The grandfather tells Niskaw, thank you." Ask, "What is he grateful to Niskaw/Marie for?"
- At the end of the story, revisit the cover and the page with a picture of the pond. Ask students what they notice about the pond and the water. Ask, "How do you feel after reading this book?"

**AFTER READING:**

A. Review the story's illustrations with students and ask to reinforce and extend their understanding of the text:

- Ask, "How does Marie's sense of connection with her goose help her, her family, and her community?" Create a chart to list what the students come up with.
  - How does the sense of connection with her goose help...

Marie/Niskaw	Her family	Her community

OR: B. Marie feels many emotions throughout this story. Go back to the beginning of the story with the class and summarize the pages. Have the students call out every emotion they think she might be feeling on each page and then ask why they think she feels that way. Create a chart with the emotion in one column and why she feels that way in another column on a board or a piece of chart paper. After filling in each row for each emotion, ask students if they have ever felt that way. Allow time for students to share their stories.

Emotion	Why

**ACTIVITIES:**Learn about the Cree language

Invite students to practice the Native language Cree. Ask if any students are already familiar with the language, and if so, invite them to help the class learn if they are comfortable. Write out the Cree words from the story and say them together.

Write or tell a story:

- Have the students look at the chart of Marie's emotions that the class created together. Have the students pick one emotion they have felt and then tell the story about the time they felt that way. Students can work in pairs to verbally tell each other their stories. As a further extension, have the students write or practice their stories at home. Then, have students share stories with the whole class as an oral class presentation or set up a recording area for students to record their stories privately.

OR Draw and color a picture (younger students):

- Think of an animal you feel a connection with or that you imagine you could feel a connection with. Draw and color a picture of you and this animal.
  - Extension: Share your drawing with another student or the class. Describe why you picked this specific animal, what is happening in the drawing, and how you imagine you feel when you are with this animal and why. Can you imagine feeling that feeling with someone in your life? Why or why not?

**AT THE END OF THE LESSON:**

Ask students to reflect on these questions. Try this with the whole group, in a sharing circle, or ask students to fill out index cards.

- How did you feel about today's book and discussion?
- Did today's book and discussion change how you think about anything in your life?
- What did you learn from today's book and discussion that you didn't know before?

**DON'T FORGET TO REPORT YOUR READING:**

**[RedRover.org/reportreadings](https://RedRover.org/reportreadings)**