

# Bringing Métis Children's Literature to Life—The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story

Author: Leah Marie Dorion  
Illustrator: Leah Marie Dorion  
Translator: Norman Fleury

**Overview of Story:** This charming story, richly steeped in Métis culture, focuses on the boyhood reminiscences of Moushoom as he describes finding the “great giving tree” with his parents. This story emphasizes Métis core values and beliefs, including strength, kindness, courage, tolerance, honesty, respect, love, sharing, caring, balance, patience, and most of all, the important connection with the Creator and Mother Earth.



## Themes in this book:

- Values: honesty/respect
- Mentorship
- Storytelling
- “Métisness”
- Nature/trees/habitat
- Travel
- Foods/healthy eating
- Symbols

## Possible Curriculum connections:

### Language Arts

- Listen, comprehend, and respond
- Compose and Create

### Science

- Habitats/homes for animals
- Interdependence among plants, individuals, society, and environment
- Ecosystems

### Arts Education

- Cultural Historical: study of illustrator as artist: Leah Dorion
- Creative Productive: Use of colour

### Health/Physical Education

- Values
- Maintaining a healthy body

### Social Studies

- Cultures and traditions
- Community
- Needs and wants
- Relationship with land



**Before Reading:** Ask some probing questions to **make predictions** while doing a picture walk of the book, *The Giving Tree*, such as: Why is the tree called the “Giving Tree”? This story took place a long time ago, what is different now? We all want to be good people. What makes us a good person? (make a T chart listing as many virtues/values as possible before reading).

What makes a good person?	What makes not such a good person?

**During Reading:** While reading this story, stop at some key points and identify the virtue/value being displayed (**key ideas**).

E.g.:

1. Unloading the wagon page: think about how everyone shared the work.
2. Looking inside the hole in the Giving Tree: think about how this helped others
3. Putting something back in the hole page: think about what this is teaching the youngster, etc.

**After Reading:** Review the values being displayed in the book, and then show the last couple pages. After some discussion make *My Values Book*. Create a booklet page for each value in *The Giving Tree*, using the values listed on the Red River Cart Wheel at the back of the book.

- Make a title page with the name of the child in the title (E.g.: Child's Name Book of Values).
- For the remaining pages, have the students illustrate each of the virtues as it relates to their own life. This can be done in different ways: For example: using the virtue of sharing, place each letter of the word, /s/, /h/, /a/, /r/, /i/, /n/, /g/, on the left side and find a word to describe this virtue (acrostic poetry), and place it beside each letter. E.g.: S is for smiles, H is for helping out, A is for advice and so on.
- Another method might be to provide a sentence stem and the student complete it with their own words. E.g.: I show love to...
- This booklet could be done over a long period of time. When it is complete, bind it together and do a shared reading. It is also a nice keepsake to take home.





### **Additional Post-reading Activities/Lessons for *The Giving Tree*:**

#### **Thinking About Author's World View:**

In this lesson, discuss the writer's world view using the following prompts:

- What do you know about the topic?
- What experiences have you drawn upon? Connected with?
- What other texts have you read that may help you understand this one better?
- How might the reader's background, experience, and perspective influence the reading of this text?
- How has the author helped the reader understand and navigate the text?
- What experiences are related that you will have to do further research for?

