

## Olemaun Paper Doll Exercise

Objective: have students immerse in the experience of residential school children through a visual exercise to increase their empathy and understanding.

Outcome: students will have a deeper empathy for the feelings and emotions experienced by residential school children, and a greater understanding of how Olemaun's mother did not recognize her when she returned home.

Ages: K-4

Materials: *Fatty Legs* or *When I Was Eight*, crayons, scissors, glue, construction paper.

1. Have the students colour the pages.
  - a. Encourage them to decorate Olemaun's parka. Explain that traditional clothing was not store bought, but homemade with a lot of love and care, and was considered very special. Discuss how the Inuvialuit knew how to dress very warm for their harsh climate, and were able to survive this way for eons.
  - b. Colour one pair of tall stockings grey and one red. The medium legs are bare. The slouchy stockings can be any colour.
2. Explain that the heart represents Olemaun's heart. It can be **a little broken**, **a lot broken**, it can be **content**, or it can be **really happy** (represented by the wings).
3. Walk the students through dressing Olemaun, and representing each image with the heart.
  - a. How was Olemaun dressed at home? How did she feel growing up in the north with her family, travelling by dogsled, hunting, and playing with her siblings? Show with her heart.
  - b. How did Olemaun feel when her father agreed she could go to school? Show with her heart.
  - c. How was her appearance changed at the school? Show this by dressing her in her uniform. Was this practical to wear in the north where the ocean froze for 10 months of the year? What was significant about the hair cutting? How did she feel when she did not get to learn to read immediately?

- d. How did she feel when she thought she was getting new stockings? Dress Olemaun in the stockings she was given.
  - e. How did Olemaun feel when she burned her stockings?
  - f. Dress Olemaun in bare legs. Show how she felt when the nun confronted her.
  - g. Dress Olemaun in grey stockings. How did she feel when she received them?
  - h. How did Olemaun feel when she heard she was going home?
  - i. How did Olemaun feel when her mother didn't recognize her? Ask students to place the parka over her, then remove it, and compare the difference. Discuss why her mother didn't recognize her.
  - j. How did she feel when her father recognized her? If reading *When I Was Eight* how did she feel when she received her own dog sled and team?
  - k. How do students think Olemaun feels now that she has shared her story?
4. Have the students choose one version of Olemaun to depict. Have them paste it onto construction paper, along with how her heart felt in that moment. Have them write or describe orally what scene they are showing, and explain why they showed her heart the way they chose to.





