

# Multicultural Scouting Diversity and Unity

by Lena Wong

In June 2003, I attended a Hindu wedding in Montreal. The bride was born in Canada; her parents having arrived in this country from India in the early seventies. The groom was born in the U.K., grew up in Canada, and has an Indian-born father of Chinese descent and a Danish mother. As I stood behind my son and his bride during the ceremony and looked at the guests sitting on the temple floor it struck me that they represented most major racial groups as well as religious faiths. There were Muslims, Christians of several denominations, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, agnostics and non-believers. Some had traveled from Europe, India, Australia, the United States and elsewhere to help celebrate the joys of this marriage ceremony. Most live right here in Canada, a country of many faces and traditions with a social equilibrium that is recognized and envied around the world.

This does not mean that we can be complacent and assume that all is well. Unfortunately, there are still problem areas when it comes to embracing Canadian diversity. To help you deal with some of the issues and educate your youth members, here are some resources that are easily accessible through the Internet.

## Canada's People

One of the nicest things to see when walking down a city street in Canada is a diverse group of children enjoying each other's company and friendship. Have you ever wondered how you can find out more about the people who make up the current Canadian population?

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration has done an excellent job in including several pages on their web site to help Canadians appreciate and understand each other. For a long list of country profiles go to [www.settlement.org/cp/](http://www.settlement.org/cp/). The information in these profiles will help in explaining the differences and finding similarities between cultures. For more materials from this source go to [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca) and explore the information available under Celebrate Citizenship and Community Involvement. You can order several print resources or download/print them directly off the web.

At the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs site at [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/) you will find KIDS' STOP – an excellent resource for information about Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Here you will also find links to several other organizations and information sources. For a look at Inuit Art and cultural perspective visit [http://collections.ic.gc.ca/cape\\_dorset/](http://collections.ic.gc.ca/cape_dorset/). Another helpful site can be found at [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/index_e.html), click on any menu item of interest.

Last, but not least, visit the Canadian Heritage site at [www.canadianheritage.gc.ca](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca) and explore subjects under the A-Z index. For example, look up Black History Month and Asian Heritage Month for ideas to celebrate diversity with and within your group.

## All Different, All Unique

For a great resource to encourage discussion among older youth (Scouts, Venturers and Rovers) go to <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001345/134556e.pdf> to download and print the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The declaration consists of 12 articles which can be independently discussed over several meetings. The publication is written in a youth friendly language and suggests topics for discussion and action associated with each article.

## Rock Painting

Ancient rock paintings have been found in Europe, North America, The Middle East, Asia, Africa, South America and Australia. In other words, every continent has examples of this particular art form from a time when people had to use all their energy and resources to hunt and gather for their existence. Somehow, they still found the time to express themselves through these fabulous paintings. Beavers, Cubs and Scouts can express themselves in an historical medium that clearly shows how similar our cultural beginnings are. The example below is based on paintings by the Dogon people from southern Mali in West Central Africa and comes from the Michael E. Carlos Museum web site. For more general

information about rock paintings visit [www.bradshawfoundation.com](http://www.bradshawfoundation.com).

*What you need:* Each artist needs a smooth stone about 3"x5", chalk and coloured pencils. The traditional Dogon colours are earth-red, black and off-white.

### What to do:

Step 1: Use the shape and size of the stone to determine design (person, animal, plant etc.). Draw the design on the stone using chalk making it easy to rub out mistakes.



Use your imagination to create an interesting design!

Step 2: Draw a thick dark line over the chalk outline using black or another dark colour.



Step 3: Fill in the shape with a second colour starting from the center and working outwards to the dark line.



Step 4: Use off-white or another light colour to draw a line outside the dark outline.



Ask all your youth to try and discover something about their origins that they can share with the rest of the group. Most Canadians don't have to go very far back to find ancestors who have come to Canada from somewhere else. Compare notes and discover some of these cultural heritages through stories, food, art and music. X  
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