

# ARTIST STUDY ART JOURNAL: Research, Collage, Painting

## GEORGE LITTLECHILD : ARTFUL STORYTELLER



"Grandfather Edward - So Handsome"

George Littlechild was born in 1958 on Hobbema reserve in Alberta. He grew up separated from his natural family and Cree community. Fortunately he was raised by caring foster parents who encouraged his artistic talents. When he was a young man he became interested in his own cultural heritage. He found out about his past and met many of his relatives for the first time

Littlechild finds ideas for his art and writing from his ancestors and his culture. He honors his parents and other family members by including their photos in his art. He uses colors and symbols to remind him of his heritage. "Our people had a highly developed oral culture that has almost been destroyed," Littlechild says, "My paintings are another way of telling those stories."

George Littlechild is also concerned about many First Nations social and political issues. Through his words and pictures he hopes to help other people understand First Nations culture and to alleviate prejudice and racism .

"Plains Cree Chiefs" by George Littlechild

This picture is dedicated to the Chiefs for their efforts in maintaining culture, pride and traditions at a time when old ways were replaced by new ones. Three of the Chiefs are George Littlechild's great, great, great uncles.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

## **RESEARCH ACTIVITY: ALL ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CULTURE**

*Collect information and ideas that tell about yourself, your family and your own culture.*

*Keep photos and collage materials in a folder, big envelope or plastic bag.*

*Write and draw other ideas onto the blank pages in this art journal.*

*Check off each research topic after it is completed.*

\_\_\_\_\_ My parents are \_\_\_\_\_

My grandparents are \_\_\_\_\_

My Great Grandparents are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Collect some **photos of yourself and your family**. Have them photocopied.

\_\_\_\_\_ Think of a **space**, like a landscape or cityscape, that is special for you and your family. Collect photographs or draw pictures of **your own special place or space** .

\_\_\_\_\_ Think of an object that has a special meaning. For example, a musical instrument, something you use for transportation, or a piece of sports equipment. What else can you think of? Make **line** drawings of **your own special objects** .

\_\_\_\_\_ What **patterns or designs** are unique to your culture? For example, decorations on clothing like Scottish plaid, Ukrainian embroidery, or Cree beadwork. Draw and **color** your ideas for designs and patterns.

\_\_\_\_\_ What **colors remind you of your culture**? Think of colors in the landscape, colors on a flag, or colors in a special costume. Fill a page with an abstract color design.

\_\_\_\_\_ What **symbols** are special to your culture? For example, a pyramid could be a symbol for Egypt and a palm tree could be a symbol for a tropical island. Invent some **symbol shapes** for your own family and culture. See if you can combine the shapes to create a **pattern**

*Think of more research topics. Write and draw about them in your journal.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

## ***PAINTING and COLLAGE ACTIVITY : ALL ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CULTURE***

**FIRST:** Look at This Land is My Land to see how George Littlechild creates art all about himself and his own culture.

*Check off each art task as it is completed.*

### **\_\_\_\_\_BACKGROUND COLORS and DESIGNS: your own cultural colors and designs**

- Use a strong art paper, like manilla tag, Bristol board or watercolor paper.
- Draw a border around your paper. Fill it with **your own cultural patterns and designs**. (Look at pages 5, 11, 22 & 23 to see how Littlechild includes border designs in his pictures.)
- Paint the area inside the border with the **colors that remind you of your culture**. Use an acrylic or watercolor wash. (Experiment with painting techniques on a scrap paper first. Be sure to glue your experiments into your idea journal)
- Paint the border with contrasting colors.

### **\_\_\_\_\_INCLUDE A SPECIAL SPACE : your own special place or space**

- Look at **your own special place or space** pictures. Can you collage the pictures or draw the space somewhere into your composition? (Look at pages 8, 10 and 27 to see how Littlechild includes space in his pictures.)

### **\_\_\_\_\_INCLUDE PHOTOS : your own and your family**

- Trim **photos of yourself and your family** carefully. Glue them into your composition. You may want to overlap some pictures. Add colors and drawing details. (Look at pages 5, 11 & 21 to see how Littlechild includes photos in his pictures. Also look at the illustrations in We Are All Related)

### **\_\_\_\_\_INCLUDE SPECIAL OBJECTS:**

- Draw some of **your own special objects** or **symbol shapes** into your composition or make cutouts to glue onto your collage. (Look at pages 8 and 21 to see how Littlechild includes special objects in his pictures.)

### **\_\_\_\_\_FINISH YOUR PICTURE WITH MORE COLLAGE and PAINTING**

**Look in This Land in My Land . Try out some of these techniques yourself:**

Pages 7, 8 & 9 : Use acrylic paints in bright colors, including some metallic gold, copper or silver.

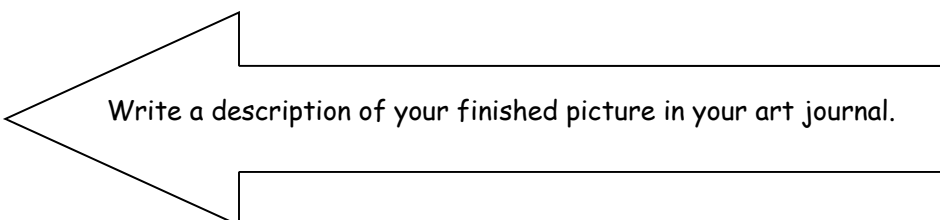
Pages 17 & 31 : Paint a part of your picture. Let it dry. Next, paint a contrasting color over it. Then use the wooden end of your brush to scratch and draw into the paint while it is still damp.

Pages 5 & 15 : Use PVA glue or modge podge to glue little objects onto your painting.

Pages 10 & 21 : Trace an important shape onto your picture several times. Paint the shapes in.

Pages 5 & 11 : Make a border pattern with your own cultural shapes and symbols.

Pages 19 & 27 : Add some important words.



Three things I learned are:

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One thing I still wonder about is:

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Your own reflection question:

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**TEACHERS:**

- Insert and staple blank pages into the centre fold of this booklet to create an art and idea journal.
- Combine this art activity with : “We are all Related: A Bookmaking Activity” by Janet Beaver [www.historysociety.ca/content/en/pdfs/Beaver.pdf](http://www.historysociety.ca/content/en/pdfs/Beaver.pdf)
- How did this journal help your children learn? Do you have any suggestions for improvements or extensions for this activity? Please send feedback to [lkuiper@wsd1.org](mailto:lkuiper@wsd1.org) Thanks!