

A STORY OF GRATITUDE

JESSE COCKNEY

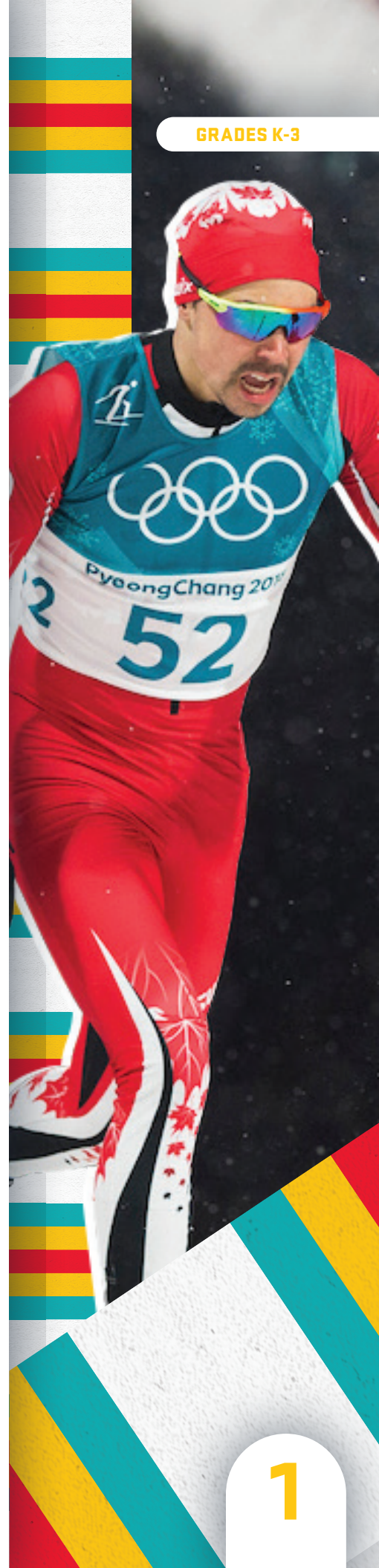
Jesse Cockney was born in Yellowknife Northwest Territories on July 26th, 1989. Jesse was only three years old when he started cross-country skiing! His father, Angus Cockney also competed in Canada as a national champion. He was a mentor for him in skiing, and learning about the Inuvialuit people and culture, where Jesse was from.

Jesse is grateful that he was able to learn and make connections from his family.

“Both my parents are really amazing artists and shared that love of art with my sister Marika and I.” Jesse’s father’s art was mostly stone carvings. Inuit stone carvings show life around them such as animal life, nature or creation tales. “That was my connection back to Inuit culture was just being surrounded by art and learning culture through Dad’s perspective.”

At the age of seven, Jesse and his family moved to Canmore AB. “What Canmore provided for me was a really great community to fall in love with skiing”. Jesse’s sport of cross-country skiing has shown him to be grateful to be able to get out on the land and ski. In Inuit culture the idea of coexisting with the planet is something that has stuck with Jesse.

PHOTO BY COC/DAVID JACKSON



Coexisting means living peacefully with our environment and everything around us. “We need cold winters and lots of snow to be able to cross-country ski”. The Inuit people in the north were able to peacefully coexist in a harmonious system with the land, the water, the animals and nature, even with cold and harsh temperatures” explains Jesse.

When it comes to protecting our planet, “there are things we can all do to work to maintain harmony with the land.” Jesse knows that we need to take action now to face climate change. “If it gets too hot and the snow keeps melting, that means that cross-country skiing wouldn’t be able to take place.”

In 2011, Jesse won three gold medals in the Canada Winter Games. After that, Jesse made it to the Olympics. In 2014, Jesse competed in the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi Russia and again in 2018 in PyeongChang South Korea. Jesse is not only thankful for the land and the cold temperatures that allow him to ski, but he also brings gratitude with him to each race. “Having the opportunity to do what I love every single day is such a privilege. It is important to remember it’s what I love to do and be grateful I have the chance to do it.”

When Jesse isn’t skiing, he teaches students all over the country lessons about community, healthy living, goal setting and perseverance. Jesse’s advice to young students in school is “Know yourself, know what you love and to seek out others in that same direction of your goals. I am a big believer in teamwork. I think it is so much more valuable to take on big goals and dreams together.”



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING GOAL

By the end of the lesson students should have an understanding of what gratitude looks like in their daily life. They should have an understanding of why showing gratitude and giving back to our peers, our community and the planet is an important part of being an environmental citizen. To have gratitude is to show a readiness to show appreciation and a return of kindness. To show purpose, awareness and compassion.

MATERIALS

Jesse Cockney's athlete story (either displayed where students can see or individual copies), whiteboards or sticky notes to have students jot down ideas, gratitude circle BLM

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Jesse is proud of where he is from. Think about your family roots and all of the things you have to be proud of.

Why is it important to be grateful for what we have?

Why must we treat our planet with gratitude and kindness?

What are small things we can do everyday that will help our earth? How can we give back to the earth?



CONNECT

Read Jesse Cockney's athlete story as a whole class. As you read it, pause the reading when examples of gratitude come up to give students a chance to connect the examples to the theme. Ex. Jesse is grateful towards his community for the support and partnership and helping him achieve his goals. Is there anyone in your life that helps you follow your dreams?

PROCESS

Discuss examples either from the reading or another text the students are familiar with first and have these displayed somewhere they can see. Then have students think-pair-share with a partner or small group something they have done recently to give back either to a person, the community or the planet. We want students to begin to make connections between the reading and their life.

Students are now ready to fill in their gratitude circles (worksheets available). In the middle they will write one action they will take going forward to give back to the planet. Examples might include, picking up litter, planting seeds in their garden, or donating an old toy to charity instead of throwing it away. As the circle expands in their other layers, students will write a few words about how that action helps themselves, the community and the planet.

TRANSFORM

Have students share their gratitude circles with the class or in their small group. Display the gratitude circles somewhere in the classroom where all the students can see them. To extend this activity you can build a gratitude wall/ give back wall and when students complete their action from their circle, they can share a picture on the wall of them completing their give back action.



GRATITUDE CIRCLE

EX: DONATING A TOY

EX: HELPS YOURSELF BECAUSE YOU ARE DOING
A GOOD DEED WHICH FEELS GOOD

EX: HELPS THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE THERE ARE MORE TOYS FOR
OTHER KIDS TO PLAY WITH WHO MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO BUY NEW TOYS

EX: HELPS THE PLANET BECAUSE THE TOY IS BEING REUSED INSTEAD OF
GOING INTO A LANDFILL



SCHOOL PROGRAM

INDIGENOUS LEGACIES THROUGH SPORT SERIES

GRATITUDE CIRCLE

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