



Marie Watt (Seneca Nation of Indians). *Blanket Stories: Three Sisters, Four Pelts, Sky Woman, Cousin Rose, and All My Relations*, 2007. Wool blankets, satin binding, with salvaged industrial yellow cedar timber base, 150 x 40 x 40 in. Seattle Art Museum, General Acquisition Fund, in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum, 2007.41. Photo: Susan Cole. © Marie Watt

There are 573 recognized tribal nations in the United States, with over 634 First Nations in Canada. Women are cultural and creative leaders within these diverse communities. They not only are considered “vessels” for giving life, but also hold a significant place in keeping distinct traditions alive.

Lesson 3: Family Objects and Oral History

Objective

In this lesson, inspired by *Marie Watt’s Blanket Stories*, each participant will tell a story about their family history or traditions while passing around an item connected to their story.

Materials

Objects (or pictures of objects) that can be passed around. See Step 1 for details.

Steps (for Art Trunk teachers/leaders)

- 1: Think about ways of representing community stories, like Marie Watt’s *Blanket Stories*. Ask participants to reflect on their legacies and relationships, and to think of objects that could represent their traditions. Ask each individual to bring one of those objects (or picture of the object) to pass around at your group’s next meeting. You may want to bring extra items or images to use as prompts.
- 2: At your next gathering, depending on what will best encourage storytelling and discussion, direct participants to sit either in small groups or one large circle.
- 3: Have each person share with the rest of the group their story about the object they brought or selected. Use the questions below to help listeners respond to each story and generate conversation.

Discussion questions

How is the item you are sharing connected to your legacy?
How does it tell the story about the relationships in your family or life?

Vocabulary phrase *oral history*