

## **The Jealous Creator and the Great Snake**

Read the story below: “The Jealous Creator and the Great Snake,” from the book *Stories and Legends of my Grandfather*. Then do the exercises.

### **The Jealous Creator and the Great Snake**

Once there was a time when the Creator had finished making the earth for the great Ojibway Indians to look after, respect, and honour. The earth was full of beauty, peace, and harmony. There was kindness, honesty, sharing, and strength. The earth was like heaven.

The Creator of the earth made the plants very pure and they grew very straight. The branches and roots of the trees were formed perfectly. The rocks were completely round. The lakes were round, the rivers were straight, and the streams were pure. The air and winds were fresh. The Creator who made the earth had beautiful colours like the rainbow. This rainbow was the water that gave life to everything.

It was a very easy life for the Ojibway Indians. This is why the Thunders and other spirits who were pure came to live on earth, and the mermans came to live in the lakes, rivers, and streams.

The Ojibway Indians were given a sacred pipe by the Creator because the pipe is the healer of the physical body; a sacred feather because the feather is knowledge, wisdom, medicine, spirituality, teachings of the mind, and feelings; a drum because the drum has songs and is the heart of the spirit. That is why an Indian’s hair is braided into three parts. This represents the body, mind, and spirit. The Ojibway Indians followed the traditions and the ceremonies to respect and honour their Creator, the God Almighty.

This wonderful life continued until a day when the Ojibway Indians turned their ways of life into evil and no longer followed the gift they were given. The Creator became jealous because the Ojibway Indians did not respect and honour him with their loyalty. They did not respect the nature he had made for them to live spiritually. The Creator then sent a great snake to the earth to crawl all over and make things crooked. It crawled into the plants, trees, animals, rocks, hills, lakes, rivers, streams, and the grounds. Everything that was straight became crooked, wavy, and bumpy. Life was not easy any more. It became hard. That is how things that the Creator made straight became crooked.

Today the things we see around us are crooked, wavy, and bumpy. That is why the plants are twisted and wavy and branches of the trees are crooked. That is why the animals and humans are each formed differently. The lakes have formless shapes and the rivers and streams are wavy like a snake. The hills are steep, crooked, wavy, and bumpy.

The legend was told by the Ojibway Indian elders.  
From *The Stories and Legends of My Grandfather* by Floyd Joseph Gray

## Facts about the story

1. What three things does the story say the Ojibway Indians were supposed to do with the Earth?

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2. How did the plants, trees, rocks, lakes and streams look when the Creator first made them?

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3. Why did the Creator give the Ojibway Indians the pipe? The feather? The drum?

Pipe \_\_\_\_\_

Feather \_\_\_\_\_

Drum \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do the three parts of a braid stand for?

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5. Why did the Creator become jealous?

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6. What did the Creator do as a result of his jealousy?

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## Thinking about the story

### *B. Discussion and Response*

1. Think of one thing that is crooked, bumpy or wavy, and imagine how life would be easier if it was straight or smooth.
2. Draw a picture of how you think the world or something in it looked when it was first created.
3. What are some ways that we can respect the Earth today?
4. How can we today show respect, honour, and loyalty to the Creator?
5. In what ways do you think the earth is still “like heaven”?

### *C. Creative Response*

Write a poem using the following form as an outline:

- Line 1 - How the lakes looked when they were created
- Line 2 - How the streams and rivers looked when they were created
- Line 3 - How the plants and trees looked when they were created
- Line 4 - How the hills looked when they were created.
  
- Line 5 - Tell of a wrong thing you've done
- Line 6 - Tell how that made another person feel
- Line 7 - Tell how you think the Creator felt about it
  
- Line 8 - How the lakes looked after the snake had come
- Line 9 - How the streams and rivers looked after the snake had come
- Line 10 - How the plants and trees looked after the snake had come
- Line 11 - How the hills looked after the snake had come
  
- Line 12 - A beautiful thing in nature that you've seen this week
- Line 13 - Your feelings about what you described in Line 12
- Line 14 - One or two words to express thanks to the Creator

## ***Tools for Writing a Poem:***

The poem can be in free verse. That means

- it doesn't have to rhyme
- the lines can be different lengths

The lines of a poem should have very few words - only enough to describe a thing or feeling clearly.

A good poem

- makes word pictures. Try using a comparison in one of your lines, e.g. the lake was as round as the moon, or as a shiny quarter, or as the irises of a baby's eyes.
- creates emotion in the reader

A poet needs sharp eyes. The best poems come out of careful watching, listening, smelling, tasting and touching. When you write a good poem about things you have carefully watched, listened to, smelled, tasted, or touched, someone hearing your poem will be moved to want to experience the same thing, or they may say, "I've noticed that, too," and that makes a point of communication and common interest between the two of you.

## **Answer Key**

### ***Facts about the story***

1. The people of the earth were to look after the earth, and respect and honour it.
2. The plants were pure and they grew straight. The branches and roots of the trees were perfectly formed. The rocks were completely round, and so were the lakes, and the rivers were straight and pure.
3. The pipe was the healer of the physical body, the feather represented knowledge, wisdom, medicine, spirituality, teachings of the mind and feelings; the drum has songs and is the heart of the spirit. All three of these were gifts of the Creator to make life full and successful for the Ojibway people.
4. The three parts of the braid represent the body, mind, and spirit.
5. the Creator was jealous because the Ojibway people no longer respected and honored him. They were doing evil and didn't follow the gifts they were given. They stopped respecting the Earth.
6. He sent a great snake to the earth to crawl all over and make everything crooked.