

# Maori Roles and Relationships

## Enduring Understandings:

- Family dynamics and conflicts exist in all cultures.
- Traditional roles for women are often limited, compared with those of men.
- Many traditions are eroding in the face of modern progress.
- Often traditions must change and adapt over time to survive.

## Essential Questions:

- How do some cultures adapt their traditions to succeed in the modern world?
- What effects do changes in tradition have on members of the group and their relationships with each other?

## Notes to the Teacher:

This lesson explores the power of family expectations and cultural roles (especially gender roles) in affecting relationships. Additionally, it introduces the possibility of change in these cultural mores and asks students to think about how individuals handle cultural change.

Students process more when they speak their thoughts out loud, which is the basis of the Socratic method. However, they also benefit from some time to prepare their thoughts, or to interact with the issues involved before discussion begins. (The Touchstones Discussion Project, which was developed out of the St. John's College "Great Books" program, uses this method successfully with middle school students when they tackle selections from great writings.) This is the rationale behind the order of this lesson: starting with individual reflection, then moving to small group work, and finally moving into the fishbowl activity.

In this lesson, students begin by putting themselves in the shoes of different characters in the movie, imagining their feelings, and comparing what they learn to their own situation. Then, in a small group they study a particular character in depth. Their job is to create talking points that will express the feelings and opinions of their character. In the fishbowl activity, one person from each group joins a role-play in the middle of the circle (or in front of the room). They discuss various issues from their different perspectives. After 6-8 minutes they return to the circle and five new people (one from each group) replace them for further role-play and discussion.



**DURATION OF LESSON:**

One period

**ASSESSMENT:**

Student discussions

Reflections from **HANDOUTS 1 AND 2**

Role-playing



**STANDARDS**

Indicators addressed by this lesson

**STANDARD 1.** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

**LEVEL III (GRADES 6-8)**

**12.** Writes in response to literature (e.g., responds to significant issues in a log or journal, answers discussion questions, anticipates and answers a reader's questions, writes a summary of a book, describes an initial impression of a text, connects knowledge from a text with personal knowledge, states an interpretive, evaluative, or reflective position; draws inferences about the effects of the work on an audience)

**STANDARD 8.** Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

**LEVEL III (GRADES 6-8)**

- 1.** Plays a variety of roles in group discussions (e.g., active listener, discussion leader, facilitator)
- 3.** Uses strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., takes notes; organizes, summarizes, and paraphrases spoken ideas and details)
- 4.** Listens in order to understand topic, purpose, and perspective in spoken texts (e.g., of a guest speaker, of an informational video, of a televised interview, of radio news programs)
- 7.** Uses appropriate verbal and nonverbal techniques for oral presentations (e.g., modulation of voice, inflection, tempo, word choice, grammar, feeling, expression, tone, volume, enunciation, physical gestures, body movement, eye contact, posture)

**STANDARD 9.** Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

**LEVEL III (GRADES 6-8)**

- 1.** Understands a variety of messages conveyed by visual media (e.g., main concept, details, themes or lessons, viewpoints)

## Materials needed:

Pen or pencil  
 Notebook paper  
 Index cards  
**HANDOUTS 1 and 2**

## Procedure

1. Give every student **HANDOUT 1: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION**. Read the questions out loud if necessary. Direct students to write their own answers, and give them about 6-8 minutes to finish.
2. Read the directions first from **HANDOUT 2: SMALL GROUP WORK**. Then divide the students into five small groups and have them relocate to different parts of the room so each group has its own space and doesn't disturb the others.
3. Give one copy of **HANDOUT 2** to each group. Give each group a character to consider: the main character Paikea, her grandfather Koro, her grandmother Nanny Flowers, her uncle Rawiri, and her classmate Hemi (the boy who trains in Koro's school and cries about his father). Assign one student in each group to be the secretary, who will write down the talking points for their character.
4. Move around among the groups, making sure that all students are contributing and that someone is writing down their character's ideas. Make suggestions when necessary. Again, give them about 6-8 minutes, or continue until you sense they are all ready.
5. For the fishbowl discussion, have your students put five chairs in the middle, facing each other, and move all the other chairs into a circle. Have one student from each group go into the middle to represent the character for which his or her group made talking points.
6. Ask students to role-play as if they are the character they represent: speaking in his or her voice, expressing his or her feelings, and trying to think as that character would think. They may certainly disagree with one another, but remind them to continue to treat each other with respect.
7. After about 6-8 minutes, stop the discussion and get new students (one from each group) to go into the center of the fishbowl. Continue the discussion. The discussion may go off the specific questions on the handout, which is fine, but if it wanders off topic or if they get stuck, you may bring them back by asking a new question to consider.
8. When the fishbowl activity is finished, each student gets an index card to use as a "3-2-1" card to complete before he or she can leave class. Ask students to write down 3 things they learned about the characters from the discussions, 2 questions they would still like to ask, and 1 major understanding from the lesson as a whole.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

1. While many societies favor the firstborn male child, in this film the girl was chosen by the supernatural powers, against the cultural expectations. Have students compare this with the way the patriarchs, prophets and kings were chosen in the Torah (Old Testament). (Many times God disregarded the cultural norms and favored the younger son – consider Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and all the way to David – often making the older brothers angry.)
2. Have students research to find out why certain roles in Maori life were performed only by women. For example, how did it come to be that a woman had to perform the formal call onto the *marae* (the temple ground)? Compare that to the role of women as priestesses or oracles in the ancient Greek religion.
3. Have students research the impact of modern legislation like Title 9 on opportunities for girls and women. Many of your students may take relatively recent changes for granted, since the laws were passed before they were born.
4. Have students write a journal entry or essay about one or more of the following questions:
  - a. Why did Koro call Paikea “wise leader” at the end of the film? What does that show about her, and about him?
  - b. In what ways is Koro the boss of the family, and in what ways is he not?
  - c. Why couldn't Paikea leave town with her father?

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

#### A. Print materials (books, magazine articles, etc.)

Chambers, John H. – *A Traveller's History of New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands* (New York: Interlink Books, 2004)

#### B. Internet resources

<http://maori.com/>

<http://www.nzmis.org.nz/lib/links/index.htm>



**HANDOUT 1**                      **Individual Reflection**

1. List 3 qualities that are important in a leader.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  
2. Are any qualities in your list found only in boys? Only in girls?
  
3. What are some things in our society that have *traditionally* been done just by boys or men? Note down two of them here. Next to each one, write a reason why that is; if you don't know one, make your best guess why it might be. Does it make sense? Is it fair?
  - a.
  - b.
  
4. What are some things in our society that have *traditionally* been done just by girls or women? Note down two of them here. Next to each one, write a reason why that is; if you don't know one, make your best guess why it might be. Does it make sense? Is it fair?
  - a.
  - b.

HANDOUT 2 ▶ P. 1

# Talking Points for \_\_\_\_\_ (Your character)

Names of your group members:

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**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your group to write “talking points” for your character about each of the following issues. In other words, how would your character answer each question?

- Can women and girls be leaders just as well as men and boys?
- Should parents tell children what they can do with their lives?
- Should boys and girls be raised differently?
- Should every boy be raised to be a chief, or only the firstborn?
- Does crying disqualify you from being chief?

# Lesson 4 LANGUAGE ARTS/VISUAL LITERACY



## HANDOUT 2 ► P. 2

- Should the Maori try to do everything in the old ways?
- What can young people possibly teach their elders?
- Who is the boss of the family?
- What is the best way to keep the Maori people strong?
- Why have so many Maori people been moving away?
- Who is to blame for the Maori troubles?
- What is your greatest hope for your people? Your greatest fear?