

A stylized graphic of an orange t-shirt with a white crew neck and white sleeve cuffs. The shirt is centered on a light beige background. A large, semi-transparent yellow circle is overlaid on the front of the shirt, serving as a backdrop for the text. The background also features abstract orange shapes, including a large circle on the left and a wavy shape at the bottom.

# Orange Shirt Day

Visual Arts Step by Step:  
Classroom Community Mobile

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In our Classroom Community Mobile project, you and your students will build connections to one another and gain an understanding of the **unique contributions each person makes to your classroom**. Paired with our “What is Orange Shirt Day?” video, this activity supports students in understanding that their classroom is a space where unique contributions and voices are **valued** and **respected**. Through this activity, our goal is that students celebrate their individuality while considering how students at **residential schools** would have felt when they **could not share or celebrate what made them unique**.

## About This Resource

Thanks for accessing our Online Learning resources! These step-by-step instructions will help your class express their own creativity and build connections to the Ontario Arts Curriculum. This resource accompanies our Orange Shirt Day content and Teacher’s Resource Guide, found on the Harbourfront Centre School Visits’ website.

## About us

Harbourfront Centre School Visits is an experiential, hands-on learning program that offers curriculum-focused, inquiry-based programs that explore all aspects of contemporary arts and culture. Every year, we host 26,000 students onsite for meaningful engagements with the arts. We trust you will find the step-by-step guide outlined below will allow creativity to shine through!

## Suggested Grade Range

Grades 1–3

## Curriculum Links

Visual Arts  
Social Studies  
Language

## Key vocabulary words

**Unique:** being the only existing one of its type or, more generally, unusual, or special in some way

**First Nation:** “First Nation” is a term used to describe Indigenous peoples in Canada who are ethnically neither Métis nor Inuit.

**Métis:** The term Métis refers to a collective of cultures and ethnic identities that resulted from unions between Indigenous and European people in what is now Canada.

**Inuit/Inuk:** This term refers to specific groups of people generally living in the far north who are not covered under the Indian Act.

**Residential School:** Government funded institutions dating from the early 1800s to the late 1900s that aimed to “take the Indian out of the child”.

*Source for definitions: <https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/>*

## Required Materials

- 1 branch or stick (or wooden dowel if unable to find) for the class
- 1 sheet of 8.5x11” card stock (cut into quarters) per student
- 1 pair of scissors per student
- Materials to colour with (paint and paintbrush or sponge; markers; crayons; pencil crayons, etc)
- Clear tape (Scotch tape)
- 1 roll of fishing line (string, yarn or twine)
- 1 one hole punch

**Visit [harbourfrontcentre.com](http://harbourfrontcentre.com) for more E-Learning Resources**

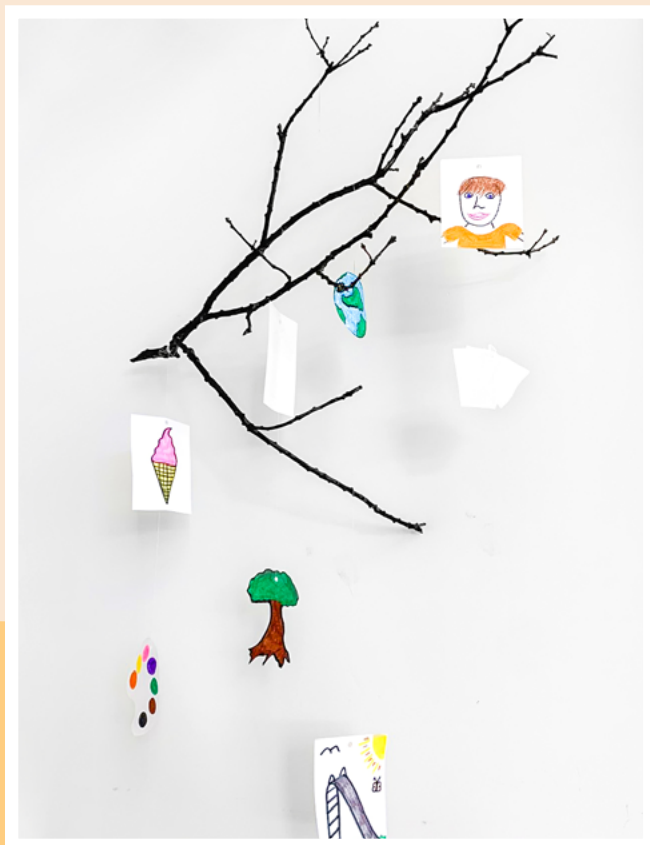


# Step by Step Instructions

# Step 1

Let students know that today, we will be exploring what makes them unique. If unique is a new vocabulary word for your students, remind them that unique is another way of saying special, one of a kind or different from others.

**Please note: As outlined in the required materials, please have one large fallen branch and/or one large dowel to act as the base for students to hang their creations from in your community mobile.**



## Step 2

Ask students to share with you their thoughts on the following questions.

↳ **What makes you unique?**

Potential answers could include their physical characteristics, likes or dislikes, family or home life, languages they speak, or any aspect of their culture students are willing to share. Consider writing the words students share on the board or chart paper to reference throughout the activity. If students find this question challenging, you may want to ask them to think about their favourite part about your class, school, neighbourhood or community. Discuss how different students have different answers and connections, thus sharing part of their unique identities.

## Step 3

Let students know that you will be creating a Community Mobile. Students may have seen one hanging over a crib or bed, at an art gallery or in their communities. A mobile is a piece of art that has different items tied together to make a big impression!



# Step 4

Demonstrate how you would like students to take the words they thought of and connections they made in response to our first question and draw or write out how they uniquely contribute to your classroom community. For this activity, students can draw or write with anything available like paint, markers, crayons. We recommend that you use card stock to draw on.

**\*Possible extension:** If students are interested or able to, you could have them draw an image on one side of the cardstock and write down an explanation of what this unique contribution is and/or have students complete more than one drawing.





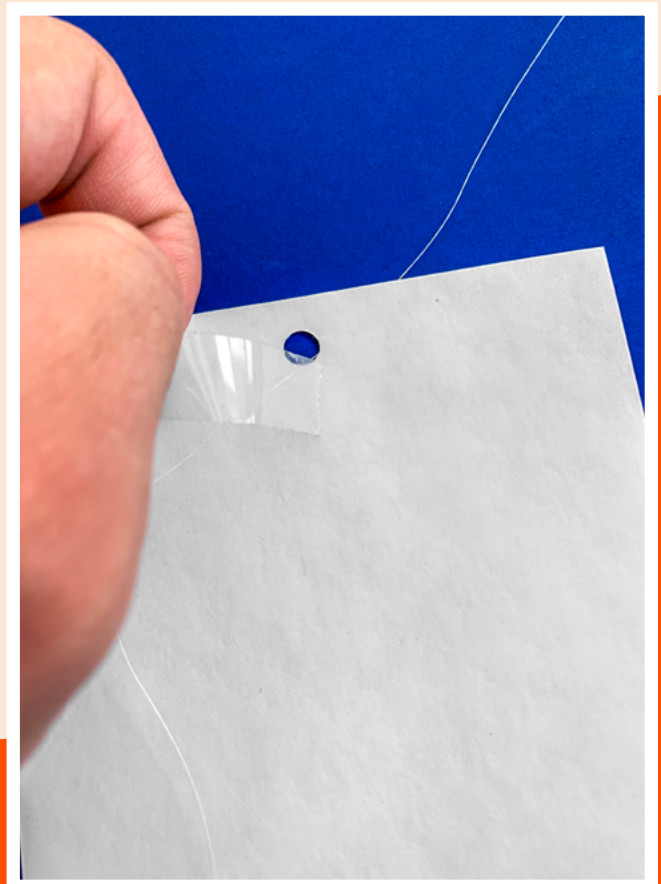
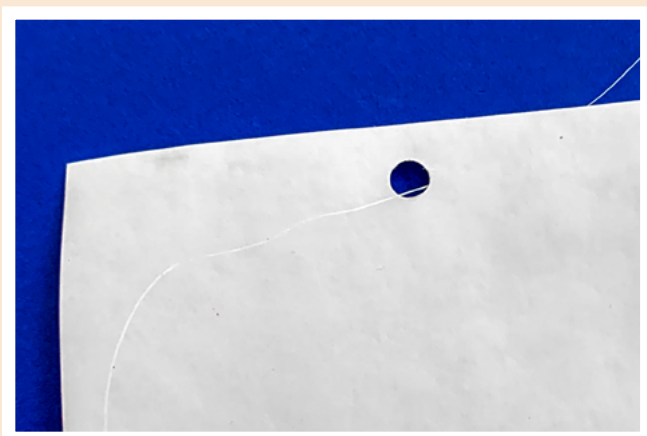
## Step 5

Once students have finished their drawings or writings, they will need to use a hole punch to create one hole in their work. This hole should be at the top of their image, roughly in the middle of their piece of art so they can tie their work to the main branch or dowel for the Community Mobile.

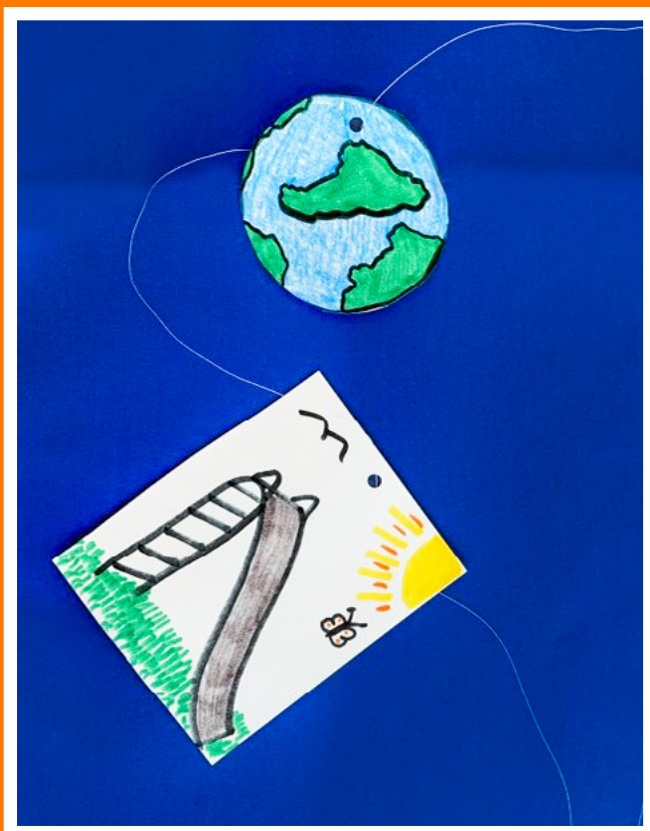


## Step 6

After each student has punched a hole in their work, give each student one piece of string or yarn. Have students thread the end through the hole in their work and use tape to secure it in place. This part may require some assistance from an adult. We recommend giving students different lengths of string or yarn so that all the art pieces do not hang down at the same level.







## Step 7

If students have chosen to make more than one image, you can use the same piece of string to thread through the hole in any additional art pieces.

## Step 8

Once the string is attached to their artwork, have students bring their piece to a teacher or adult in the classroom who can help students then tie them to the branch or dowel. Consider how close together you need to put student artwork to ensure everyone has a place for their contributions.

## Extensions

- Have students make a personal mobile, which could feature many different images, words and connections to themselves, their family and community. Consider displaying them in your classroom.
- Review the Teacher's Resource Guide for suggested read-aloud content to deepen student understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture and/or Orange Shirt Day.

## Step 9

Once all students have completed the activity, look for a special place in your classroom to hang your mobile. You may want to talk with students about how unique each of their contributions is and tie this conversation back to residential schools and Orange Shirt Day. For example, what would happen if one of the students was not in your class anymore? Their unique contributions would be missing from your classroom. We celebrate the unique meaningful role of everyone in our classroom community in this way.