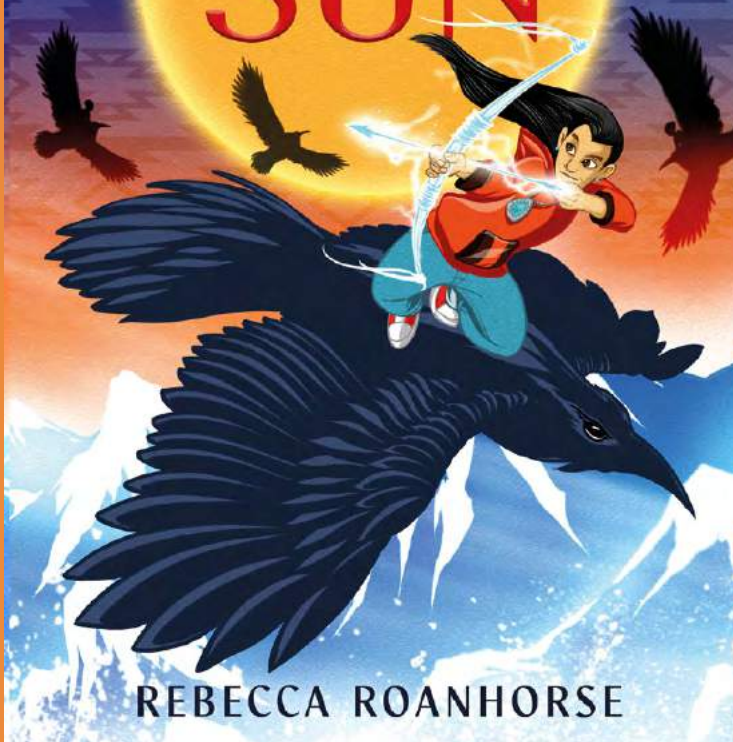




RICK RIORDAN PRESENTS

# RACE TO THE SUN



REBECCA ROANHORSE

FAMILY READING KIT

**I'm yours to keep!**

Please remember to return  
the Library book.



CALGARY  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

*“Books are sometimes windows, offering views of the world that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms the human experience.”*

— Rudine Sims Bishop

Diverse children’s fiction, like this book, may have perspectives and content that are new and sometimes complex. Reading a wide variety of children’s literature gives children a chance to develop their own opinions and encourages deep thinking, emotional intelligence, and imagination. The contents of this reading kit can help to initiate conversations and spark interest, provide learning and teaching opportunities, and create time for your family to connect. The questions and activities encourage discussion on various topics to help foster self-reflection and a lifelong love of learning. We hope you enjoy reading together!

<p><b>BOOK</b> <i>Race to the Sun</i></p>	<p>A thrilling adventure story about a Navajo seventh-grader who can detect monsters, Nizhoni finds herself on a rescue mission with her brother to save their family. Timeless themes such as the importance of family and respect for the land resonate in this funny, fast-paced, and exciting quest adventure set in the American Southwest. Other themes include environmental issues, marginalization, socio-economic disparity, and Navajo culture.</p>
<p><b>AUTHOR</b> Rebecca Roanhorse</p>	<p>Rebecca Roanhorse is a Black Indigenous (Ohkay Owingeh) writer of speculative fiction. <i>Race to the Sun</i> is her middle-grade debut novel. Rebecca is a lawyer by day who specializes in federal Indigenous and tribal law. She lives in northern New Mexico.</p>
<p><b>CONTEXT</b></p>	<p>This book was published in January 2020 and is set in contemporary Arizona.</p>
<p><b>RECOMMENDED FOR</b> Ages 8 – 12</p>	



**This booklet is yours to keep.**

Please return the Library books when they are due.

# HOW TO USE THE FAMILY READING KIT

## WHAT IS THE FAMILY READING KIT?

The Family Reading Kit is an opportunity to encourage literacy by reading a book together and doing fun learning activities inspired by the book. The reading kit can be used in a classroom or by independent readers, too. Each year, Calgary Public Library chooses titles that are relevant, high-interest, and appealing to readers of all ages.

### **What is family literacy and why is it so important?**

Family literacy is a great way to practise, encourage, and develop reading skills as a family. Sharing a book out loud and reading together strengthens bonds between family members and helps create lifelong learners. The Library is proudly committed to supporting lifelong learning.

More information about Family Literacy can be found at [abclifeliteracy.ca](https://abclifeliteracy.ca)

### **English Language Arts Curricular Connections**

While each grade and subject have specific curricular topics, each Family Reading Kit supports the overlapping outcomes between grade levels in English Language Arts in Alberta. Some titles may also connect to other topics and subjects in school, such as Science or Social Studies.

More information about ELA curricular connections can be found at [calgarylibrary.ca/ela-curriculum-connect](https://calgarylibrary.ca/ela-curriculum-connect)

# WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE FAMILY READING KIT?

Everything you need to explore this book is included! This package contains:

## BOOK SUMMARY AND TIPS FOR READING TOGETHER

**pages 2 and 5**

Get some background information on the book and its author(s) and illustrator(s). Use this section to plan your family's reading journey and try out some tips and ideas for making reading together fun and enjoyable for all ages.

## BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**pages 6 – 9**

Book discussion questions are a great way to start thinking about the book you are reading. They help you slow down and think about what you have just read or what you are about to read next. There are discussion questions to answer before the book, in the middle of the book, and at the end.

## ACTIVITIES

Each package contains two activities that help you explore ideas from the book in different and exciting ways at home and in your community.

THINGS YOU CAN CREATE:

### **Field of Knives Setting Diorama**

**pages 10 – 11**

Visual literacy is the ability to read, recognize, and understand visual imagery as well as being able to write and create your own. The activities in this portion of the package will

rely on your creativity and imagination!

REFLECTING AND SHARING ABOUT WHAT YOU READ:

### **Making Navajo Tacos**

**pages 12 – 13**

Sharing activities might include telling someone about a similar experience you had, how the book made you feel, or doing your own book talk. These activities also invite reflection on your own learning and reading experience.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**pages 14 – 15**

All packages include Additional Resources with further reading on topics / themes in the book and suggestions for what to read next.

Please fill out a survey to provide your feedback on your family's experience at

[calgarylibrary.ca/family-reading-survey](http://calgarylibrary.ca/family-reading-survey)

## SHARING WITH OTHER FAMILIES

Share your family's photos, book review, writing, artwork, audio, and video with others who read this book, on the Library's Padlet at

[calgarylibrary.ca/family-reading-padlet](http://calgarylibrary.ca/family-reading-padlet)

# TIPS FOR READING TOGETHER

## 1. Create a Special Reading Space

- Nice lighting, no distractions, and a cozy nook make a great spot for reading. Or take reading on the go with an audiobook on your next family road trip.

## 2. Schedule Reading Time

- Plan for your family reading. Read ahead, take turns reading, and make time to chat about what you learned. As a group, make decisions about how you will read and who will read.

## 3. Think Outside the Book

- Involve your listeners — encourage them to get involved in the story with laughter, sound effects, actions, and different voices for different characters. Little readers might get distracted, so offer a pen and paper for their own illustrations.

## 4. Listening / Pausing / Talking

- Listening is an important part of reading skills. It takes practise to focus and listen to what is said.
- Let everyone have a turn talking and sharing.
- As you read, take time to talk about what is happening and what is going to happen in the story. If your listeners are curious, this is where your book discussion questions can shine and spark great conversations!

Get more tips and tricks for reading together at [calgarylibrary.ca/reading-tips](https://calgarylibrary.ca/reading-tips)

# BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Share each question, or choose a few that you like to read aloud and share your answers. Don't worry about staying on topic! See where the conversation leads you and encourage kids to ask questions of their own.

## BEFORE THE BOOK

1. What do you think will happen during the book based on the title and cover? What can you guess about the plot or the characters?
2. What makes a good hero?

As you dive deeper into reading together, you may come across some tough questions and topics. Here are some tips from Common Sense Media on talking about these questions with your kids:

- Check in by sharing how you feel and ask them how they feel. You can say, "I feel angry when I know that someone got hurt," or "It makes me feel sad to hear that someone didn't get a good education or the right treatment to help them," and "What are you feeling right now?"
- Ask open-ended questions to get kids to think more deeply about serious topics. For example, "What did you hear?," "What did it make you think?," and "Why do you think that?" For older kids, you can ask, "Do you think families from other backgrounds would view this the same way as us?"
- Admit when you don't know something. You can say, "I don't know. Let's try to find out more."

Source: [calgarylibrary.ca/difficultsubjects](https://calgarylibrary.ca/difficultsubjects)

## HALFWAY THROUGH THE BOOK

After Chapter 10

Pause here to check in and see how everyone is feeling about the book. Make some predictions to help stay engaged and redirect focus to specific areas of the story.

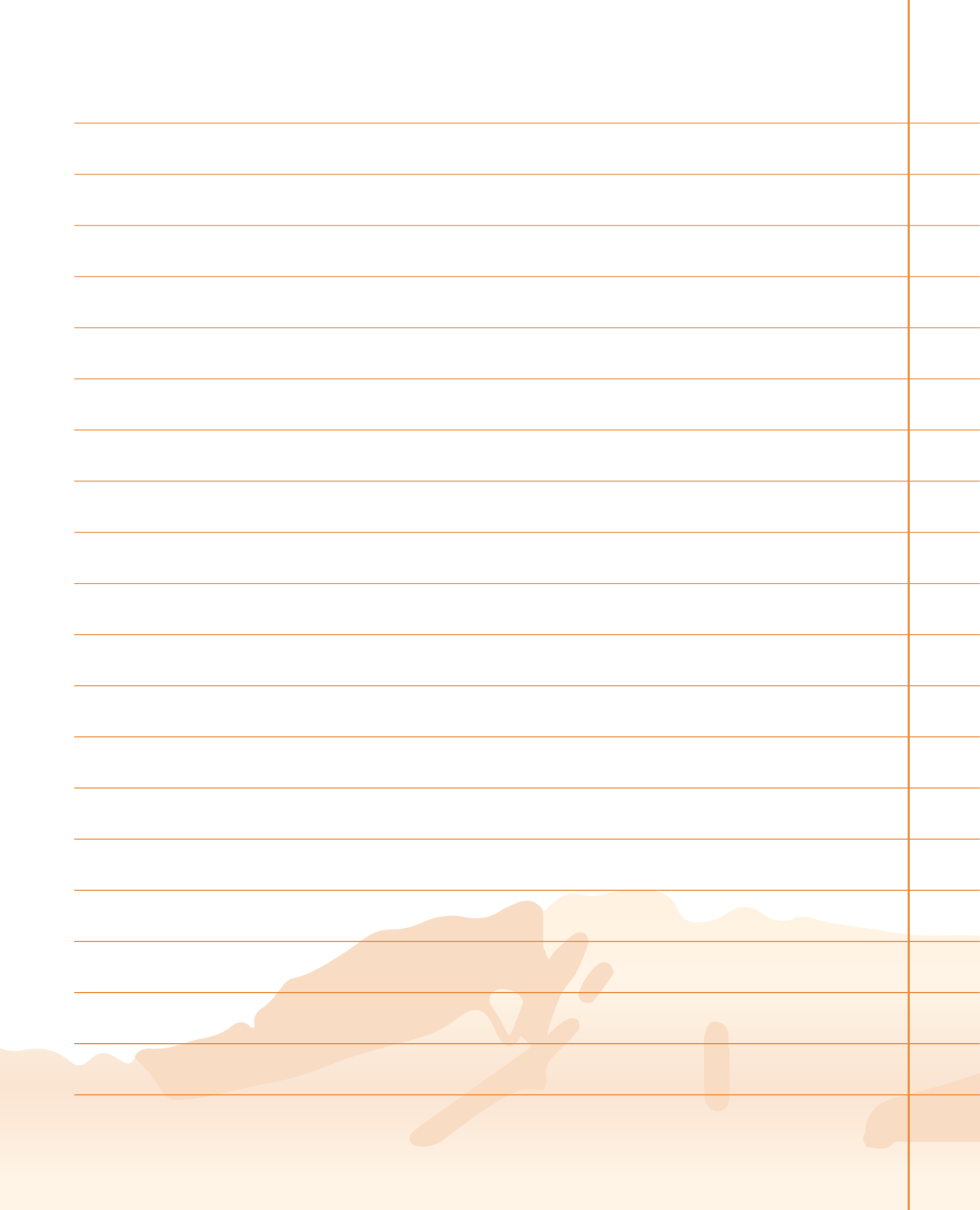
1. In Chapter 3, what do you think the importance of Mr. Charles is in the story? What about Nizhoni's dad?
2. After reading Chapter 7, why do you think Mr. Yazzie is in the story?
3. In Chapter 10, Nizhoni thinks that if she were to call the police about her dad being kidnapped, they would not believe her because Mr. Charles is rich. What does this say about her society's values?

## AFTER FINISHING THE BOOK

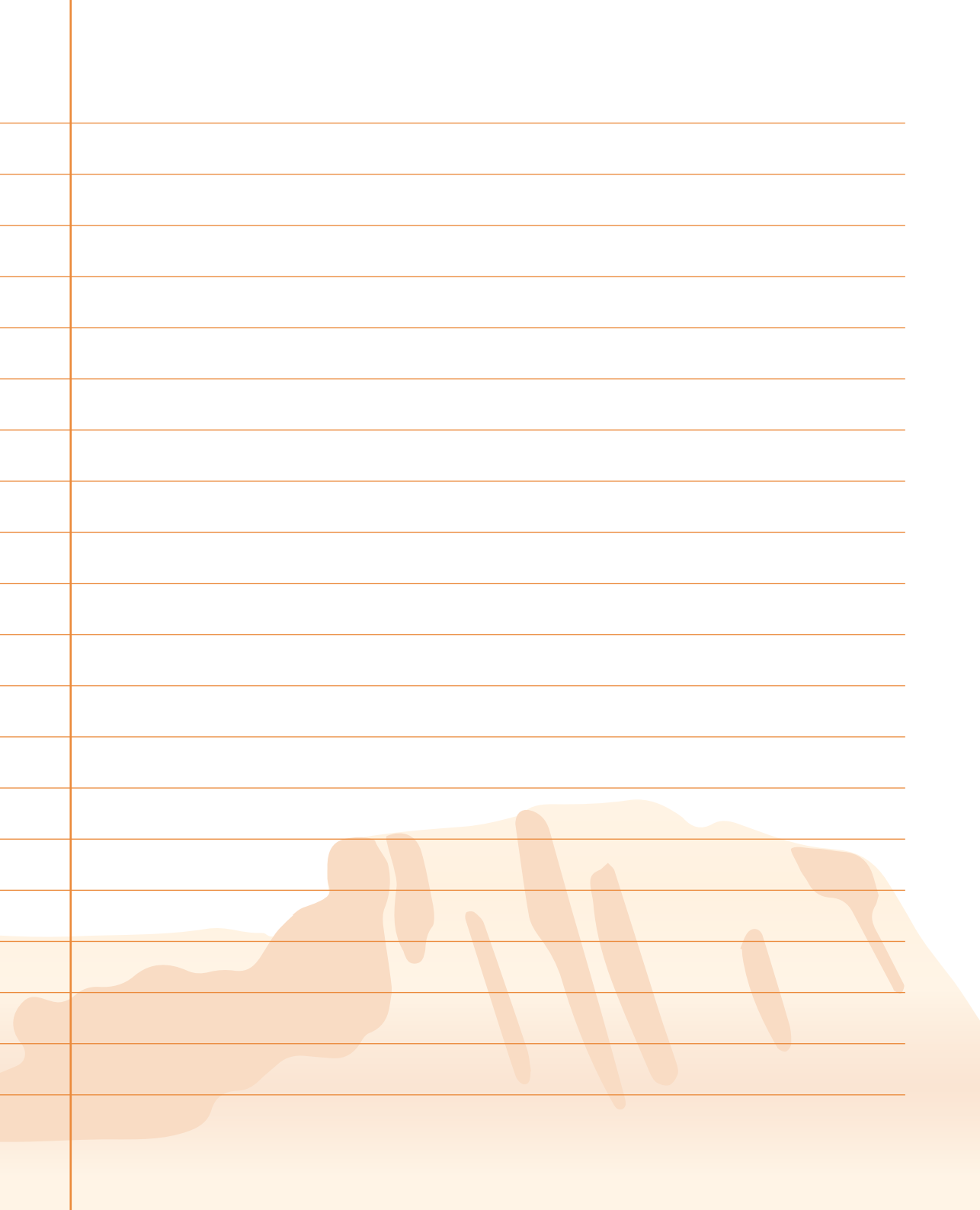
When you're done reading the book, you can keep asking questions. Try asking:

1. Would you want to be friends with the main character? Why or why not?
2. What was your favorite part of the book and why?
3. Stories are used within different cultures to explain natural phenomena. What phenomena might this modern telling of the Hero Twins be explaining (Chapter 16)? What could this modern take on a traditional Navajo story be saying about the modern world and / or society?
4. Marginalization means to treat a person, group, or identity as inferior or insignificant. How does marginalization show up in *Race to the Sun*?
5. **Thinking Further for Older Kids:** In an essay he wrote for the journal AICL, Michael Thompson, of Muscogee Creek Nation, has criticized *Race to the Sun* because he feels that Rebecca Roanhorse "fails to observe traditional boundaries that normally protect cultural narratives from appropriation." Appropriation is when someone uses a story or art form from a culture they don't belong to without permission to do so.

What do you think of Thompson's criticism of *Race to the Sun*? How are stories told and shared in Indigenous cultures? How might you find out more about Navajo culture to better understand both Roanhorse's approach to writing and Thompson's critique?







THINGS YOU CAN CREATE:

## **A FIELD OF KNIVES SETTING DIORAMA**

WHAT IS VISUAL LITERACY?

Visual literacy is the ability to read and write, and create visual images. We use visual literacy to understand the world around us and connect with other people. We can read a note left for us and write a message back, adding a smiley face. We interpret visual cues and we leave visual cues for others with words and pictures.

ACTIVITY

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In Chapter 31, Nizhoni and Davery need to walk through a swamp full of sharp reeds as one of the trials to the Sun. Nizhoni has a smart idea, which is to cover themselves with mud to protect themselves from the sharp reeds. In this activity, you will make a diorama to show the difficult landscape that Nizhoni and Davery had to walk through as part of their journey.

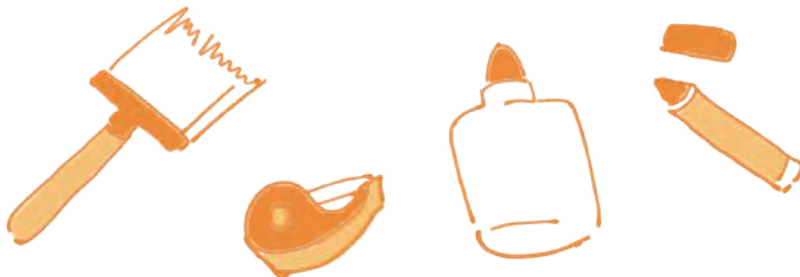
MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Empty cardboard box, about the size of a shoe box
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Rocks and twigs collected from outside
- Colored construction paper
- Pencil crayons, markers, or paint

- Optional: Popsicle sticks, toothpicks or twigs, playdough or clay

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ensure the box has an opening. You may wish to cut off the top to open up the "sky" and make it easier to reach in.
2. Inspired by the setting described in Chapter 31, draw, colour, or paint a background for your setting on the inside back of the box.
3. Draw, colour, or paint the ground for your setting on the inside bottom of the box.
4. Draw and cut out the lake, reeds, and other aspects of nature.
5. Decorate the diorama by gluing twigs, rocks, and plastic trees, if you have them .
6. You may wish to add Nizhoni and Davery, covered in mud. How might you make them stand up on your ground? Popsicle sticks or something straight and stiff can be glued onto the back of paper figures and held upright in a clay or playdough base.



## REFLECTING AND SHARING ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE READ: **NAVAJO TACOS**

Sharing our reflections with others helps give what we learned new and deeper meaning and invites more discussion outside our immediate family groups. This helps connect what we have read and discussed to our own life. In addition to reflecting on the book itself, consider reflecting on your experience reading it and using this reading kit. Reflecting on what you liked and didn't like about this experience can help understand how everyone in your family likes to read and learn, which may influence the way you read your next book together!

Consider asking yourself:

- What worked best for me when I used the Family Reading Kit and read the book?
- What didn't work so well?
- What's next? What would I do differently or the same?

### ACTIVITY ---

Eating and making food together is another great way to learn about culture and family. Share your favourite family recipe with someone else and discuss similarities and differences in technique and ingredients.

#### Taco Dough:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup warm water

#### Chili Mixture:

- 1 pound ground beef (or protein of choice — even tofu)
- 1 (15-ounce) can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 (1.25-ounce) package chili seasoning, or whatever spices you like
- vegetable oil for frying
- toppings you like on tacos (cheese, sour cream, guacamole, green onions, jalapenos, etc.)

#### Instructions

1. Mix flour, baking powder, and salt together in a large bowl. Pour in water, stir dough until just combined. Cover with plastic wrap and let rest, about 15 minutes.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add ground beef or other protein, cook and stir until browned, about five minutes. Drain off grease. Stir in pinto beans, diced tomatoes with their juices, and chili seasoning until well-mixed. Simmer until chili flavours combine, 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Grease your hands lightly with oil and pinch off a piece of dough about the size of a baseball. Press it with your palms into a flat circle, about four inches in diameter and half an inch thick. Repeat with remaining dough.
4. In a deep fryer or large saucepan, heat about two to three inches of oil. Fry dough rounds in batches until well-browned, puffy, and cooked through, two to three minutes per side. Drain on paper towels.
5. Divide fry bread among serving plates while still hot. Spoon chili mixture on top and add any toppings you would like!

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY DIGITAL LIBRARY eRESOURCES:

Access these resources and more for free with your Library card! Need help? Contact the Library at 403.260.2600.

### **World Book Online for Kids**

Learn more about almost any topic you can think of with World Book Online for Kids. This resource is like an interactive encyclopedia with articles, pictures, and videos on many topics, including information about the Navajo people.

[calgarylibrary.ca/world-book-online-for-kids](http://calgarylibrary.ca/world-book-online-for-kids)

### **Treaty 7 Language Books**

Want to know what your favourite animal is called in Cree? Find out in Treaty 7 Language Books produced by local Indigenous writers and artists for the Library.

[calgarylibrary.ca/treaty-7-books](http://calgarylibrary.ca/treaty-7-books)

### **Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada**

Find out the history, culture, and traditions of Indigenous people across Canada. Created by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society in conjunction with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Metis Nation, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, and Indspire, this resource features Indigenous voices describing their own histories.

[calgarylibrary.ca/indigenous-atlas](http://calgarylibrary.ca/indigenous-atlas)

## EXTERNAL RESOURCES:

Watch this touching 14-minute video about a young Navajo girl and her family from National Geographic: [calgarylibrary.ca/natgeo-navajo](http://calgarylibrary.ca/natgeo-navajo)

Learn about Navajo string games and find out the significance of this winter activity through these two resources.

[calgarylibrary.ca/thefancynavajo](http://calgarylibrary.ca/thefancynavajo)

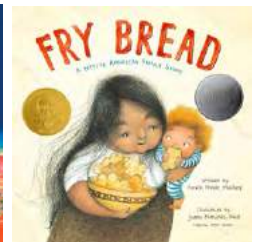
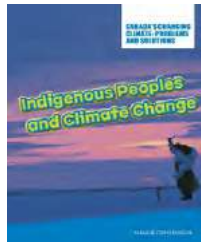
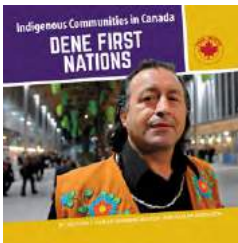
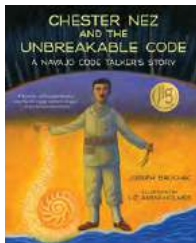
[calgarylibrary.ca/navajocode](http://calgarylibrary.ca/navajocode)

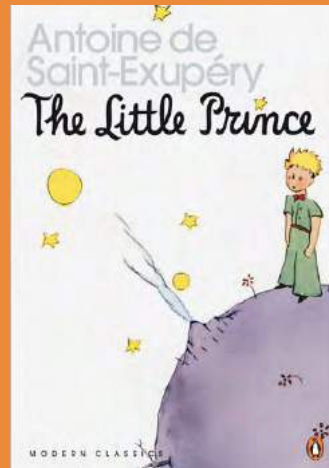
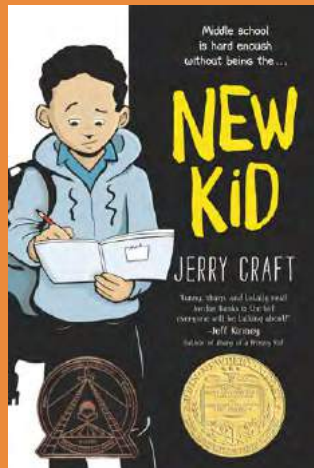
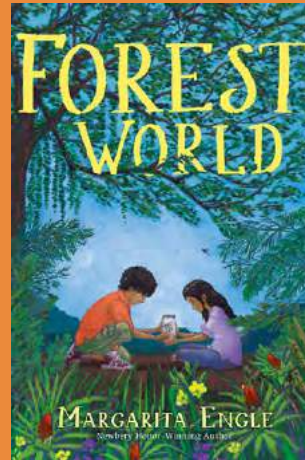
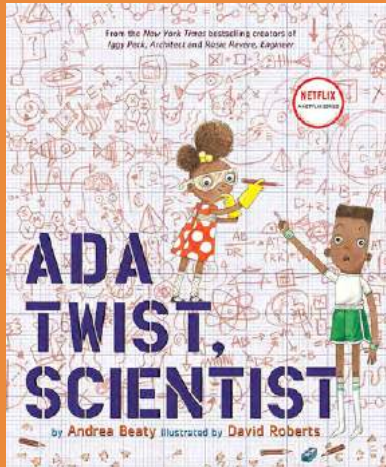
The University of British Columbia has compiled a list of lesson plans and resources suitable for elementary and junior high students to learn about Indigenous Peoples of Canada: [calgarylibrary.ca/ubc-indigenous](http://calgarylibrary.ca/ubc-indigenous)

## FURTHER READING

If your family enjoyed *Race to the Sun*, you'll want to check out these related titles at your Library location or in this booklist at [calgarylibrary.ca/if-you-liked-race-to-the-sun](http://calgarylibrary.ca/if-you-liked-race-to-the-sun):

- *Chester Nez and the Unbreakable Code: A Navajo Code Talker's Story* by Joseph Bruchac
- *Dene First Nations* by Heather Hudak
- *Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change* by Marla Tomlinson
- *Go Show the World: A Celebration of Indigenous Heroes* by Wab Kinew
- *Oral Traditions and Storytelling* by Anita Yasuda
- *First Laugh: Welcome Baby!* by Rose Ann Tahe
- *Solider Sister, Fly Home* by Bo Flood
- *Fry Bread* by Kevin Noble Maillard
- *Aru Shah and the End of Time* by Roshani Chokshi
- *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* by Kwame Mbalia





## CHECK OUT ALL OF THE 2022 FAMILY READING KIT TITLES

[calgarylibrary.ca/family-reading-kit](http://calgarylibrary.ca/family-reading-kit)