

# My Butterfly Teacher

## A Big Day Out in the Schoolyard

Designed to be experienced in Spring.  
Incorporates the Grade 3 Alberta Program of Study.  
Easily adaptable to other seasons and grade levels.



### Human Camera

pg 4

In partners, find that "picture perfect" spot in the schoolyard

4-5

### Opening Circle

Feelings as Weather check-in &  
Land acknowledgement



### Gratitude

Storytime! Cate the caterpillar

5-8

8-10

### Honouring Feelings

Boom Chicka Boom &  
Storytime! Cate the chrysalis



### Cairn of Caring

Honouring feelings around  
the COVID-19 pandemic

11-12

13-14

### Where's my Caterpillar?

Help Cate save her little brother caterpillar from the hungry birds!



14-16

### Seeing with New Eyes

Storytime! Cate emerges & Body Buddies



16-18

### Active Hope

Storytime! Cate flourishes and flies



### Sit Spot

Find a special spot where you can draw or write about your unique gifts

18



19

### Acting it out

Move your body and act out the 4 phases of Cate's life cycle



### Talking Circle

Share our learnings: how can a butterfly be our teacher?

20

# My Butterfly Teacher

*My Butterfly Teacher is full-day lesson plan that can be delivered in any schoolyard. It helps students connect to [The Butterfly Cycle](#) through a series of imaginative and engaging activities. Throughout the day, students will follow the adventures of Cate the Caterpillar as she grows up, becomes a chrysalis, and then emerges as an adult butterfly. By connecting to gratitude and learning to honour the difficulties of the COVID 19 pandemic, students will see how growth and transformation are possible, even (and especially) after experiencing great challenges.*

## Program Details

**Grade Level:** Created for Grade 3. Easily adapted for K-6.

**Season:** Spring, summer, and autumn

**Location:** Outside, in the schoolyard

### Potential Benefits and Skills:

- Connection to place
- Emotional wellness
- Understanding multiple perspectives
- Personal growth and well-being

### Curriculum Connections to Alberta Programs of Study – Grade 3

- Science
  - Animal Life Cycles (Alberta Education, 1996)

### Optional Pre-Program Activities

- Order a caterpillar larvae kit to set up in the classroom. This will help students connect in a very real way to the life cycle of a caterpillar. Kits can be ordered from Butterfly Wings N' Wishes [here](#).
- Watch this [video](#) of the life cycle of the Mourning Cloak Butterfly and/or this [video](#) showing what happens inside a chrysalis.
- Show students pictures of the Spiny Elm Caterpillar and the Mourning Cloak Butterfly. Find pictures using a Google Image search.

- Download the [Stoney Mobile Dictionary](#) to your mobile device. Practice saying the following words in the Îethka (Stoney Nakoda) language:
  - Ahopach (ah-HOE-puhch): Respect
  - Mîthûgan" (mee-THUHN-gan): my younger brother

## Children's Books that Connect to Theme

### **Caterpillars and Butterflies**

- *Ten Little Caterpillars* by Bill Martin Jr. (2011)
- *Waiting for Wings* by Lois Ehlert (2001)
- *A Butterfly is Patient* by Dianna Hutts Aston (2011)

### **Honouring our Emotions**

- *The Shadow Elephant: A story about emotions* by Nadine Robert (2020)
- *The Color Monster: A Story about Emotions* by Anna Llenas (2018)
- *My Heart Fills with Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith (2016)
- *My Heart* by Corinna Luyken (2019)
- *The Heart and the Bottle* by Oliver Jeffers (2010)
- *Ishi* by Akiko Yabuki (2016)

### **Îethka Language Books**

- *Ne Îethka Makochî Chach = This is Our Home* by Mînî Thnî or Trudy Wesley (2019)
- *Âba Wathtech Înâ Mâkoche = It is a Good Day, Mother Earth* by Sheri Shotclose (2019)
- *Watâga Wîyâ: A's, Â's & B's ze yuthpe îkiyabich = Grizzly Bear Woman Teaches the A's Â's & B's* by Tatâga Thkan Wagichi or Trent Fox (2019)
- *Îyâ Sa Wîyâ Wahogu-kiybi Cha = Red Mountain Woman Receives a Teaching* by Red Mountain Woman or Tina Fox (2019)

### **Additional Resource**

- *Butterflies of Alberta* by John Acorn (1993)

## Pre-program Prep

- Read [The Butterfly Cycle](#) on the Thimbleberry Learning website. In this program you will be taking your students through a series of activities that will help them connect to the four phases of the Butterfly Cycle: (1) gratitude, (2) honouring feelings, (3) seeing with new eyes and, (4) active hope. You will find the rationale behind this approach, as well as guidance around helping students honour their feelings in this section of the website.

## Materials Needed

- An object to represent a caterpillar in the *Where's my Caterpillar* game (a ball or a rock or a pinecone would work)
- Students' reflective/nature journals, writing utensils, and sit pads
- An item that can be used as a talking stick for the final Talking Circle.

## Lesson Plan

### Opening Large Group Activity

#### Human Camera

- *Divide students into partners. Have one partner be the photographer, the other the camera. Have the camera close her eyes. The photographer will guide her to a “picture perfect” view and tap her shoulder to “take a picture”. These can be done as “close ups” by bringing the camera close to an object, or as “wide angles” by giving the camera a wide view. As the photographer taps on the camera’s shoulder, she opens her eyes, takes in the view for several moments, then closes them again. The photographer continues to find two additional views for two additional photographs. Partners switch roles, and the new photographer does the same: guiding the camera to 3 different spots, tapping his shoulder to take 3 different pictures.*

### Opening Circle

#### Weather Report

- Do you ever notice that sometimes your feelings match the weather? What might that mean?
  - *Compare feelings to today’s weather*
    - What might it mean to feel cloudy? Sunny? Rainy? Cold? Stormy?
  - Do your feelings ever feel different than the weather?
    - Sad on a sunny day?
    - Cheerful on a dreary day?
- Let's do a weather check-in together. *Invite students to share their current state by using a weather term.*

#### Land Acknowledgement and discussion

- *If your students are prepared to offer their own land acknowledgement, invite one of them to do so here. If not, you can remind them that the land on which you are learning today is the traditional territory of several different Indigenous communities, including the Îlethka (Stoney Nakoda), the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the Tsuut'ina. This is also the traditional home of many Métis people. They have lived here in a very close relationship to this land for many, many, many generations.*
- One of the important values taught by Îlethka elders is respect.
  - What does the word respect mean to you? *Honouring relationships with others. This could include respect for people as well as respect for the earth and other animal and plant species.*

- Let's learn the word for respect in the Îlethka language. It's a fun word to say, "ahopach" (ah-HOE-puhch). Let's say it a few times together: ah-HOE-puhch.
- The importance of respect shows up in the Îlethka language – in how they refer to all of their different family members.
  - Does anyone have a younger brother? To show respect, the Îlethka have special words for different relationships in their families. They have a different term for older brother and younger brother. They refer to a younger brother as "mîthûgan" (mee-THUHN-gan).
- We can show respect in the way that we speak. We can also show respect, "ahopach" (ah-HOE-puhch), in the way that we act.
  - What are some ways we can show respect for one another in our class? *We listen to one another. We share. We speak in a respectful way.*
- Today we will have the chance to practice showing respect, or "ahopach" to one another.

## Phase 1: Gratitude



### Storytime *Cate the Caterpillar*

#### **Section One: Caterpillar and Gratitude**

*Read to your students this first section of the interactive Cate the Caterpillar story. Throughout the story, keep everyone active by doing the described actions (in italics), or actions you come up with on your own.*

I'd like to tell you a story about Cate the Caterpillar.

It was a beautiful early June morning in Calgary.

The Savannah Sparrows were chirping and trilling in the tall grass that led down into the coulee.

*Students chirp and whistle*

A Downy Woodpecker was busy pecking a hole into the trunk of an aspen tree to make space for a nest.

*Students hold hand up to face and use nose to "peck" the tree (hand)*

The green aspen leaves shimmered on their long stems as a light breeze fanned past. Students do “jazz hands” – representing the trembling aspen leaves.

How do you feel on mornings like this?

Express **gratitude** for the joys of a June morning: signs of life all around, new leaves on the trees, birds singing, sun shining. Life is good and one’s heart is often full of gratitude.

What are you **grateful/thankful** for today?

- What did you see in your Human Camera today? Does anyone have something to share about that experience?
- How does your heart feel when you’re feeling thankful? Does it feel Open? Free? Happy?

*If you did not start the day with the Human Camera activity, ask more generally what students are feeling grateful for. If they are hesitant to respond, some prompts might include: clean water to drink, fresh air to breathe, classmates to learn with, the chance to learn outdoors, etc.*

On that beautiful June morning, a large dark butterfly landed on a nearby tree to feed from the sap that was seeping down the side. She flitted from tree to tree and then landed on an aspen leaf and laid her eggs.

- Have you ever seen a butterfly egg before? What do you think it might look like? How big do you think it might be?  
*Allow students to respond with their thoughts.*

These butterfly eggs are small and round – shiny and golden. About the width of your pinky finger.

*Ask students to pinch the tip of their pinky finger with the opposite hand, to see how big the butterfly eggs are.*

Butterflies don’t just lay one or two or even five at a time like Robins do, they lay a huge bunch of little eggs. Let’s count her eggs together (by 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s – whichever they are learning to do, until you reach 35 or 36 eggs).

She has laid 35 (or 36) beautiful golden eggs in tidy rows on the top of the leaf. Inside each egg, a teeny, tiny caterpillar was beginning to form.

*Let’s be teeny, tiny caterpillars, all curled up inside of our egg. Crouch down low with arms curled over your head.*

It will take about ten days before the caterpillars emerge from their eggs.

*Let’s count by 2s all the way to ten. 2,4,6,8,10 Days!*

Cate the caterpillar’s little black head hatched from the top of her egg.

*Let’s all curl up really tight and jump out of our egg. Pop!*

She and all of her 34 (or 35) siblings started crawling away from their eggs and munching on the yummy aspen leaves.

*Let’s pretend we’re munching the leaves. Bring hands toward mouth and smack your lips as if eating.*



Cate and all of her siblings stuck close together as they ate and ate and grew and grew. Cate helped her little brother Jake find the juiciest, greenest leaves to munch.

- Do you remember the word for little brother in the Îlethka language? Let's say it together: "mîthûgan" (mee-THUHN-gan).

Together, Cate the caterpillar and her little brother Jake ate and grew, and ate and grew.

*Let's pretend we're eating and growing, eating and growing. Munch and stretch, munch and stretch. Bigger and bigger!*

Caterpillars have very simple eyes. Cate and Jake weren't able to see colours or shapes, but they could see the difference between light and dark. These eyes are all they need to do what a caterpillar needs to do. And what is that, you ask? Yes, they need to eat and grow, eat, and grow.

*Let's pretend we're eating and growing, eating and growing. Munch and stretch, munch and stretch. Bigger and bigger!*

Even though they were growing, they were still pretty small. They're caterpillars after all. And caterpillars make a wonderful snack for many different birds. One morning a White-crowned sparrow landed on a branch very near to where Cate and Jake were munching away. The sparrow was hungry and loved to eat little caterpillars. It was a good thing that Cate and her siblings all stayed near one another. When they sensed the sparrow flying near, they all began to shake and vibrate together – scaring that sparrow away. Staying safe. For now.

*Let's shake and vibrate all together to scare away that sparrow!*

Cate and Jake and their brothers and sisters might be small, but they are powerful when they work together! And as they continue to eat and grow, eat and grow, they also grow pointy spikes all over their bodies. One late afternoon, when they were 6 days old, a Black-capped Chickadee flew nearby, looking for a juicy caterpillar for his new baby sleeping in a the nest. He got close to where Jake was munching away. Cate crawled closer to warn him of the coming bird, when suddenly the chickadee turned quickly and flew away. Once he saw those spikes on Jake's back, he decided he'd better find a better snack for his new baby; he did not want to risk her being poked by a spiky caterpillar.

*Show me your poky pointer fingers and poke away that chickadee that's flying near. Poke fingers into the air. "Stay away from me, Mr. Chickadee!"*

Do you think Cate and Jake were feeling **grateful** for the spikes that protected Jake from Mr. Chickadee? Yes!

After Cate and Jake and their brothers and sisters were done munching and growing, munching and growing, they needed to find a safe place to pupate.

*Pupate!? What does it mean to pupate? Does anyone know?*

Yes – that means they are going to find a place to begin their great transformation. Are Cate and Jake and their brothers and sisters going to go on being caterpillars forever? No! They have something amazing to experience. And they need to get started!

Cate and Jake crawled down the trunk of the great aspen tree together, **grateful** for the tree that had fed them and helped them to grow and went out in search for the perfect place to hang out for a little while.

*Let's crawl down the trunk of the tree and start looking for the perfect place for our great transformation to begin...Crawl crawl crawl.*

- Invite the students to crawl like caterpillars and stand in a circle for the next part of the program.  
*Crawl, crawl, crawl...takes a long time when you're a wee little caterpillar. They can travel 10-50 metres to find a place to pupate. What a long journey!*

## Phase 2: Honouring Feelings



### Large Group Activity

#### **Boom Chicka Boom with Feelings (adapted from Macy & Brown, 2014)**

Boom Chicka Boom is a familiar call and repeat song. Sing this together with your students several times. The first time, sing it normally. Each additional time, sing it in a different style. Begin with fun and silly styles (such as hiccup, underwater, or opera), and then move on to singing with different emotions (such as joyful, disgusted, angry, excited or other ideas from the class). The more dramatic flair you give, the more enjoyable it will be!

I said a Boom Chicka Boom  
I said a Boom Chicka Boom  
I said a Boom Chicka Rocka Chicka Rocka Chicka Boom  
Uh huh  
Oh yeah  
One more time \_\_\_\_\_ style

When play is complete, invite the students to gather in to hear the next part of our story.

## Storytime

### Cate the Caterpillar

#### Section Two: Honouring Feelings and Chrysalis

Now, where did we leave off with the story of Cate the caterpillar and her little brother ("mîthûgan") Jake? Does anyone remember? Yes – they had crawled down the trunk of the aspen tree and were looking for a place to hang out for a while. To pupate! How do you think Cate and Jake know where to go or how to even start this process? They don't have parents to guide them. Maybe you could call it instinct? It's kind of mysterious! They just know. Isn't it amazing?

Dark gray clouds started to fill the sky. The warm, sunny spring days that Cate the caterpillar, and her little brother ("mîthûgan") Jake enjoyed as they ate and grew, ate and grew in the aspen tree, were giving way to several stormy ones. Although caterpillars can't hear, they can sense sound vibrations in the air with their antennae. Cate and Jake sensed the thunder and felt the day growing darker.  
*Let's make the sound of thunder by standing up and stomping on the ground all together.*

In the coulee, not far from the aspen tree, there was a small creek. The water ran lazily over large stones. Raindrops started falling from those storm clouds and joined the water in the creek as it began to rush more quickly.  
*Let's make the sound of running water. Shhhh-rrrr-shhhh-rrrrrr-shhhhhh*

Finding shelter under the leaves of a willow that stood next to the creek, Cate the caterpillar, and her little brother ("mîthûgan") Jake began crawling up one of the many, many willow branches.  
*Let's climb with the little caterpillars, up, up, up the willow branch.*

The willow branch forked. Cate the caterpillar crawled up in one direction, and her little brother ("mîthûgan") Jake crawled down in another. They each found a strong twig, protected from the rain by a canopy of leaves and began to spin an anchor pad out of silk. This would be the place where they would hang, shed their skins, and pupate. This is where they would change from a caterpillar into a chrysalis.  
*Let's pretend we're spinning our anchor pad out of silk by making a knitting motion with our hands.*

That anchor pad will have to be strong enough to hold the weight of the caterpillars' bodies while they hang upside down. Cate the caterpillar finished weaving her anchor pad and fixed it to the twig.  
*Let's fix that anchor pad to the twig – and make sure it's on there nice and tight. Motion upward with your hands, as if tapping the anchor pad into place above you.*

Cate the caterpillar couldn't see her little brother ("mîthûgan") Jake, down there on his twig, but she knew he was doing the very same thing she was. Even though she was all

alone, she knew that she had everything she needed inside her to go through with her great transformation.

The rain continued to fall on the willow, but Cate was kept dry under the canopy of leaves. She attached her back legs to the silk pad, let go of the twig with her other legs, and hung there, in the shape of a "J".

*We can't hang upside down right now like Cate the caterpillar is, but let's see if we can form our bodies into the shape of the letter "J". We can raise our arms into the air, as if hanging onto the twig, and drop to our knees, in the shape of a "J".*

Now there was just one more thing that Cate the caterpillar needed to do. That spiky caterpillar skin that had been so useful in protecting her from hungry birds needed to go. On that rainy afternoon in June, hanging upside down from that willow, Cate the caterpillar bravely let her caterpillar skin go – almost as if she were taking off a jacket. *Let's take off our caterpillar jackets. Pretend you're unzipping your coat and dropping it to the ground.*

When that spiky skin had dropped to the ground below, a chrysalis was all that remained, hanging from that willow in the rain.

*Has anyone seen a chrysalis before? Do you know what it looks like?*

The chrysalis is the colour of a dried-up leaf. It is hard like a shell, and it has some spiky bits on the outside too.

*Does it still look like a caterpillar? Does it look like a butterfly yet? What do you think happens inside that chrysalis? Where did Cate the caterpillar go? Is she still inside there?*

Inside the chrysalis, Cate the caterpillar dissolved into a great caterpillar soup. Her caterpillar body became liquid, but some important parts of her, that knew how to turn that liquid into a butterfly, remained. They are called the imaginal discs!

*What do you think it would feel like inside that chrysalis right now? Do you think that it is easy for a caterpillar to turn into a butterfly? Close your eyes for a minute and see if you can imagine what it feels like inside that chrysalis. What did you imagine?*

It was getting late. It was getting dark. The storm had passed through, and the rain let up as the sun set. Cate the caterpillar's chrysalis hung on the willow all that night. In the morning the sun came up and the sparrows began to sing. The grasses, and the leaves on the willows and aspens, began to dry as the sun rose higher. A squirrel scampered up an aspen tree and jumped across to a nearby poplar, looking for his breakfast. Cate the caterpillar's chrysalis hung from that willow branch, motionless. So still. Waiting. It hung for two days, two nights, three days, three nights. The chrysalis darkened but stayed motionless. And only after 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 days and 10 nights, did a small crack begin to appear in Cate the caterpillar's chrysalis.

*What do you think will happen next?*

## Large Group Activity

Invite students to sit in a circle.

### **Feelings Discussion around Pandemic**

- We've all been through something really difficult over the last few years with the COVID-19 pandemic. It has stretched us and challenged us in so many ways. And it still is, in many ways, too.
- Just like it can be helpful to feel grateful, it can be helpful to honour the feelings we have about things we have lost, about some of the difficult challenges we face, or other things we might feel sad about.
- Some of us have missed out on seeing cousins or grandparents. Or just hanging out with friends. Others may have missed being on sports teams. Many of us missed out on being here at school for several months. Some may have parents who have lost jobs. Some of us may have even lost someone we were close to.

### **Cairn of Caring (adapted from Macy & Brown, 2014)**

- I'm going to give you a few minutes, in silence, to think of something that has been difficult for you during the pandemic. Something you've missed, or something you are sad about. As you think about this, I want you to wander around the schoolyard, find a small object that represents this thing for you, and bring it back to the circle. This could be a small rock, a twig, a stick, pinecone, or even a handful of grass. *Give the students several minutes to find an object that helps them connect to a difficult aspect of the pandemic.*
- When everyone is back seated in the circle, object in hand, explain how this process will unfold:
  - I want you to look down at the object in your hand. Really feel it with your fingers. This represents that thing that has been difficult for you because of the pandemic.
  - You might find that you start to feel sad or upset as you hold it and think about it. That's OK. In fact, that is perfectly normal. Lots of times we may not like thinking about it because we don't want to cry or feel sad. Just for a few minutes, today, we are going to let those feelings of sadness come up if they want to. We're going to honour those feelings.
  - We can only feel sad about something when we really care about it. Your feelings of sadness are proof that you really care.
  - Together, we are going to build something we'll call a Cairn of Caring in the middle of our circle. I will go first and demonstrate how we'll do this. One-by-one, we'll place our objects in the centre of the circle. *Walk toward the centre of the circle, and place your own object on the ground, beginning to build the cairn. As you do,*

*describe what your object represents, the feelings it brings up for you. As an example you could say:*

- *"This leaf represents how much I have missed seeing my sister during the pandemic and it makes me feel lonely"*
- *As you walk back to your place in the circle, invite the students in the circle to say aloud:*
  - *"We hear you"*
- *You are all now invited to, one-by-one, bring your object to the centre of the circle, describe what it represents and how you feel about it. When you are finished, we will all offer our support by repeating, "we hear you". If students are reluctant to participate, you can reassure them by honouring their own reluctance, and inviting them to participate silently.*
- *After everyone has participated, invite them to look at the cairn they have built together.*
  - *Does anyone have something to share about this experience?*  
*"Allow children...to have their own experience – and to share only what they want to share afterwards" (Macy & Brown, 2014, p. 226).*
    - *...about putting your object in the centre?*
    - *...about having your classmates say that they heard you?*
- *Even though our experiences have been different, we have all been going through something difficult. Not just our class, or our school. But everyone across our whole city, our whole country. Even the whole world! It's not just your pain and sadness. It is felt by everyone on the planet. Still, some have suffered more than others.*
  - *What are some ways we can support our friends who have been through difficulty? Who have lost something very special to them?*
    - *We might be tempted to tell them to cheer up or distract them with funny stories. Remind students of the story *The Shadow Elephant* if you have read it together as a class.*
    - *Sometimes, all someone needs, is to have you there to listen to them. For them to know that you hear them!*
- *Express gratitude for the students for the brave ways that they've shown up for this activity. If they were unable to participate in ways that you might have wanted/expected, take the time to honour that; talking about and feeling our feelings in this way might be unfamiliar for them and that is important to notice and stay with for a moment.*  
*It can be important to weave the theme of gratitude throughout the day. Don't be shy about modeling expressing gratitude, especially after having honoured more difficult feelings.*

## Large Group Activity

*After having honoured difficult feelings, it is important to engage the students in an activity involving movement. At this point, play this organized game “Where’s My Caterpillar?” or engage the students in another form of active play.*

### Where’s my Caterpillar?

In the style of Where’s My Egg or Red Light/Green Light

- Choose one student to be Cate the Caterpillar. She will stand at one end of the play space.
- All of the other students represent hungry birds. They stand at the other end of the play space.
- Cate the caterpillar places the object that represents a caterpillar on the ground between her and the rest of the class. She then takes 2 large steps away from the object, away from the rest of the class. This object represents her little brother (“mīthûgan”) Jake the caterpillar.
- The object of the game is for the hungry birds to collect the object (Cate’s little brother, “mīthûgan” Jake the caterpillar), and return back to the start without Cate the caterpillar catching them in movement or in the act.
- Play starts when Cate the caterpillar turns her back on the rest of the class. The hungry birds begin to move toward the object (Cate’s little brother, “mīthûgan” Jake the caterpillar). When she calls out, “Where’s my little brother (“mīthûgan”) Jake?”, the other students (hungry birds) must freeze. After she calls out, she spins around.
  - If the object is still there, she searches for any movement in the other players. Anyone who is moving is then “out” and must sit on the sidelines to continue watching the game.
- Cate the caterpillar turns back around, allowing the hungry birds to once again advance toward the object (Cate’s little brother, “mīthûgan” or Jake the caterpillar). When she calls out, “Where’s my little brother (“mīthûgan”) Jake?”, the other students (hungry birds) must freeze. After she calls out, she spins around.
  - If one of the hungry birds has captured the object, they must put it behind their back. All of the hungry birds place their hands behind their back so Cate the caterpillar won’t know which one of them has the object. When Cate the caterpillar spins around and sees that the object is missing, she must guess which of the hungry birds is holding it. If she guesses correctly, she wins. If not, she turns back around, and play continues.
  - Once one of the hungry birds has captured the object representing (“mīthûgan”) Jake the caterpillar, and Cate the caterpillar has not guessed which one of them has it, they attempt to get back home by walking backward in that direction with their hands behind their backs.

- o Play continues until Cate the caterpillar guesses who is holding the object, or until the hungry birds make it back to the start with the object in hand.

When play is complete, invite the hungry birds and Cate the Caterpillar to fly back to your learning space to hear the next part of the story.

### Phase 3: Seeing with New Eyes



#### Storytime *Cate the Caterpillar*

##### **Section Three: Seeing with New Eyes and Emerging as Butterfly**

Where did we leave off our story of Cate the caterpillar? Oh, yes, she had shed her caterpillar skin and for ten days and ten nights, hung really still, in the willow as a chrysalis. She didn't look like a caterpillar anymore and she didn't yet look like a butterfly. But, just beneath the surface of the chrysalis, you could start to make out the golden outline of a butterfly wing.

The first day of summer had come and gone in the coulee. A baby magpie peeked over the edge of his nest and squawked hungrily, waiting for his mother to bring a juicy worm or wriggly spider for breakfast.

*Can you squawk like a hungry baby magpie?*

I don't know if it was that noisy magpie that did it, but just then, a long crack formed in the surface of Cate the caterpillar's chrysalis. From that crack, you could see the edge of a fuzzy butterfly wing beginning to wriggle.

*Let's all be a butterfly, still folded inside her chrysalis, just starting to wriggle and stretch. Hold your arms, folded, close to your chest, and begin to wriggle and shake gently.*

As Cate began to shake and stretch, her chrysalis opened up like a door, and with her little new butterfly legs, she pushed herself out, and hung on to that willow twig for dear life, not exactly sure what had just happened!

*Let's all unfold our butterfly bodies and hang on to the twig while we wait to see what happens next.*

It took a little while for Cate to realize what was happening. Her body felt so different. And what were these big, beautiful additions to her back? She felt a little bit tired and decided to rest there for a while until she could figure out what to do next. Over the next few hours, her crumpled, wet wings began to straighten and dry out.

*Can you start to slowly stretch out your butterfly wings? Bring your thumbs to your arm pits and make a few, small flying motions with your wings.*



Not only did Cate find that she had wings, but something just as amazing was happening. She could see all around her – the most amazing shapes and colours. Nothing like the poor vision she had as a caterpillar. Her new butterfly eyes let her see in all directions – and in more colours than you or I can even imagine! And what do you think was one of the first things Cate spotted when she was hanging there, waiting for her wings to dry?

*Let the children guess what Cate spotted with her new butterfly eyes.*

Just below Cate, on a nearby twig, was another chrysalis, just beginning to crack open. She watched quietly as her little brother ("mîthûgan") Jake broke free of his pupa and began to look around, just as surprised as she had been. He didn't look anything like he had the last time she had seen him. Somehow, though, she knew it was him. And she didn't feel so alone anymore. There was mîthûgan Jake, clinging to the twig. She knew that he had been through the very same thing she had.

*Let's put on our butterfly wings again and take a minute to look around at the butterflies sitting beside you. We've all earned our wings and we all have new eyes. What are we ready to do together?*

## Large Group Activity

### Body Buddies

- There are some ways that our human bodies are similar to other living things, and some ways that we are different. I'm going to call out the name of a living thing. You're going to pretend to be that living thing. Ready?
  - Caterpillar! *Students crawl on the ground like caterpillars*
  - Freeze! I want you to find the caterpillar nearest to you. See if you can think of one thing that our bodies have in common with caterpillar bodies. *Give the students a few moments to come up with some answers. Then call on a few of the caterpillars to offer up commonalities.*
  - Frogs! *Students hop around like frogs*
  - Freeze! I want you to partner up with the frog who is nearest to you. See if you can think of one thing that our bodies have in common with frog bodies. Try to think of something different from what you came up with before. *Give the students a few moments to come up with some answers. Then call on a few of the frogs to offer up commonalities.*
  - Continue with this pattern by calling out different species such as coyotes, magpies, aspens, dandelions, etc. *The students might find it more challenging to find commonalities with plants. You can remind them that trees have limbs and leaves have veins. It might surprise you the kinds of things they come up with!*

Invite your students to choose their favourite animal and move like that animal back to your outdoor learning space to hear the end of the story.

## Phase 4: Going Forth with Active Hope



### Storytime

#### Cate the Caterpillar

#### Section Four: Going Forth with Active Hope – The Flying Adult Butterfly

Where were we with our story? Oh yes, Cate the caterpillar... Wait! Can we call her Cate the caterpillar anymore? No – she's now a butterfly. Cate the butterfly was hanging onto the willow twig that her chrysalis had hung from. She was waiting, feeling her wings drying and starting to stretch them out.

*Let's stretch out our brand-new butterfly wings again.*

With her new butterfly eyes, she could see the brilliant colour patterns on the top side of her wings. There was a buttery-yellow border on the outside edge. Next to that yellow border, it looked as if someone had dipped a paintbrush into a pot of periwinkle blue paint and had placed perfect, periwinkle paint splotches up and down the outside of her wing. The biggest area of her wings – closer to her body – was a rusty brown colour that shone red in the sunlight as she stretched her wings out wide.

*Take a look behind your shoulders and with your new butterfly eyes, admire the colour pattern on your wings.*

Cate is a Mourning Cloak butterfly. Mourning Cloaks are one of the most common butterfly species we'll see in Calgary – and one of the biggest. Why do you think she is called a Mourning Cloak butterfly?

*Some students may understand the name as "Morning Cloak".*

The word "Mourning" in this case does not refer to the start of day or "Morning". Does anyone know another meaning for the word "mourning"?

*Allow students to give their answers*

Mourning, when spelled this way, with a "u" after the "o", means showing grief or sadness for someone who has died. The British had a tradition where they would wear black for many weeks to show sadness for the death of someone they were close to. The scientists who named the Mourning Cloak butterfly were British. The dark wings on the Mourning Cloak butterfly reminded them of the dark coats that people wore to mourn their dead.

Cate, the Mourning Cloak butterfly, saw her little brother ("mîthûgan") Jake hanging from the twig below. Her wings had dried and straightened out. With all of the courage she had, she let go of the willow twig with her legs and headed straight for the ground.

Oh no! She was falling fast... Just before she hit the ground, her wings spread out wide and she took flight for the first time. She flapped and fluttered around the back side of the willow and then around the front until she found the right twig – she landed next to her little brother (“mîthûgan”) Jake.

*Let's all flap and fly and flutter.....and LAND on the twig.*

“Mîthûgan” Jake looked over at Cate the butterfly as she landed beside him. His wings were still a little crumpled and wet. He saw how Cate was able to fly but didn't feel ready to try himself. Seeing what she was able to do, though, gave him courage. He hung on to the twig for dear life as he waited for his wings to straighten and dry.

Cate the butterfly was so happy to see that Jake had made it out OK. She realized, though, that she hadn't eaten anything in over a week, and she was soooooo hungry. She looked upstream and saw a stand of Aspen trees. They looked familiar! There was a small hole in one of the trees. A Downy Woodpecker flew out of the hole. As soon as he did, Cate the butterfly heard a tiny chorus of hungry, chirping baby Woodpeckers waiting inside. She knew just how they felt!

*Let's be the baby woodpeckers, waiting in their nest for lunch. Can you chirp like a group of tiny, hungry woodpeckers? Chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp.*

Not far beneath that Woodpecker hole, Cate the butterfly could see there was warm, golden sap running down the side of the aspen tree. She left her little brother (“mîthûgan”) Jake to dry out for a little longer and hopped off the twig. This time her wings spread out right away. What an amazing feeling it was to fly up the coulee, toward that golden sap.

*Spread out your wings and fly like Cate.*

As she flew, she spotted the woodpecker returning to the hole to feed his babies. As those babies quieted down, Cate the butterfly landed on the aspen's trunk, and sunk her proboscis into that delicious sap.

*Proboscis? What's a proboscis?*

Kind of like the butterfly's tongue, the proboscis is a tightly coiled tube, that the butterfly unwinds and extends to help her to eat. The proboscis helps her to reach deep down into flowers and drink the nectar, or to drink the sap from a tree, like Cate is doing.

*Let's extend one arm out in front of us, reaching far down into a tree, then curl your arm back toward your body. Then unfold it again to drink that sap, then curl it back up.*

Cate the butterfly hadn't realized just how hungry she was until she started to drink that golden sap. Her whole body filled with energy. After she had had her fill, and after she saw Mr. Downy Woodpecker fly out in search of more food for his young, she flew back to see how her little brother (“mîthûgan”) Jake was getting along. She flew around the front of the willow. She flew around the back of the willow. He was nowhere in sight! Maybe she was looking at the wrong willow. She flew back and forth across the coulee, searching, but could not find him anywhere.

*Let's fly left, fly right, fly up, fly down. Let's help Cate find her little brother (“mîthûgan”) Jake.*

Finally, she spotted him down in the mud beside the creek. He must have been awfully hungry too. She didn't blame him for heading down there to slurp up some of that juicy mud. She went and joined him. They unfurled their proboscises into the mud and slurped the afternoon away.

*Slurp, slurp, slurp.*

Now that they had their fill, and were feeling full of energy, what do you think they did next? Other than eating, what do butterflies do? Do you have any ideas?

*Listen to their ideas.*

Brave little butterflies,  
who started out as caterpillars hatching out of eggs on the top of an aspen leaf,  
who shed their skin to pupate as a chrysalis,  
who came out of the chrysalis with new eyes, who learned to fly,  
now want to start the cycle of life all over again!  
Cate and Jake flew and fluttered and flapped across the coulee, in search of a mate.  
*Let's fly and flap and flutter and freeze!*

A few days later, after finding a mate, and dressed in her finest Mourning Cloak wings, a beautiful reminder of all that she had gone through, Cate the butterfly landed on a leaf of an aspen tree and laid a clutch of eggs. A big bunch of 42 eggs this time. And the adventure starts again.

*Let's give a big round of applause for these two brave little caterpillars who transformed into beautiful butterflies and started the cycle of life all over again! Clap clap clap!!*

## Sit Spot

See the [Sit Spot Guide](#) on the Thimbleberry Learning Website

*Before sending your students to their sit spot, engage them in a brief discussion:*

- Each of us is unique. What does that word mean?
- No two of us are the same. Not even identical twins. You all have something special to bring to the world. A voice and a gift that is only your own. We are all shaped by the experiences we go through, and these experiences can help us to discover our own unique gifts.

*Invite students to write these prompts in their journals before they go.*

In your journal, in words or pictures, respond to one of these prompts:

- What do you imagine is your unique gift to the world?
- OR Write a letter or draw a picture for a future student at this school – they haven't been born yet. Show them how living through a pandemic has transformed you.

## Large Group Activity

### ***Embodying the Four Phases of the Butterfly Life Cycle***

- We've been through quite a journey today with Cate the caterpillar and her little brother ("mîthûgan") Jake. We've followed them from egg, to caterpillar, to chrysalis, to adult. Let's act out again the four phases of Cate the Caterpillar's life cycle.
  - **Grateful growing caterpillar:** Invite the students to once again pop out of their egg and crawl around like hungry caterpillars. Remind them of their grateful hearts at this stage of the process. They were so thankful to have so many yummy leaves to eat. Munch and stretch getting bigger and bigger!
  - **Chrysalis and Honouring Feelings:** Next Cate hung in a "J" shape, shed their caterpillar skin became a chrysalis. Invite them to make their bodies into a "J" shape again and to dissolve. Remind them that when we take the time to honour the difficult things we go through, we can be transformed.
  - **Emerging Butterfly and Seeing with New Eyes:** Now you can start to wriggle and stretch and unfold your big, beautiful, butterfly body out of the chrysalis. Keep hanging on to that twig while your wings straighten and dry out. Look around with those big new butterfly eyes. The world looks somehow new and different when you see it as a butterfly.
  - **Flying Butterfly and Active Hope.** Stretch out those new butterfly wings let's fly together. Slurp up all the food you can find with that curly proboscis. Fly and flap and flutter and lay your little clutch of butterfly eggs on the top of a leaf. You brave little butterflies are full of hope and ready to start the whole cycle again.
  - Now let's fly together back into our circle. Lead the students back to your outdoor learning space, asking them to fly behind you in single file until you have formed a large circle. Invite the students to sit down.

## Talking Circle

- As we go through difficult things, we often learn things that help us to help others.
  - In the story of Cate the caterpillar, she showed her love and respect to her little brother by how she spoke of him as the Îethka do, as “mîthûgan”. How else did she show respect (“ahopach”) to him?
    - She looked out for him and tried to protect him. She went through her great transformation first, so she had learned how to help him.
- We've all been through a lot of difficult things over the last few years as we've learned to live with COVID-19. It hasn't always been fun or easy. And lots of times it felt like it would never end. But we've been through it together. And because we've been through it, we might be better able to help others.
- Pass around the talking stick and invite students to answer the following question:
  - What is something you hope to remember about today? Or
  - How can a butterfly be our teacher?

## Post-program Activities

- Go for a walk in the school community to look for butterflies. The Mourning Cloak is one of the earliest species to emerge in spring, you can spot them as early as the end of March. Look for butterflies in empty lots, unmown areas, and anywhere where you see a variety of trees and flowers. Unsure of what you're seeing? Check out [this online guide](#) of butterflies of Alberta.
- Plant a butterfly friendly area in the schoolyard. Here's some inspiration from the David Suzuki Foundation: <https://davidsuzuki.org/take-action/act-locally/butterflyway/schools/>

# The Butterfly Cycle



# The Butterfly Cycle



## Desktop Butterfly Cycle

*Invite your students to create their own desktop Butterfly Cycle.  
This can help them map their own inner experience  
as they navigate life and learning.*

1. Review the four phases of the Butterfly life cycle with the students: caterpillar, chrysalis, emerging butterfly, flying butterfly.
2. Invite students to colour the Butterfly Cycle.
3. Invite students to write in the outer circle, how they relate to each phase of the cycle.

### **Examples:**

- a. **Focusing on the learning process, and developing a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006):**
    - i. Caterpillar: New learnings. **I'm grateful!**
    - ii. Chrysalis: Struggling or making mistakes: **I'm stuck!**
    - iii. Emerging butterfly: New understandings: **I get it!**
    - iv. Integrated learning: **I use it! Or I share it!**
  - b. **To borrow from Joanna Macy's 4-fold spiral from *The Work That Reconnects*, focusing on how honouring emotions can lead to active hope (Macy & Brown, 2014):**
    - i. Caterpillar: Gratitude: **I'm grateful!**
    - ii. Chrysalis: Honouring feelings: **I feel it!**
    - iii. Emerging butterfly: Seeing with new eyes: **I'm not alone!**
    - iv. Flying adult: Going forth with active hope: **I share my hope!**
4. Invite students to find a small object to use as a marker (a small rock works well).
  5. Invite students to keep their Butterfly Cycle close at hand throughout the school day:
    - a. Tape the Butterfly Cycle to the top of the desk, or
    - b. Laminate the Butterfly Cycle so it stays intact as they move to different desks or tables.
  6. Throughout the day, students can place their marker on the phase of the cycle that matches how they are doing. This can be a spontaneous movement, one that does not need to happen in concert with the other students. Alternately, it can come from a teacher prompt.

### **Examples:**

- a. When they feel stuck working on a difficult assignment, they may want to place their marker on the chrysalis. This can be a reminder that difficulties are a normal part of the learning process.
- b. Once they have a breakthrough of some sort, they can shift the marker to the emerging butterfly.
- c. Remind the students to start each day with gratitude.



## Key Learnings

- A recognition that our experience changes and shifts. No one stage lasts forever.
- It can be helpful to start our day with gratitude.
- Difficulties in life and learning are normal. We can stay with and honour those difficult moments.
  - Failure and mistakes are an important part of the learning process.
  - Honouring difficult emotions is important for well-being
- The difficulties we face often prepare us for great transformation.
- New insights into our connectedness with each other and all of life can come as we honour our difficulties.
- Experiencing gratitude, going through difficult times, and recognizing our interconnectedness, can help us to face the future with active hope.
- As we go through our own difficulties, we are better prepared to help others.

## References

- Acorn, J.H. (1993). *Butterflies of Alberta*. Lone Pine Publishing.
- Alberta Education. (1996). *Science kindergarten to grade 6 (Grade 3) [Program of studies]*. <https://education.alberta.ca/media/159711/elemsci.pdf>
- Aston, D.H. (2011). *A butterfly is patient*. Chronicle Books.
- Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House Publishing Group.
- Ehlert, L. (2001). *Waiting for wings*. Harcourt.
- Fox, T. (2019). *Îyâ sa wîyâ wahogu-kiybi cha = Red mountain woman receives a teaching*. Durville.
- Fox, T. (2019). *Watâga wîyâ: A's, â's & b's ze yuthpe îkiyabich = Grizzly bear woman teaches the a's â's & b's*. Durville.
- Gray Smith, M. (2016). *My heart fills with happiness*. Orca Book Publishers.
- Jeffers, O. (2010). *The heart and the bottle*. HarperCollins Children's.
- Llenas, A. (2018). *The color monster: A story about emotions*. Little, Brown and Company.
- Luyken, C. (2019). *My heart*. Dial Books for Young Readers.
- Nature North. (n.d.) *Mourning cloak butterflies*. Nature North Zine.  
<http://www.naturenorth.com/spring/bug/mcloak/Fmcloak.html#:~:text=and%20widespread%20butterflies,-,LIFE%20CYCLE,for%20females%20to%20flutter%20by>

Macy, J., & Brown, M. (2014). *Coming back to life: The updated guide to the work that reconnects*. New Society Publishers.

Martin, B. (2011). *Ten little caterpillars*. Beach Lane Books.

Robert, N. (2020). *The shadow elephant*. Enchanted Lion Books.

Shotclose, S. (2019). *Âba wathtech înhâ mâkoche = It is a good day, Mother Earth*. Durville.

Wesley, T. (2019). *Ne îethka makochî chach = This is our home*. Durville.

Yabuki, A. (2016). *Ishi. Pow!*