

# I AM RIVER

Level :

Preschool

Time :

45 minutes - 1 hour

## Driving Question :

Who is the Saint Lawrence River, and how does this river interact with us and with the other animals living in and along its waters?

## Big Idea :

The Saint Lawrence River is an amazing entity that encompasses many ecosystems, and supports many animals, plants and people. We are a part of this system, and our actions impact this River.

## Curriculum connections :

Building self-awareness, harmonious relations with others and the environment, communication, discovery of the world.

## Objectives :

Get familiar with Saint Lawrence River and the plants and animals within. Understand that people have an impact on the River.

## Vocabulary :

Plant and animal names, glacier, sea, river, lake, freshwater, saltwater, community, estuary, ocean.

## Materials :

- *I am River* book
- Ice cubes, cups
- Whale plushies with sound

## Lesson Procedure

### Introduction

Before the book reading, introduce the concept : we are reading a book about the Saint Lawrence River. Perhaps some of you have seen this River, since it runs through Quebec, which is the province you live in! Ask students what they think might be in this River.

### Book Reading

*This section will be separated by pages. For each two-page spread, read the book and then do the activities described here.*

### Page 1-2 : Hello River

**Action** : ask students to say and wave hello to the River.

**Questions** :

- Has anyone seen a River (show of hands)?
- Has anyone seen the Saint Lawrence River? Note that Old Port and any bridge out of Montreal counts.

### Page 3-4 : Glacial Melt

**Action** : Ask students to look closely at the page.

**Questions** :

- Point to the glacier and ask what is this? What is it made of?

**Explain** : A long long long time ago, this area was covered in ice. Eventually, the ice melted and turned to water. This became the Saint Lawrence River.

**Experiment** : Have a container with an ice cube, and ask students what they think will happen to it while you read. Tell them they've made a *hypothesis* - an educated guess.

## Page 5-6 : Great Lakes & Thousand Islands

### Questions :

- Has anyone been to a lake (show of hands)?
- Has anyone been to the ocean (show of hands)?
- What did you notice about the water at the lake?
- How was the water different between the lake and ocean?

**Explain :** Lakes have freshwater - that means it is not salty. Oceans have salty water - that's why if it gets in your eyes, it hurts! The Saint Lawrence River runs from freshwater lakes all the way to the ocean, so it has both salty and freshwater sections.

**Action :** Observe the page.

**Question :** What animals do you see?

**Explain :** Some animals only like salty water and some only like freshwater, so different parts of the River have different animals.

## Page 7-8 : Estuary

**Explain :** We just talked about how the Saint Lawrence River has freshwater and saltwater sections. The estuary (enunciate) is where they mix!

**Action :** Have everybody mix with their arms (roll arms over each other) and say "estuary" back at you a couple times.

**Explain :** Because the water is mixing, there are a lot of nutrients! This means the estuary has a lot of animals living in it.

**Question :** What animals do you see here?

### BELUGA

**Action :** Introduce your friend, Beluga. Have everyone say hi.

**Explain :** Beluga is a kind of whale, and while most of them live in the Arctic, some live here in the Saint Lawrence River!

**Question :** What do you notice about Beluga?

- Small fins, white, small tail, big bump on head.

## **BELUGA (continued)**

**Explain** : The bump on Beluga's head is called a "melon" and it helps him talk! The melon is a big lump of fat that makes Beluga's voice louder, and helps him make stranger noises than you and I can make.

**Action** : Play the Beluga sounds, and then have students try to make the same noises.

**Explain** : It's hard for us to make those noises, but belugas do it all the time thanks to their melons. In fact, belugas love to make noises, it helps them find each other, find food, make friends, etc.

## Page 9-10 : Gulf of the Saint Lawrence

**Explain** : Now we have arrived all the way at the ocean! The water here is salty, and there are different animals than in the freshwater lakes and mixed estuary.

**Action** : Have students look closely and observe what they can see in the water.

**Question** : What is the big animal on the bottom right?

## **HUMPBACK WHALE**

**Explain** : That is another kind of whale, but not a beluga. In the ocean part of the River, we can find bigger whales.

**Action** : Introduce your friend, Humpback.

**Question** : What do you notice about humpback?

- Long fins, big tail, no melon.

**Explain** : Humpback doesn't have a melon, but he still loves to make noises. Humpback whales are the "Singers of the Sea."

**Action** : Play humpback song, ask students to sing along. Tell them it was lovely.

**Explain** : Humpbacks don't sing to find food, but they use it to find each other! Singing is very important to them.

**Question :** What other animals do you notice?

- Fish, crabs, birds.

**Action :** Everyone stands up, ask them to put their hands on the side of their faces and act like fish, then make crab claws, then squawk like seagulls, then sit back down.

## Page 11-12 : Montreal

**Question :**

- What is a community?
- Who is in your community?
- Where is this? Do you recognize anything here?

**Explain :** Community is the people, animals and places that you care a lot about, and that care about you.

## Page 13-14 : Gratitude

**Question :**

- Why might you be thankful towards the River?

**Explain :** Not only does the River benefit animals, it gives us water to drink, to grow our plants and food, to swim in, etc.

**Action :** Have students say “thank you” to the River.

## Page 15-16 : Damage Done

**Action :** Observe the page closely.

**Question :**

- What do you see in the water?
- Why might the River not like have garbage in its water?
- Why is the whale sad?

**Explain :** Garbage can get wrapped around wildlife, making it hard for them to swim. Sometimes, they accidentally eat it and get very sick. The whale is sad because the boat is very loud. Remember that whales love to talk and sing. When it is very loud, they can't hear each other!

## Page 17-18 : Damage Repair

### **Question :**

- What are the people on this page doing?
- What can you do to help the river?

**Explain :** Putting garbage in the garbage is good, but even better is to make less garbage in the first place! Bring a tupperware instead of a bag, wear hand-me-down clothes, etc. Also, just going home and talking about this River with your family will help others take care of it too!

## Page 19-20 : What I have Always Done

**Explain :** By helping the River, they also help all the animals that live within, and they help themselves and their families, since we all rely on this River.

## Page 21-22 : Goodbye River

**Action :** Have students say and wave goodbye to the River.

**Question :** Are you a friend of the River now?

**Action :** Thank the students for listening so well. Check in on your ice cube (it will have melted) and remind them that that is how the River was formed, a long long time ago.

**The End! Ask if there are any questions.**

