

Educators' Guide



Tasha Hilderman is a children's author and a registered member of the Métis Nation of Alberta in Canada. She comes from a family known for hospitality and storytelling, a legacy she carries forward in her life and work. *Métis Like Me* is her debut book. Tasha lives with her family in Lloydminster, Alberta — Treaty Six territory and the homeland of the Métis.



Risa Hugo is an illustrator and author who spent most of her childhood in Japan and graduated from Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Canada. She is the illustrator of *Why Are You So Quiet?* and *Leopold's Leotard*, and her picture book *Shadow* marks her authorial debut. Risa lives with her family in Vancouver, British Columbia.

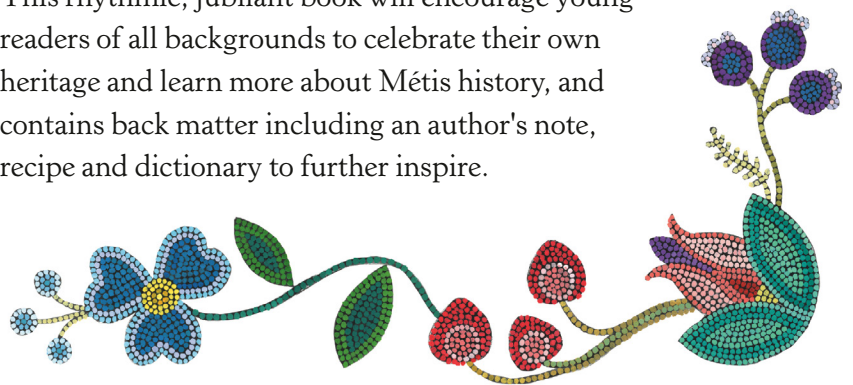
This guide was created by **April Waters**, a Red River Métis educator from Treaty One territory in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She has been a classroom teacher, an Indigenous Education teacher and a school-based administrator for almost twenty years. She is currently an administrator of Indigenous Education and provides instructional support and professional development for educators in bringing authentic Indigenous perspectives, culture and history into their classrooms.

Métis Like Me

Whether or not you're Métis, there's so much to experience and learn about this amazing Indigenous culture – take a picture book journey into Métis crafts, music and cooking with friends who love to share.

Are you Métis like me? A group of children of Métis descent share and explore all the ways they celebrate and experience their heritage — enjoying traditional foods like bannock bread and Saskatoon berries; crafting with beads; sharing stories, dance, music and songs. Each child shares a different way they enjoy honoring their backgrounds and weaving parts of the rich tapestry that makes up Métis culture. One child, though, has grown up disconnected from their history, and can't join in with the others in the same way. But they soon see it's never too late to learn, celebrate or become a part of a community in which Métis and non-Métis alike can discover the richness of an often-overlooked culture.

This rhythmic, jubilant book will encourage young readers of all backgrounds to celebrate their own heritage and learn more about Métis history, and contains back matter including an author's note, recipe and dictionary to further inspire.



Discussion Questions

If your students are unfamiliar with the name Métis or the people it refers to, it's important to discuss what it means before reading this book. *Métis Like Me* is a great opportunity for students to explore concepts of identity and what identity might mean for people when they do not know or understand who they are. It is also important to learn about how the process of colonization and events in history have interrupted that knowledge.

As you read and learn about different aspects of Métis culture throughout the book, encourage your students to think deeply about what makes them unique as individuals, but also what they might have in common with this Indigenous nation.

After-Reading Discussion Questions

1. What are some aspects of Métis culture that are shared in the book?
2. Think about your own cultural or family background. If you are not of Métis descent, what are some things that you might have in common with the Métis Nation? If you have Métis heritage, what traditions depicted by the book have you experienced?
3. In the middle of the book, there is a page that talks about how one of the characters is Métis, but they do not know anything about their culture or who they are. Have you ever had that experience? How do you think that would feel?
4. Towards the end of the book, there is a page that states, "We are strong! We are resilient! We are still here!" Why do you think Tasha Hilderman wrote that? What does it mean to you?
5. In the author's note, Tasha Hilderman shares how so many Métis people have grown up disconnected to their identity, their community and their history. She says that the Métis were known as "the forgotten people." Why do you think this happened?



Activities

1. Watch some of these videos to learn more about the Métis nation:
 - *The Métis People: A Kid's Version* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7akCot015JQ>
 - Métis Minute (Manitoba Métis Federation playlist) - https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQh2MwNjojI8OvPoZyia_1aUGLEdtVFV
 - *Who are the Métis?* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvulIRnPE3Y>

Using a map of Canada, try to map out the Métis homeland/territory. Be sure to highlight the Red River, which is where the Métis Nation was created. Share what you have learned about the Métis with your school community.

2. Two different First Nations, the Dakota and the Nehiyawak (Cree), gave the Métis nation the nickname of the “flower beadwork people.” They received this name from the unique floral beadwork patterns on their clothing and other items. Do some research for examples of Métis beadwork and examine the different features. Connect with your closest Métis local and see if your community has a Métis beadworker that you can welcome into your classroom or school for a beading workshop.
3. Christi Belcourt is an internationally renowned Métis artist. Her beautiful artwork hangs in many important spaces across what is now known as Canada. Her paintings mimic the floral beadwork of the Métis and highlight the Nation’s connection

to the land and water. Research Belcourt’s art pieces and study them. Using visual arts tools available (paints, markers, etc.), try to use her art as an inspiration to create your own pieces.

4. Music and dance are things that are common to different nations and cultures. The book talks about how fiddle music and jigging are both important parts of Métis culture. Visit these links to learn more:

- <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/metis-minute/fiddle>
- <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/metis-minute/jigging>

Connect with your closest Métis local and see if your community has a Métis fiddler and/or jiggers that could come in to teach the class about their gifts. Do you notice any patterns in the dance steps? How does the Red River Jig tell a story about the Métis People?



5. The book talks about making bannock as a part of the Métis culture, but it is actually something that did not originate with Indigenous nations. You can find further information about bannock here:

- <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/bannock>
- <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/metis-minute/traditional-foods>

How did colonization impact the diets of Indigenous nations? How has bannock become a staple in Indigenous communities? Use the bannock recipe at the end of the book and try it out as a class!

6. At the back of the book, Tasha Hilderman discusses the Michif language. She shares that it is classified by UNESCO as critically endangered. Explore what it means when a language is identified in that way. Why do you think Michif is critically endangered? Explore the vocabulary list on that page. What do you notice? Following appropriate cultural protocols, contact the Métis local closest to your school and see if they can connect you with a Michif speaker.

7. The Métis Nation was born on the prairies of what is now known as Canada. While Métis harvesters hunted and gathered many animals and plants from the land, one animal was central to the nation: the buffalo. The Métis sustainably harvested and used the buffalo for everything that they needed to survive. More information can be found here: <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/metis-minute/buffalo-hunt>

Research the Métis nation's connection to the buffalo and share what you discover with your school community.

8. At the end of the book are the lines, "We are strong! We are resilient! We are still here!" The Métis have had to protect themselves, their identities and their communities a number of times throughout history. Put students into groups to research different events of resistance that have taken place. Some examples could be the Battle of Seven Oaks, the trial of Guillaume Sayer, Red River Resistance or the Battle of Batoche. Each group can present their research and together the class can develop a timeline of events in Métis history. Be sure to include the names of some important leaders, such as Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont.

