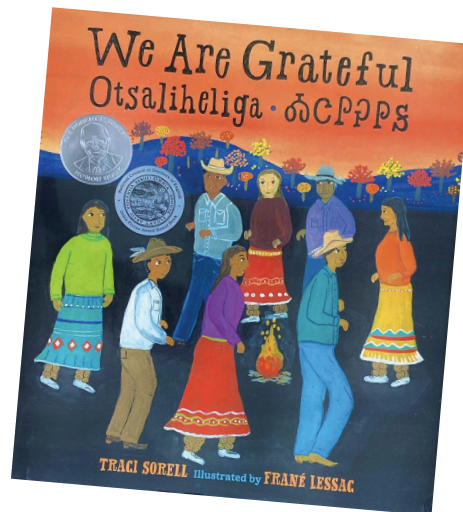


We Are Grateful

Written by Traci Sorell
Illustrated by Frané Lessac
Charlesbridge, 2018



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The Cherokee word *ostaliheliga*, pronounced oh-jah-LEE-hay-lee-gah, is used to express gratitude. The word returns throughout this colorful book written by Traci Sorell and illustrated by Frané Lessac. Sorell was born and raised in the Cherokee Nation. She is a culture bearer and still participates in her tribe’s celebrations.

The author’s notes explain how important gratitude is in Cherokee culture. *We Are Grateful* teaches us that gratitude is not just an annual event, but is practiced throughout the year in special ways honoring simple things. Each season brings new celebrations and experiences to be grateful for and new chances to learn about the Cherokee people in this award-winning book.

In the fall we learn about the Great New Moon Ceremony and the Trail of Tears. We learn the Cherokee word for autumn and for grandmother.

In winter we learn to be grateful for snow and family while discovering traditional foods and customs. We also learn the Cherokee words for winter and lullaby.

In the spring we see that gratitude is expressed for ritual planting customs and traditional crafts. We add the Cherokee words for spring and strawberries to our vocabulary.

In summer, catching crawdads, playing traditional games, and celebrating the Green Corn Ceremony and Cherokee National Holiday are the focus of gratitude. The author shares two more Cherokee words—this time, the words for summer and history.

The return each season of “ostaliheliga” provides a pattern that can be used to encourage students to improvise on instruments or with their voices.

We are Grateful includes definitions for things unique to the Cherokee Nation, as well as an explanation of the Cherokee syllabary and alphabet for readers unfamiliar with them. Pronunciation guides accompany each Cherokee word, helping teachers and students learn and pronounce them correctly.

Orff Schulwerk teachers can use these words to create ostinati or other rhythmic patterns. The

return each season of “ostaliheliga” provides a pattern that can be used to encourage students to improvise on instruments or with their voices.

Throughout the book, Lessac’s simple, bright illustrations reflect the colors of each season while creatively depicting contemporary Cherokee children and families involved in typical and traditional activities. I say “ostaliheliga” to Sorell and Lessac for teaching us, with a child-friendly, engaging story, about our Cherokee friends and neighbors and their culture. ■

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Vision/Pathways Forward

Educators have been asked to redesign and transform their pedagogies in response to educational trends and world events. How has your vision of the Schulwerk evolved, especially in light of the pandemic and recent racial discourses in education? What pathways forward do you see for the Schulwerk and music education overall? Look for the Fall 2022 issue, “Visions and Pathways Forward,” to reflect on these topics and more!

