# STANDING ABOVE THE CLOUDS

## Exploring "He aha lā he kūkulu? What is Your Foundation?"

### Objective:

Participants will explore the concept of foundations (kūkulu) in both the chant "He aha lā he kūkulu?" and their own lives. They will discuss the significance of foundations in social-emotional learning and indigenous cultures, reflecting on how these foundations manifest in their experiences and how they relate to current global and personal uncertainties.

### Materials:

- Copies of the chant "He aha lā he kūkulu?"
- Whiteboard and markers
- Paper and pencils
- Chart paper and markers
- Audio recording of the chant (optional)

### Preparation:

- Prepare copies of the chant for each participant.
- Set up the audio recording for playback (optional).
- Arrange the space for group discussion.

### Introduction (10 minutes):

#### Greeting and Warm-up:

- Emphasize starting with aloha, a spirit of love, peace, and compassion that underpins Hawaiian culture and this lesson.
- Begin with a warm welcome, acknowledging the people featured in and those who made the film "Standing Above the Clouds" possible. Express gratitude for their efforts in highlighting the importance of foundations, both physical and metaphorical, in our lives.
- Introduce the concept of kūkulu (foundations) and explain that today's lesson will focus on understanding and discussing what foundations are important in their lives.

#### Reading the Chant:

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- Distribute copies of the chant "He aha lā he kūkulu?" to each participant.
- Read the chant together as a group. If possible, play an audio recording of the chant to help participants hear the correct pronunciation and rhythm.

## Discussion (15 minutes):

### Understanding the Chant:

- Discuss the meaning of each line in the chant. Ask participants to reflect on what each foundation represents in Hawaiian culture:
    - He mauna! A mountain!
    - He ʻahu! A temple!
    - He pōhaku! A rock!
    - He kanaka! A person!
- Explain that a kūkulu (foundation) can be a person, place, or thing that you aloha (love), care for, and respect deeply. When you have your worst day, where do you go? Who do you search for? What do you listen to?
- Highlight that in today's world, there are many uncertainties, but finding and grounding yourself in your foundations will make you resilient.
- Refer to the closing scene of the film "Standing Above the Clouds," where the chant begins slowly with a few voices and gradually grows louder and faster as more people join in.
- Discuss participants' reflections on that scene. How did it make them feel? What did they notice about the power and unity of the chant as more people participated? How does this reflect the idea of kūkulu (foundations) in both individual and communal contexts?
- Ask participants to think about the foundations in their own lives. What are their mountains, temples, rocks, and people?

## Activity (20 minutes):

### Group Discussion:

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Provide each group with chart paper and markers.
- Have each group discuss and write down their answers to the following questions:
    - Who are the important people (kanaka) that form their foundation?
    - What activities or places (mauna, ʻahu, pōhaku) are important in their lives?
    - When do they feel most connected to these foundations?
    - Where do they feel their foundations are strongest?
    - How do these foundations support them emotionally and socially?

### Group Sharing:

- After 15 minutes, ask each group to share their findings with the class.
- Discuss common themes and differences among the groups.

## Reflection (10 minutes):

### Individual Reflection:

- Ask participants to take a few minutes to write down their personal reflections on what they learned about their foundations.
- Encourage them to think about how they can strengthen these foundations in their daily lives.

### Group Discussion:

- Bring the group back together for a final discussion.
- Ask participants to share any insights or thoughts they have about the importance of foundations in their social and emotional well-being.

## Closing (5 minutes):

### Review and Summary:

- Summarize the key points discussed during the lesson.
- Reinforce the idea that understanding and acknowledging our foundations is crucial for personal growth and emotional health.

### Closing Chant:

- End the lesson by reading the chant "He aha lā he kūkulu?" together once more.
- Thank the participants for their participation: "Mahalo nui loa!"

## Assessment:

- Participation in group discussions and activities.
- Individual reflection writings.

## Extensions:

- Ask participants to create a visual representation of their foundations through drawing or collage.
- Have participants research and present on another Hawaiian chant or cultural practice related to foundations and social-emotional learning.

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## Resources/Action Items:

- Sign MKEA petition
- Follow MKEA on insta
- Host a screening of SATC
- Donate to MKEA