Celebrating NAIDOC Week 2016; Songlines: The living narrative of our nation.

Songlines are recorded in traditional songs, stories, dance and art.

NAIDOC was celebrated this year at St Patrick’s School when students and staff welcomed Joey Williams and Catherine Mercer from Poornarti Aboriginal Tours.

This interactive day began with ‘A welcome to country’ said by the students. Joey spoke about Katanning and how it got its name. The students got to enjoy an Artefact display, some over 100 years old, given to hold and pass around.

Joey drew animals traditional style and explained their food use emphasising that Aboriginal culture is oral and visual; they learn through art, story and song. The students were then reminded of the six Noongar seasons which they had previously studied and showed an art piece he did that now stands in the Civic Centre in Denmark. The children were then led into a dreamtime story of the Emu, bush turkey and the formation of the Milky Way, with an art piece Joey had painted over 20 years ago.

Staff and students were mesmerised by paintings Joey did for each class that were a similar style to the paintings in the Carrolup exhibition which visited the Art Gallery last year. Joey was taught this style by his Aunty Bella Kelly whose family was part of the ‘stolen generation’ at the Carrolup Mission. Joey told how he used to sit on his aunty’s veranda and watch her paint.

The session concluded with students learning a traditional dance, with song and clap sticks.

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