Running a Trading Post Activity

Divide class into Native Americans and traders (approximately five Native Americans to one trader). Traders decide what goods they'll stock. Post prices from the Math at the Trading Post activity. Give students tokens of some kind to represent furs and merchandise. (If desired, hide the fur tokens around the room. Students acting as Native Americans can "hunt" for them.)

Let students exchange their tokens. Encourage them to consider which items they really need to live and which would be merely nice to have.

If desired, children can talk about their purchases after trading. They might discuss their feelings about doing business this way. What advantages does trading have over shopping with money? What disadvantages?

Ask students if they've ever exchanged goods or services to get something they wanted. You might mention that some stores still trade for certain items today. Children wanting to swap can find places to do so by looking in the Yellow Pages under Book Dealers-Used and Rare, Collectibles, Comic Books, and Sports Cards and Memorabilia.

(This idea comes from Two Nations, One Land by Will Leinicke and Marion Lardner.)