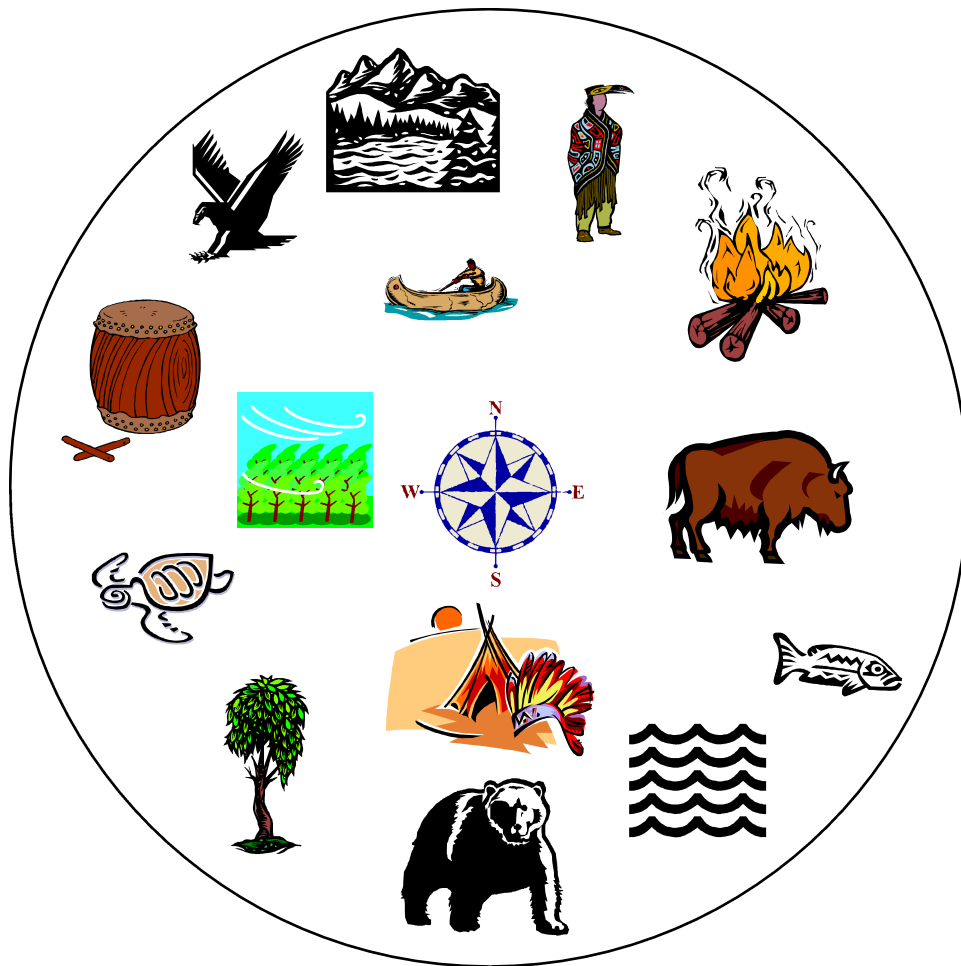


# All My Relations

## An Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Manual



THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA, INC.

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Developed by  
**Sandy Hill**  
 for The John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc.  
 Second edition by **Johanna Hildebrand** and **Liz Plett**

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To order copies of this workbook, or others in the series, contact the  
 John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc.  
 583 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1Z7  
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**The John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc.**  
**2004**

## **ALL MY RELATIONS**

### **An Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Manual**

**All My Relations: An Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Manual** was developed for The John Howard Society of Manitoba=s Basic Literacy Program. It contains 21 lessons concerning Native traditions and basic beliefs.

Although there are many Nations of Aboriginal People throughout Canada, this workbook will study the culture and traditions of the Plains Aboriginal people. The Elders that have been consulted for the writing of this workbook are of the Cree and Ojibway Nations and live in the Province of Manitoba.

Each of the lessons is followed by an exercise to build literacy skills and to learn the information found in the lesson.

This manual was developed to provide a basic understanding of Aboriginal culture. While anyone can benefit from this book, it is especially suited to low-level readers.

**All My Relations** is a term used by the Aboriginal People. When they say “all my relations” they are saying that they are related to everything that is alive and living on Mother Earth. Many Aboriginal prayers are ended using this phrase.

As a member of the Cree Nation, I wish to express my deep appreciation to the John Howard Society of Manitoba for giving me the honour of writing this workbook, and to the Elders for their guidance and direction in preparing this manual. Before you begin these lessons, it is important to remember to have an open mind. If we are closed minded, we are unable to learn.

Sandy Hill

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## **Lesson #1**

### **What will I Learn?**

This workbook on Aboriginal (ab-or-RID-ja-nul) culture will give you a better understanding of what Aboriginal people believe and what their traditions (tra-DISH-uns) are from long ago. These beliefs and traditions are often called “a way of life” by the Aboriginal people.

This workbook only begins to talk about the Aboriginal way of life. It does not cover all of the traditions of all Aboriginal peoples. If you want to learn more about what you have read in this workbook, it would be helpful to speak with an Elder.

In this workbook, we will study the beliefs and traditions of the Cree and Ojibway people. These are the biggest nations in the province of Manitoba.

You will read about the role of the women, children, men and Elders to help you understand what jobs these people have in the Aboriginal community.

You will find out about different uses of native medicines (MED-a-sinz) such as tobacco, cedar, sweetgrass and sage and find out what they mean. The Pow Wow, Smudge, Sweatlodge, Vision Quest, Sundance, Tobacco Offering, and the Sacred Pipe are ceremonies (SAY-ra-mo-neeZ) that you will read about in this

workbook.

Reading about the Medicine Wheel will help you understand the symbols or signs of Aboriginal culture.

You will learn the place of Aboriginal nations in the history of North America. You will learn about their struggle with the past and their future. The Aboriginal peoples have had many losses since the Europeans (yoo-ra-PEE-unz) first came to North America. Because of this, Aboriginal Peoples have had to find out and learn about their traditions for themselves. If you want to learn more about this history, an Elder will be able to help.

**Exercise #1**

Fill in the blanks. Look back to the lesson for the answers.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are often called “a way of life” by Aboriginal peoples.
2. In this workbook, you will study the beliefs and traditions of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ people.
3. To help you understand some of the symbols of Aboriginal culture, we will study the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Women, children, men and Elders have certain \_\_\_\_\_ in the Aboriginal community (kum-MYOO-nit-tee).
5. If you want to learn more about Aboriginal Culture, you should speak with an \_\_\_\_\_.

Name 4 ceremonies that will be discussed in this workbook.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Lesson # 2**

### **A Short History**

Aboriginal people have been called by many names. One of these names is Native Indians. When Columbus arrived in North America he thought he was in India. When he met the Aboriginal people, he called them Native Indians. Aboriginals have also been called First Nations people. They are called this because they were the first nations of people to live in North America. Cree and Ojibway people call themselves Anishinabe (a-nish-a-NOB-bay) which means “the people”.

There are many different nations of Aboriginal people. Each nation has a different language and different ceremonies. But they are all closely bonded to nature. The Aboriginal people and their traditions show a deep respect for the Earth, including the land, the water, the animals, the sky and the Creator who is at the centre of it all.

Many people came from other parts of the world to live in North America. The Europeans were one group of people who came. They brought their own culture which had a huge effect on the Aboriginal “way of life”. Their way of life soon took over the Aboriginal culture.



Missionaries (MISH-un-nay-reez) brought one type of change. They came to North America to tell the Aboriginal people about the Christian religion and convert them. Also, the army set up Reserves for Aboriginal people to clear space for settlers from Europe.

There were other changes. European government leaders made treaties with the Aboriginal people to get land, furs and other resources (REE-zor-siz) to help the settlers make a living. Laws were made to make peace between the Europeans and Aboriginal people. The church and government worked together to make residential (rez-i-DEN-shul) schools. Aboriginal children were forced to live and learn in these residential schools. They were taught Christianity and were told that their own beliefs and traditions were wrong. Aboriginal people were not allowed to speak their own language. When alcohol was traded for furs and meat, the health well being of the Aboriginal peoples suffered very much.

All of these things helped the Aboriginal people lose their traditions. But Aboriginal people today have found their early values and are helping themselves become a proud nation once again.

**Exercise #2**

Write a sentence using each word.

**First Nations**

---

---

**missionaries**

---

---

**reserve**

---

---

**culture**

---

---

**traditional**

---

---

**residential school**

---

---

**beliefs**

---

---

### **Lesson #3**

#### **What is Aboriginal Culture?**

The word culture means the many beliefs, food, art, language, clothing, ceremonies and ideas of a group of people. Aboriginal peoples have their own culture which has been around for a very long time. You will learn a little bit about the culture of the Ojibway and Cree peoples in this lesson.

The Ojibway and Cree used to live on the plains of Saskatchewan and Manitoba in houses called teepees. The teepees were made of buffalo skins and long poles. Each teepee had a small fire in the centre to keep it warm and to cook food. The smoke rose through the opening at the top of the teepee. The teepees could be taken down and carried with the people as they followed the buffalo.

The Cree and Ojibway people lived in friendship with nature. They had a respect for the land and all the wildlife. They believed they were equal with all living things on Mother Earth. The Cree and Ojibway wasted little. They knew where to find roots, herbs, leaves and fruits for a healthy diet. They also grew their own vegetables, herbs and spices.

The Cree and Ojibway people hunted buffalo and other animals. They shot deer, elk, moose and caribou with bows and arrows for meat, hides and tools. They

were good trappers and caught rabbits, muskrats, and beavers for fur. They were also good fishers. Each time an animal was killed, the hunter gave thanks to the Creator for the gift of its life.

The Cree and Ojibway made their clothes with animal skins. They traded their hides, furs and guiding skills to the Europeans for cloth, pots, knives, alcohol and other goods.

The Cree and Ojibway languages are only two of many Aboriginal languages. While many languages have died, Cree and Ojibway are two that have survived. The words in these languages tell us much about the culture and spirituality (spee-rit-chu-AL-it-tee) of the Ojibway and Cree peoples.

### Exercise #3

Unscramble the words from the lesson.

Can you match the unscrambled word with the correct picture?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
wbo nda rrwoa

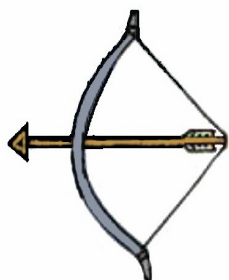
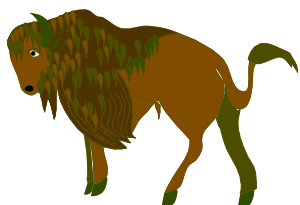
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
epeeet

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
loffuab

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
poearuens

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
hotmre hrtae

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
aseg



**Lesson #4**  
**The Role of the Woman and Child**

Everyone in the traditional Aboriginal family had a role to keep or a job to do. Everyone's role was equally important.

The role of the woman was the "life giver". Women were very important to help the Aboriginal community survive. In some Aboriginal nations, women were the leaders of the community. Aboriginal women taught the girls to cook, preserve food, and gather berries. They also taught them to skin and tan hides. The women built canoes, made teepees, and wove baskets. Women were honoured because they could give life. They were known as healers, elders and water-bearers. In the past, only the women were able to gather water for the clan. The Creator also honored the woman by giving her a moon time or monthly period by which to cleanse herself. Women were believed to be very powerful during their moon time.

This quote by an Elder shows how highly Aboriginal women were respected:

"We may possess the speediest horses, the strongest shields, and the fastest arrows, but when the hearts of the women are down then we truly have lost the battle."

Children were also equally important to the community. They were seen as gifts from the Creator who needed to be honored and cared for. To mistreat a child was not accepted. Children were included in all things so they could learn to care for themselves and respect others. They were taught that there were times to play, to work, and to show respect. Children were taught by example and by stories. These lessons were given to help the child have a good life as an adult.

When boys and girls reached puberty (PYOO-bur-tee) they were given names that were signs of their nature and abilities.

Here is a teaching called “Listen to the Children” that tells how children are to be respected.

Take a moment to listen today to what your children are trying to say.  
Listen today, whatever you do, or they won't be there to listen to you.  
Listen to their problems, listen to their needs, praise their smallest triumphs,  
and praise their smallest deeds.  
Tolerate their chatter, amplify their laughter, find out what's the matter,  
find out what they're after.  
Tell them you love them every single night, and though you scold them,  
make sure you hold them, and tell them, "everything's all right."  
If we tell our children all the bad in them we see,  
They'll grow up exactly how we hoped they would never be.  
If we tell our children, we're so proud they carry our name,  
They'll grow up without carrying unneeded shame.  
Take a moment to listen today, to what your children are trying to say.  
Listen today, whatever you do, and they will come back to listen to you.  
(Anonymous)

**Exercise #4:****Aboriginal Family Values**

Find the words in the word search. The words are across, down, forwards and backwards.

family	foundation	friendship	happy	harmony
home	joy	laughter	learning	love
nourishment	peace	protection	respect	sharing
strength	understanding	wholeness	lifegivers	men
healers	elders	children	nature	earth
women				

D	L	E	H	E	A	F	A	M	I	L	Y	E	P	S
R	O	L	A	A	E	O	B	W	J	E	A	V	W	O
E	A	G	P	R	Y	U	H	H	A	R	M	O	N	Y
T	I	R	P	T	D	N	H	O	M	E	F	L	O	L
H	J	O	Y	H	V	D	C	L	I	S	R	R	U	I
G	F	S	G	P	E	A	C	E	E	U	I	F	R	F
U	N	D	E	R	S	T	A	N	D	I	N	G	I	E
A	O	F	J	F	O	I	L	E	P	G	D	C	S	G
L	I	A	U	E	L	O	M	S	L	N	S	H	H	I
H	T	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	H	I	P	I	M	V
S	C	W	T	P	A	Y	P	L	A	N	U	L	E	E
R	E	H	T	G	N	E	R	T	S	R	T	D	N	R
E	T	O	N	A	T	U	R	E	W	A	I	R	T	S
D	O	I	N	L	T	C	E	P	S	E	R	E	D	O
L	R	H	W	O	M	E	N	P	A	L	L	N	W	H
E	P	N	L	S	R	E	L	A	E	H	M	E	N	B



## **Lesson #5**

### **The Role of the Man**

The role of the Aboriginal man was to provide for the community and protect it. The men brought food for their clans by hunting and fishing. They also taught the boys to hunt and fish. They used traps, bows and arrows, nets, guns and snares to kill animals. They used all parts of the animals killed in the hunt. Men of the Cree Nation were very well known for their skill at tanning hides.

The men also protected their family and clan from danger in their roles as warriors. It is traditional for Aboriginal men to wear their hair in a braid. The three strands stand for patience, kindness and honesty. A true warrior was a person who was patient, kind and honest.

Aboriginal men were respected elders in their village. The elders made important decisions for the community. Trading, marrying, and moving camp were some decisions the elders would make. Today, chiefs are elected by band councils and take charge of running the reserves.

**Exercise #5**

Read this story and circle all the letters that should be capital letters.

Remember, there must be a capital at the beginning of a sentence, and all names, places and titles are capitalized. HINT: There are 41 capitals needed in this story.

**the meaning of long hair**

as you walk into alex akiwenzie's office, you are welcomed by a man who has great inner strength. he is a chippawa and dressed like a businessman, but what you notice are his earrings along his left ear and his long hair.

alex's hair is neatly braided and runs down his entire back. alex tells you that there are three reasons why he wears his hair long. one of the reasons comes from his belief about the creator. "the creator gave us sweetgrass and told us how to braid it," alex explains. "the creator also told us that many people would be coming to our lands. if we braided our hair like we braided our sweetgrass, the creator would know who we were."

a second reason for the long hair is that aboriginal men want be seen as a community of first nations people. the braid sets them apart from other people.

alex gave a third reason. "many aboriginal people think that long hair is like

an antenna that pulls in the vibes people and things around them. you can tell how someone is feeling or notice things you wouldn't notice otherwise.”

“many aboriginal men do not braid their hair. they wear it loose which is the fashion. some men keep it short because of pressure from society even if they know how important it is.” alex said.

yet alex, like some others would only cut his hair if his father died. in that case, cutting the hair to the shoulder is a sign of respect.

alex cuts his hair every two years but only during the full moon. “it makes my hair grow longer,” he confides. “only someone who i trust can touch my hair because someone's hair is a sign of ownership. only me, my wife, mother or grandmother can cut, brush or braid it.” it is not respectful for one man to touch another man's hair.

alex used to wear his hair loose with a feather in it. he was often teased because of his hairstyle. alex hopes that learning why long hair is important will help others respect it.

-adapted from the story by Dana Gougeon

## **Lesson #6**

### **The Role of the Elder**

"Elder" does not always refer to age. In Aboriginal societies, one is chosen to be an Elder after lot of wisdom and experience.

Elders are mainly responsible for teachings and guidance. They teach by telling stories and legends. The stories are of real life situations and there is always a lesson learned. If you have a problem, you can approach an Elder, who can help you. When you approach an Elder, it is important that you say your name, and which clan you belong to. You may also tell them if you do not belong to a clan. It is good to make the offering of tobacco when approaching an Elder.

Medicine men and healers are often Elders as well. They have the knowledge to heal certain illness. They heal by using various herbs and other gifts from Mother Earth.

Elders also conduct ceremonies. The Sweatlodge, Shake Tent and Smudges are some of these ceremonies. Tribal Chiefs also ask Elders for advice on issues.

**Exercise #6**

Answer the following true or false questions.

- |     |  |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 1.  | You must be over 90 years of age to be an Elder.             | T | F |
| 2.  | Elders are wise and have a lot of experience.                | T | F |
| 3.  | Elders are responsible for teachings and guidance.           | T | F |
| 4.  | Elders tell you their problems.                              | T | F |
| 5.  | You must tell the Elder your name when you approach him/her. | T | F |
| 6.  | It is good to make the tobacco offering to an Elder.         | T | F |
| 7.  | Some Elders are also medicine men and healers.               | T | F |
| 8.  | Elders do not know about medicines.                          | T | F |
| 9.  | Elders conduct Aboriginal ceremonies.                        | T | F |
| 10. | Elders give advice to Tribal Chiefs.                         | T | F |

## **Lesson #7**

### **The Smudge Ceremony**

A smudge is a ceremony where a person is cleansed. Smudging is done at the start of other ceremonies. Smudging helps you get ready for the ceremony and makes you pure. Smudging can get rid of your of negative thoughts or give you strength if you are sad. As the smoke rises, it takes your prayers and thoughts to the Grandfathers and Grandmothers of the Spirit World and to the Creator.

In the smudging ceremony dried medicines in a small bowl are lit with a wooden match. People are seated in a circle and the bowl is carried to each person. As the smoke rises, you draw the smoke over your eyes, mouth, ears, heart and feet to cleanse every part of you. When my mother smudges, she always prays to the Creator to guide and protect her. She wants to be guided as she walks the forever road of life. She wants to be protected from anything negative in her life.

There are four original medicine plants. They are tobacco, cedar, sweetgrass and sage. Sweetgrass and sage are usually burnt in a smudge. When you are smudging should remove all metal objects, such as watches, jewelry and eye glasses because metals hold negative energy.

You can use a shell or clay bowl for your medicines for the smudge. Many Aboriginal people use an Abalone (ab-ba-LO-nee) shell as a smudge bowl. An Elder explained why they use an Abalone shell. AIt is because the shell comes from the water world, and Native American people come from the water world. For nine months we live in our mother=s womb, surrounded by water. Water is one of Mother Earth=s healing powers, and before any people came, the water came first.@"

You may also use a fan or sacred feather to help cover yourself with the smudge smoke.

### Exercise #7

Complete the following statements by filling in the blanks. Check the lesson for the answers.

1. A Smudge is a \_\_\_\_\_ where you are \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ carries our prayers and thoughts to the Creator, Grandmothers and Grandfathers of the Spirit World.
3. When smudging, we draw the smoke over our \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are usually burnt in a smudge.
5. Never use a metal lighter to light a smudge, as metal objects carry negative energy. Instead you should use \_\_\_\_\_.
6. When smudging, you should remove all \_\_\_\_\_ such as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
7. You can use your hands to cover yourself with the smudge smoke, but it is also okay to use a \_\_\_\_\_ or sacred \_\_\_\_\_.

List some negative thoughts from which you would like to be cleansed.

\_\_\_\_\_



## **The Medicines**

The Creator gave the first people four medicine plants. These were Sweetgrass, Sage, Cedar and Tobacco. When you study these herbs learn with respect and thankfulness for these plants and their gifts. Remember to respect the traditional people who learned the uses of these plants and passed down that knowledge to us.

## **Lesson #8**

### **Sweetgrass**

Sweetgrass is a wild green grass that grows in meadows and bogs all across North America. It grows to a height of about 2 2 feet. Sweetgrass is used for cleansing ceremonies. Aboriginal people see it as a symbol or sign of purifying people and giving wholeness, happiness, freedom and strength to those who use it. Ojibway and Cree people respect and honour Sweetgrass and think of it as being sacred (SAY-kred). Sweetgrass is highly respected and holds an honoured and sacred place among the Ojibway and Cree nations. When it is burned, the smell is sweet and it attracts good spirits.

Sweetgrass is often called the Hair of Our Mother, the Earth. It is burned in Aboriginal ceremonies and in the home. When Sweetgrass is burned, the smoke brings unity to a circle of people in a ceremony.

Sweetgrass was used by both Aboriginal People and early Europeans. The Europeans would spread it at the doorway of churches on festival days. Both cultures believed that the plant was sacred.

It is not traditional to buy Sweetgrass. You should pick it during the month

of August. If this is not possible, you may ask to trade gifts with someone who already has a supply of Sweetgrass. A woman on her moon time may not pick Sweetgrass for anyone but herself. Sweetgrass is woven into a three or four strand braid before it is used in a Smudge ceremony. It is tradition to light Sweetgrass using a flame from a fire or candle. Wooden matches can also be used. You should also remove all metal objects before using Sweetgrass.

When Sweetgrass is walked upon, it bends but does not break. One of the lessons of Sweetgrass is that when someone hurts us, we can be kind in return. We, like the Sweetgrass can bend but not break.

Sweetgrass sits in the East on the Medicine Wheel, the place of new birth and renewing of your spirit.

**Exercise #8**

Answer the questions with full sentences. Refer to the lesson for the answers.

1. Where does Sweetgrass grow?

---

2. What is Sweetgrass used for?

---

3. What does the smoke of Sweetgrass smell like?

---

4. Where is Sweetgrass burned?

---

5. Why do you think you should not buy Sweetgrass?

---

6. What is one of the lessons that Sweetgrass teaches?

---

7. Where does Sweetgrass sit on the Medicine Wheel?

---

Name one way in which your spirit needs cleansing or new birth. \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **Lesson #9**

### **Sage**

Sage is a herb that grows on the ground in a bush. It can be silver-white to green on colour. Sage is also used for purifying people. The sharp smoke of Sage works well to clear people of their everyday feelings. It also prepares people for ceremonies, teachings and healing.

Tea made with Sage leaves has a calming effect and can help ease a sore throat. If you drink Sage tea regularly, it will help strengthen the heart and body against illness.

You can use Sage by rubbing it onto your body to cleanse or heal yourself. You can carry it in a medicine pouch to protect yourself. You may also use it during Aboriginal ceremonies.

Sage is a woman=s medicine because it is the only medicine that can be used during her moon time. But, like all smudging medicines, Sage can be used by anybody, male or female.

Sage sits in the South on the Medicine Wheel, the place of learning and growing in your emotions.

**Exercise #9**

Answer the questions. Refer to Lesson #9 for the answers.

1. Where does Sage grow?

---

2. What is Sage used for?

---

3. What does the smoke from Sage prepare you for?

---

4. What would a regular drink of Sage tea do?

---

5. If you wanted to use Sage to protect yourself, where would you carry it?

---

6. Why is Sage a woman=s medicine?

---

7. Where does Sage sit on the Medicine Wheel?

---

Name one or two emotions which Sage could help you learn to express in a healthy way.

---

## **Lesson #10**

### **Cedar**

The Cedar tree has very positive medicine. Cedar removes bad feelings from your belongings or places like your home, office or gathering place. When you use it in smudging, the Cedar erases evil, negative feelings and energies. The smell of Cedar smoke is clear and crisp.

When you smudge with Cedar, use the dark needles of the Cedar tree and not the wood shavings. Some clusters of the Cedar tree are round, while others are flat. You can use either, but some people prefer the round clusters because they smell better. The branches of the Cedar tree can be boiled and used to make medicine tea. This tea helps to cleanse your body fluids. The wood shavings from Cedar trees can be used to repel moths and other bugs that eat feathers, wool or cotton clothes.

When you are gathering cedar, remember that sometimes we are drawn to areas and things that have special meaning for us. For example, one person chose a certain tree for its Cedar because it had been struck by lightning. The medicine from this tree was stronger since the Thunder Beings had put their energy into it.

Cedar sits in the West on the Medicine Wheel, the place of coming to know yourself clearly.



**Exercise #10**

Answer these questions. Refer to lesson #10 for your answers.

1. What is Cedar used for?

---

2. How does Cedar smoke smell?

---

3. Why do some people prefer to smudge the round Cedar clusters instead of the flat Cedar clusters?

---

4. What part of the Cedar tree can you use to make tea?

---

5. What will Cedar tea do if you drink it?

---

6. For what can the wood shavings from the Cedar tree be used?

---

7. Where does Cedar sit on the Medicine Wheel?

---

## **Lesson #11**

### **Tobacco**

Tobacco is a sacred plant to all Aboriginal people. It is one of the four original medicine plants given to the first people by the Creator. Tobacco is the most powerful of all the medicines.

An Elder once said to me: "Tobacco has been offered by the Aboriginal people since the first." The first people used to tell stories in the winter to help pass the time during the long and cold days. The storytellers were usually Elders or grandparents. The people listening to the stories would offer the Elders Tobacco as a gift for sharing their knowledge. This was how the Elders were respected. The Elders did not tell stories in the summer. This is because there was too much work to be done in the summer, and no time for stories.

Some Native communities would put tobacco in a large bundle and then make little sticks from these bundles. These sticks were then given for different reasons. The Tobacco sticks would be painted different colours, and each colour would have a different meaning.

The tradition of offering Tobacco continues today. It is important to

understand the meaning behind the offering of Tobacco. If you are making a request to an Elder, you should state the reason for the offering. When you make a request and offer Tobacco and the Elder accepts it, a contract has been made. It is a commitment between you and the Elder and also with the Creator and the Grandfathers. The request must be honoured.

Tobacco is offered for different reasons. One reason is to offer it to an Elder or medicine healer when you ask for help or advice. Offer the Tobacco to the Elder or Medicine healer, and remember to state why you are offering this sacred plant.

You may also use Tobacco to thank the Creator for the Creator's gifts. If you enjoyed a sunset, waterfall, good weather, or viewing a beautiful garden, you could leave some Tobacco on the ground to say thank you for that gift. You can also do this when you take a gift, such as Sweetgrass, Cedar, Sage, stones, or herbs. This is to honour the gifts you are taking. When you leave the Tobacco, you are returning energy to the plants and thanking Mother Earth and the Creator for providing these gifts. You should also offer Tobacco before a hunt to honour the animal that is giving its life.

Tobacco is also offered when you pray. For example, if you were going on a long journey, you could pray for safety and new learning experiences by sprinkling Tobacco out the car window.

Tobacco doesn't need to be smoked. In fact, it should only be smoked by certain people in certain ceremonies. For example, pipe carriers can smoke Tobacco during traditional ceremonies. It is important to note that Tobacco is never inhaled into the lungs. When you inhale the Tobacco you abuse the medicine because it is very harmful to your body.

Tobacco sits in the North on the Medicine Wheel, the place of wisdom and balance.

**Exercise #11**

Answer the following questions. Refer to Lesson 11 for your answers.

1. Why is Tobacco considered a sacred plant?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are the names of the other 3 original medicine plants?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did some Native communities make Tobacco sticks?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why must a request made with Tobacco be honoured?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Can you name one reason why Tobacco would be offered to an Elder?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. If you were a farmer, and were praying for rain, how would you offer Tobacco as a thank you when the rain came?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Where does Tobacco sit on the Medicine Wheel?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name one area in your life where you need wisdom. \_\_\_\_\_  
Name one area in your life where you need balance. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Lesson #12**

### **The Pow Wow**

The Pow Wow is an ancient tradition for Aboriginal people. It is a time to celebrate and socialize after a sacred ceremony. It is a time to bring people of all nations together to celebrate life through song and dance. The Pow Wow is based on honour, respect, and a giving spirit. For some Aboriginal people, the Pow Wow was a sacred ceremony where children were named and honored as they entered a new stage of life.

When a Pow Wow begins there is a Grand Entry. During the Grand Entry the people who are watching should always stand and remove their hats. This beautiful parade of pride and colour starts off the Pow Wow and each session of dancing. People of honour and groups of dancers join in the Grand Entry and dance to a special song played by the drum groups.

The drum is a symbol of the heartbeat of the nation and the pulse of the Universe. The drum brings the heart beat of Mother Earth to the Pow Wow for all to hear and feel. A Drumming brings everyone back into balance. Whether dancing, singing, or just listening, people around the drum can connect with spirit. @



Different sizes of drums are used for different ceremonies. Drums are sacred objects. Each drum has a keeper to make sure that no one on drugs or alcohol comes near the drum. During the ceremony, no one may reach across a drum or place any objects on it. Without the drum and the singers around it, there could not be a Pow Wow. The drum must be treated with great respect.

There is a head singer for every Pow Wow. Being the head singer is a great honour. The man who receives this honour is chosen for his past experience and the fact that he knows many songs. The head singer has the first and last word and has control of what happens with the drum. Only singers asked to sing by the head singer may sit at the drum.

Songs are started with a lead line sung by the head singer. This lets the drummer and the dancers know what song is coming. After the lead line, the rest of the singers will join in. At this point, the dancers begin to dance. The loud beats during the song are sometimes called Honour Beats.



### Exercise #12

Complete the word search. Words can be across, down or diagonal.

ancient	beat	celebration	ceremony	costumes
dancers	drum	drummer	grand entry	tradition
head singer	history	honour	powwow	pride
respect	sacred	singers	songs	

B	E	B	D	S	E	I	R	A	T	I	N	G	I	D	K	I
I	D	T	U	W	O	W	W	O	P	Z	C	B	R	H	H	O
G	A	D	S	F	G	H	Q	W	R	I	H	P	N	I	L	H
S	C	E	L	E	B	R	A	T	I	O	N	O	M	S	O	O
U	E	S	R	E	G	N	I	S	D	A	E	H	N	T	C	V
G	R	A	O	U	P	C	O	S	E	R	E	T	G	O	Y	P
A	E	C	U	E	L	N	A	I	J	R	D	A	S	R	U	F
R	M	R	Y	F	G	R	A	N	D	E	N	T	R	Y	M	R
U	O	E	W	S	J	U	K	G	K	M	U	A	N	O	Z	E
T	N	D	R	U	M	B	D	E	L	M	T	E	B	L	P	S
L	Y	C	G	S	A	V	C	R	E	U	U	B	V	M	O	P
A	N	C	I	E	N	T	K	S	H	R	I	E	S	J	I	E
B	S	P	L	S	R	E	C	N	A	D	K	D	A	G	K	C
O	T	T	O	M	W	T	R	A	D	I	T	I	O	N	C	T

## **Lesson #13**

### **The Pow Wow Dancers**

There are six dance groups within the Pow Wow. Pow Wow dancers dress in cloth materials and hides. The clothes and hides are used in many different ways, in keeping with the traditions.

Dancers enter the Pow Wow in order. First come the male traditional dancers, then the grass and fancy dancers. Next come the women=s traditional dancers, the jingle and fancy shawl dancers and lastly the youth and children. When the dancers are competing for the top prize, everyone must take part or they will lose points.

Male traditional dancers wear beautiful beadwork and feathers that are symbols of their nation. These dancers keep the “old way” of dancing. Through graceful and dramatic moves, the traditional dancer tells his story.

The outfits of the male grass dancers are decorated with rows of colourful fringe. These dancers are sometimes called “grassi” dancers. The grass dance used to be part of a sacred ceremony. This dance came after the formal ceremonies of the warrior groups. The men’s grass dance has fluid, graceful, sweeping movements.



Male fancy dancers need to be strong for the high jumps and quick footwork. Their outfits are made of two colourful bustels which they wear around the neck and back. Fancy dancers also wear matched beadwork and whips. The whips are part of the arm movements.

Female traditional dancers wear long cloth or hide dresses decorated with heavy beadwork, ribbons or shells. Hair ties, earrings, chokers and necklaces, and bead or concho belts are worn as well. Most dancers carry a shawl, an eagle fan or a single feather. The dancers bend their knees up and down in time to the beat while turning their feet. The feet of the female traditional dancers never leave the ground. This is a sign that these women are closely connected to Mother Earth. It is traditional to stand out of respect for these women when they dance.

The women's jingle dress dance is based upon a young Ojibway woman's dream. It is known as a healing dance. The jingle dress is often called a "healing dress". The jingle dress dancers are sometimes called upon to dance for a sick or injured community member. They wear knee-length cloth dresses that have rows of small tin cones or jingles sewn to the fabric. These dancers follow the drumbeat to make their jingles sound with the lightest step. The sound should stop exactly on

the drum beat.

Female fancy shawl dancers wear a decorated knee-length dress, beaded moccasins with matching leggings, a fancy shawl and jewellery. The dance has a great deal of spinning and fancy footwork. It has often been compared to the movements of a butterfly. An old legend says that the young women with their shawls are a symbol of a cocoon changing to a beautiful butterfly in flight. Fancy shawl dancers must follow the drum beat and stop exactly at the end with both feet on the ground.

### Exercise #13

Complete the word search. Words can be across, down or diagonal.

beadwork	bracelets	children	chokers	concho
dancers	decorated	drumbeat	earrings	elimination
exquisite	fancy	feathers	footwork	gestures
grassi	head dress	hide	jingle	jumps
leggings	men	quick	societies	stamina
steps	story	traditional	warrior	women

I	F	T	K	W	R	O	I	R	R	A	W	J	U	M	P	S
E	H	A	R	E	A	S	O	C	I	E	T	I	E	S	V	N
E	S	E	O	A	X	A	S	M	U	S	C	N	H	S	E	O
N	G	B	W	R	D	O	S	E	P	S	A	G	S	T	H	I
E	N	M	D	R	A	I	U	E	G	T	R	L	E	E	S	T
S	I	U	A	I	N	E	T	I	T	A	H	E	E	R	N	A
W	G	R	E	N	C	S	E	I	S	M	D	M	E	S	Y	N
W	G	D	B	G	E	I	L	S	O	I	E	H	H	R	C	I
L	E	S	T	S	R	A	I	Y	H	N	T	E	I	E	N	M
N	L	F	O	R	S	Y	M	A	T	A	A	E	I	K	A	I
O	N	W	I	T	H	R	T	H	E	D	R	L	O	O	F	L
S	K	R	O	W	T	O	O	F	D	C	O	N	C	H	O	E
E	C	W	G	E	S	T	U	R	E	S	C	H	O	C	A	R
E	I	H	E	A	D	S	E	W	O	M	E	N	E	D	W	H
E	U	R	E	W	E	S	C	H	I	L	D	R	E	N	S	W
A	O	N	T	T	S	T	E	L	E	C	A	R	B	O	G	O

Use the letters that are left over from the word search on the last page to finish the message from AThe Geese@. Copy every letter that was not used, in order, starting at the top left corner. Copy the letters on to the blanks. The first two letters have been entered for you.

***The Geese:***

*Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back in formation to take advantage of the “lifting power” of the bird immediately in front.*

***Lesson:***

IF \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



## **Lesson #14**

### **The Sweatlodge Ceremony**

The sweatlodge is a sacred ceremony which all traditional Aboriginal peoples living on Turtle Island know about. Turtle Island is what some Aboriginal peoples call North America.

In the old days, the sweatlodge ceremony was held in the daytime. But when the Europeans came to North America, sweatlodges were against the law. Because of this, the sweatlodge ceremony was held mostly at night, in hiding. Some people still hold this ceremony at night to remember the Aboriginal people's struggle to take back their culture.

The ceremony connects the people to all living things and to the Creator. It is a symbol of the womb of our Mother, the Earth. All of the four elements - Fire, Water, Air, and Earth are part of the sweatlodge because they are all needed for life to continue. A sweatlodge is built in a dome shape with willow poles that are covered with skins or blankets.

There are different types of sweatlodge ceremonies. Depending on the kind of ceremony, different sacred objects are brought into the sweatlodge. These can



be the sacred pipe, the water drum or other sacred objects. All sweatlodges include sacred songs, teachings, and prayers. The songs give honour and thanks to the spirits. Some songs ask for help and protection from the spirits.

People bring Tobacco as an offering to the lodge. The Tobacco is sprinkled over the fire outside the lodge. Tobacco is used to bring your prayers into the Spirit World. If you have doubts or questions about the ceremony, you may talk an Elder or an Elder's helper.

Rocks in the sweatlodge ceremony are referred to as Grandfathers and Grandmothers. A certain number of rocks are heated in a fire pit outside the lodge and are later carried into the lodge. The Elder running the sweatlodge will have a helper who is called the Fire Keeper. The Fire Keeper stays outside the sweatlodge and tends to the fire. The Fire Keeper opens the sweatlodge door when it is time.

When you enter a sweatlodge, it is important that you don't wear any metal objects, jewellery, perfume or hair spray. You should crawl into the lodge on your hands and knees and greet the spirits by saying, "all my relations". Always move around the centre in a clockwise direction. It is important to show respect.

Women who are on their moon time are sacred because of their own

powerful cleansing and should not enter the sweatlodge. But, women can go into their own private moon lodge during this time.

To go to the sacred sweatlodge is to seek knowledge and the wisdom of the good spirits that brings us closer to creation. It is not a test to see how much heat you can endure. When you are going to a ceremony or when you are talking with someone who has been given the gift to talk to the spirit world, let your heart be open. Your heart will guide you to a lodge that is right for you to learn from.

The sweatlodge and the teachings you hear in them work to heal the spiritual part of your life. In your healing journey, you will need to work toward a balance in your spirit, your emotions, your body and your mind. You can do this by looking after yourself and being kind to those around you.

## Exercise #14

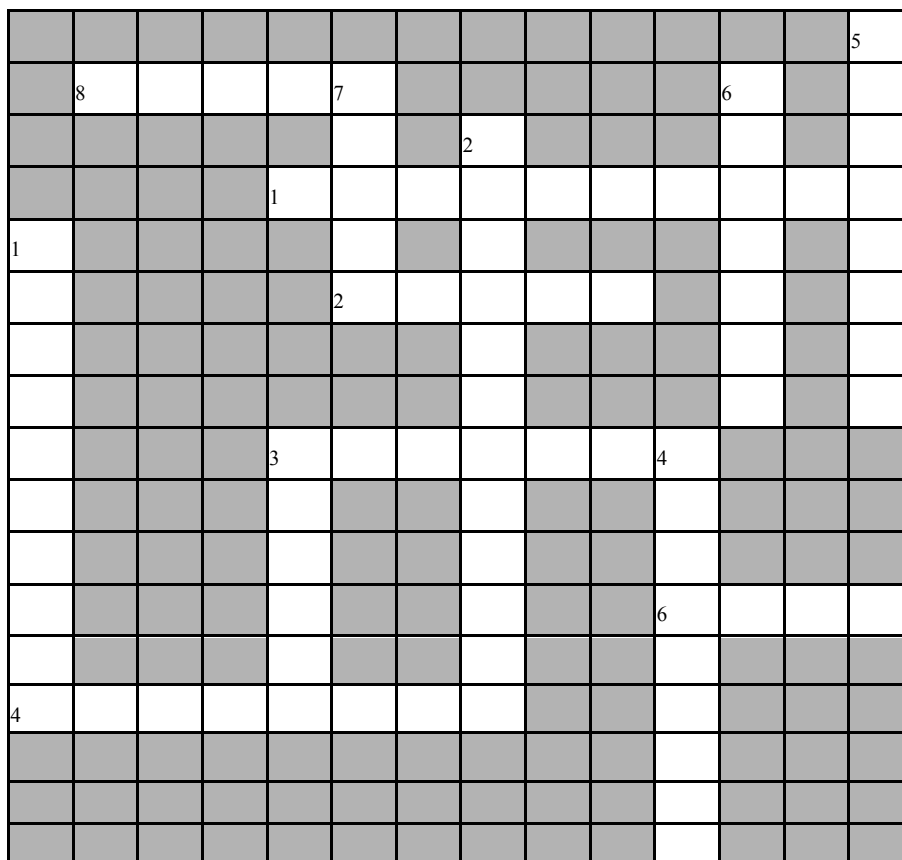
Complete the crossword puzzle. Check the lesson for the answers.

### Across

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ is sometimes brought into the Sweatlodge.
2. Prayers and \_\_\_\_\_ are part of each Sweatlodge.
3. You should always bring \_\_\_\_\_ to the Sweatlodge ceremony
4. Fire, water, air and Earth are the \_\_\_\_\_ used in the Sweatlodge ceremony.
6. A woman should not enter a Sweatlodge on her \_\_\_\_\_ time.
8. The lodge is in a round shape like Mother \_\_\_\_\_.

### Down

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a symbol of the womb other Mother Earth.
2. The rocks that are heated for the Sweatlodge ceremony are also called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Aboriginal people sometimes refer to North America as \_\_\_\_\_ Island.
4. The Sweatlodge is a symbol of \_\_\_\_\_ the Earth.
5. You should not wear any \_\_\_\_\_ into the Sweatlodge.
6. The Sweatlodge is for seeking wisdom from the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The Sweatlodge \_\_\_\_\_ your spirit and helps you find balance



## **Lesson #15**

### **The Sundance**

The Sundance is a major sacred ceremony. It is practised by most Aboriginal tribes of the American plains. The Sundance celebrates the spiritual rebirth and renewal of the people who take part and of their families. It also celebrates the renewing of the earth and all living things.

The Sundance includes symbols of animals, mostly the eagle and the buffalo. These animals once played important roles in the lives of Aboriginal people. Today, they still are sacred and have special powers. The Sundance is about sacrifice and prayer to bring peace between all living beings.

Every person may have a different reason for taking part in a Sundance. Some take part in this sacrifice to give thanks for blessings they have received. Some come to keep a promise that was made after they lived through a crisis. Others come to ask for the safety of another person, or even to ask for a healing for a sick person. Still others come with the hope of making life better for their family. Generally, each Sundancer has a sponsor who is usually the main dancer. This main dancer takes charge of the cost of the ceremony. The Sundance is about 8 to 10 days long. There is a 4-day purifying time when people prepare for the

ceremony, get instructions, and spend time in prayer. This is followed by the dancing that lasts about 4 days.

When a Sundance lodge is built, there are ceremonies to help in the building of it. For example, a special tree is cut to be used as a centre pole for the lodge. The dance area has a shelter of trees all around it. The round opening to the lodge faces to the east. During the Sundance, ceremonies mark the sunrise of each day.

During the dancing, special songs are chanted by drummers near the lodge opening. Each dancer moves in rhythm from the dance area to the centre pole and back again. Dancers take rests, but they do not eat or drink during the three or four days of dancing. Some dancers pierce their skin in their breast or shoulder with skewers that are tied to the centre pole. Once they are tied, they dance by pulling back until their flesh is torn away.

At the end of the Sundance, the dancers take part in rites to purify themselves. This is when they may drink water and break their fast. The lodge is returned to Mother Earth, but the centre pole remains until next spring.

**Exercise #15**

Fill in the blanks.

1. The Sundance is a \_\_\_\_\_ practised by Aboriginal people.
2. The Sundance ceremony is usually held in the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
3. The Aboriginal people believe that the Eagle and Buffalo are \_\_\_\_\_ and have \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Sundance is about \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to bring \_\_\_\_\_.
5. One reason for taking part in a Sundance would be to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. It takes about \_\_\_\_\_ to complete a Sundance Ceremony.
7. The round opening to the lodge faces to the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. At the end of a Sundance the dancers \_\_\_\_\_ themselves and they end their fast by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Lesson #16**

### **The Sacred Pipe**

The Sacred Pipe is often called the peace pipe. It is like a movable altar used by the Aboriginal people. It is believed that a woman dressed in white, who is sometimes known as White Buffalo Calf Woman, gave the Aboriginal people this gift of the sacred pipe to be used in ceremonies.

Tobacco is often the medicine used with the sacred pipe. Each pinch of tobacco is placed in the pipe with a prayer. The pipe is the centre of energy in the ceremony. When you smoke the pipe it is a symbol of blowing the prayer out to the Universe and connecting to the Creator. The pipe is also a symbol of joining your self with your higher self.

The stone, or bowl of the pipe is known as the grandmother. The stem is known as the grandfather.

The sacred pipe is used by one person alone or in a ceremony with others. A personal pipe is kept with you. Ceremonial pipes belong with a community.

Many years ago the tradition of having a pipe almost died. The United States and Canadian Governments said that ceremonies such as the Sundance were illegal. Because of the new laws the pipe should have been put away. Many people did not want to put away their pipes because the Sacred pipe played a large

role in all Aboriginal ceremonies. The ceremonies were held in hiding, and the Aboriginal people smoked their pipes in their homes. They hid them away until it was safe to bring them out again. These same people kept the pipe alive until the 1970's when the Sundance was once again allowed. It was then that the Sacred Pipe was brought out into the light again.



**Exercise #16**

Choose the right answer for each question and copy the word onto the blank.

1. The Sacred Pipe has also been called a \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) smoker=s pipe      b) pipe cleaner      c) peace pipe
2. Smoking the sacred pipe is a symbol of blowing the prayer out to the Universe and connecting with the \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) stars      b) planets      c) Creator
3. It is believed that a woman known as \_\_\_\_\_ gave the Aboriginal people the Sacred Pipe.  
a) calf lady      b) Mary      c) white buffalo calf
4. A medicine often used in the pipe ceremony is \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Tylenol      b) tobacco      c) cedar
5. A personal pipe is kept \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) with you      b) on a shelf      c) in the garage
6. The tradition of having a Sacred Pipe almost died because \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) it was lost      b) cigarettes were invented      c) of new laws
7. The American and Canadian governments allowed the Sundance to be performed again during the \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) 1870's      b) 1960's      c) 1970's

## **Lesson #17**

### **Aboriginal Spirituality**

For the Aboriginal people, spirituality (speer-rit-choo-AL-it-tee) was a natural part of living, just like bodies and feelings were. It was a “way of life” for them. From the time they were children, Aboriginal people were taught about the Creator and that life and all living things were sacred. This spirituality gave them a sense of belonging to the Creator and a knowledge of their history. For example, when a child was born, a couple married, or a feast was held, beliefs brought the people closer together. This was the teaching they received from the Creator.

The “Circle” was very important in the spirituality of the Aboriginal people. They saw the dwellers of the sky as round or circular (SURK-ya-lur). They also knew Mother Earth was circular even before the scientist Galileo said that the world was round. To Aboriginal people, a circle is a symbol of the Circle of life. This Circle of life is also called the Sacred Hoop or Medicine Wheel. The circle is a symbol of how people grow in their spiritual lives.

Aboriginal people believe that the Creator, or Great Spirit, gives spiritual gifts to all living things. That is why they offer thanks each time they take something from another living thing.

Aboriginal people believe there should be a balance of all things. One way of seeing this balance is by using the four directions. North, South, East and West are each a symbol of a different way of seeing things. No direction is more important than another. For Aboriginal people, all things are equal. For example, man is not better than woman. An Elder is not better than a child. Humans are not better than animals. Animals are not better than plants. Each depend on the other for life.

Aboriginal people believe that you must find balance for yourself before you can help others find balance in life. Spirituality has once again become a very important part of the Aboriginal peoples' search for becoming whole and accepting themselves for who they are.

### Exercise #17

Circle T for true or F for false for each sentence.

- |     |  |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 1.  | Spirituality is a natural part of living for the Aboriginal people.              | T | F |
| 2.  | People were taught about the Creator when they were adults.                      | T | F |
| 3.  | Spirituality gives a sense of belonging.   | T | F |
| 4.  | Spirituality does not bring people closer together.                              | T | F |
| 5.  | The use of the Circle is important in Aboriginal Spirituality.                   | T | F |
| 6.  | Aboriginal people knew the world was round before Galileo.                       | T | F |
| 7.  | The Creator is also known as the Great Spirit.                                   | T | F |
| 8.  | Aboriginal people do not believe in balance.                                     | T | F |
| 9.  | Aboriginal people believe that plants are more important than children.          | T | F |
| 10. | Spirituality is very important for the Aboriginal peoples' search for wholeness. | T | F |

Read this aboriginal spiritual teaching.

### **The Eagle Feather**

Aboriginal people believe that the Eagle is very important. The Eagle flies higher and sees better than any other bird. Its sees things differently than we who are close to the Earth. Our Creator also sees things differently than us humans in this World of Physical Things. The Eagle spends more time in Father Sky than other birds. Father Sky is the home of Spirit.

The Eagle is a symbol of truth, power, and freedom as it roams the sky. Its wings are a symbol of the balance that is needed between the male and female. Each wing depends on the strengths and abilities of the other.

The Eagle was given the honour of carrying the prayers of people from the World of the Earth to the World of the Spirit. The World of Spirit is where our Creator and Grandfathers and Grandmothers live.

When you hold the Eagle Feather, you must speak the Truth in a positive way because the ear of our Creator is close to the Feather of the Eagle.

We honour the Feather of the Eagle with great care. We show it respect, honesty and truth at all times. To be given an Eagle Feather is the highest honour

that can be given within the Aboriginal culture.

You must take special care of the Feather. A woman who is on her moon time must not touch the feather. The Feather should be hung up within your home. It should not be placed in a drawer or cupboard.

Under Canadian law, you need a permit from the Conservation authorities to have an Eagle Feather. The Eagle Feather must be used for traditional or teaching purposes.

## **Lesson #18**

### **The Medicine Wheel**

The Medicine Wheel helps people learn about the symbolic meanings of Aboriginal teachings. The teachings are based on spiritual values and beliefs that have been practised by the Aboriginal people for hundreds of years. There are different models of the Medicine Wheel for each Aboriginal Nation. There are also different ways of explaining them. The one common idea between all Medicine Wheels is the image of the Circle.

The Medicine Wheel teaches people about themselves and how they can live in positive balanced ways. The Medicine Wheel uses colour and stones and directions to explain ideas that would be hard to explain using only words.

The Medicine Wheel includes the four basic colours that are a symbol of all races on earth. These are Black, White, Yellow and Red. In the circle we are all equal and have the right to be called brothers and sisters. The circle also includes the four directions, the four stages of life, the four seasons, and the four elements of fire, water, earth and air.

The circle can be divided into four equal parts, like a pipe, which makes up a balanced wheel. These sections are symbols of our physical, emotional, mental

and spiritual parts. Also, different animals and plants are symbols of each of the four parts. The Medicine Wheel is always read in a clockwise direction, from east to south to west to north.

When you use the Medicine Wheel teachings, you can get wisdom to find balance and health in your life. To be healthy, your whole self needs healing. This includes your body, your mind, your emotions and your spirit. Because the Medicine Wheel is about the whole person, the whole community, and the whole earth, we say that the teachings are holistic (ho-LIS-tik) and balanced.

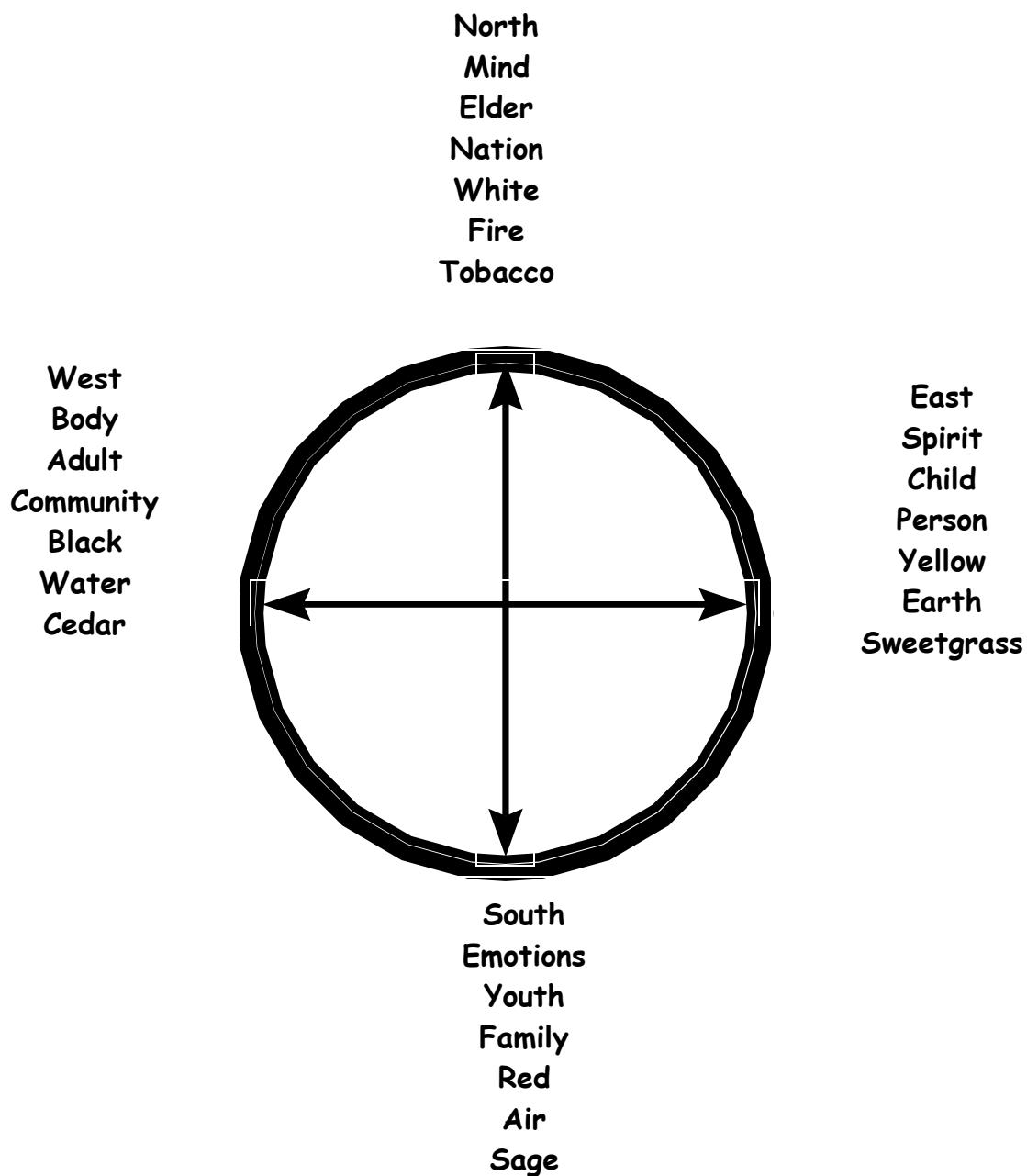
Each Medicine Wheel you see has a teaching for you, if you are open to it. Medicine Wheels are like mirrors in which we can see our own self within each section.

It is very important to offer tobacco each time you use the Medicine Wheel. The tobacco offering is a thank-you for the wisdom or healing you get from the Medicine Wheel.

Even though some people may see the Medicine Wheel differently, we must remember the most important lesson. This is to honour the most sacred and greatest gift. This gift is given to us by the Creator. It is the gift of life.



Here is an example of a medicine wheel and the symbols that go with each part. A traditional Medicine Wheel was often made of stones on level ground, taking up a large space.



**Exercise # 18**

Think of a time when you felt you were unhealthy or out of balance. Write a short story about it. How do you think the Medicine Wheel could have helped you get back your balance or health?

My Story:

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The Medicine Wheel could have helped me by:

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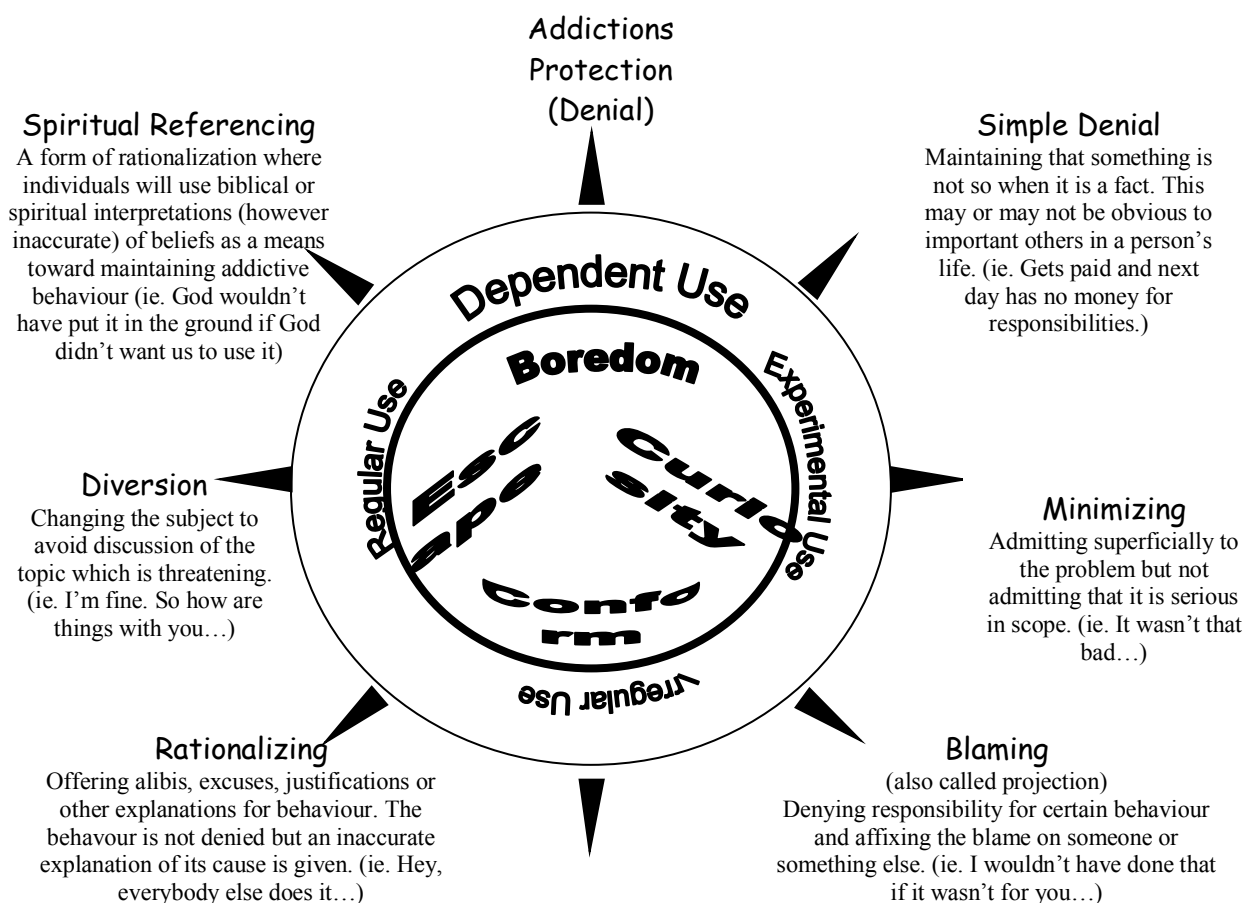
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## Lesson #19

### The Addictions Wheel

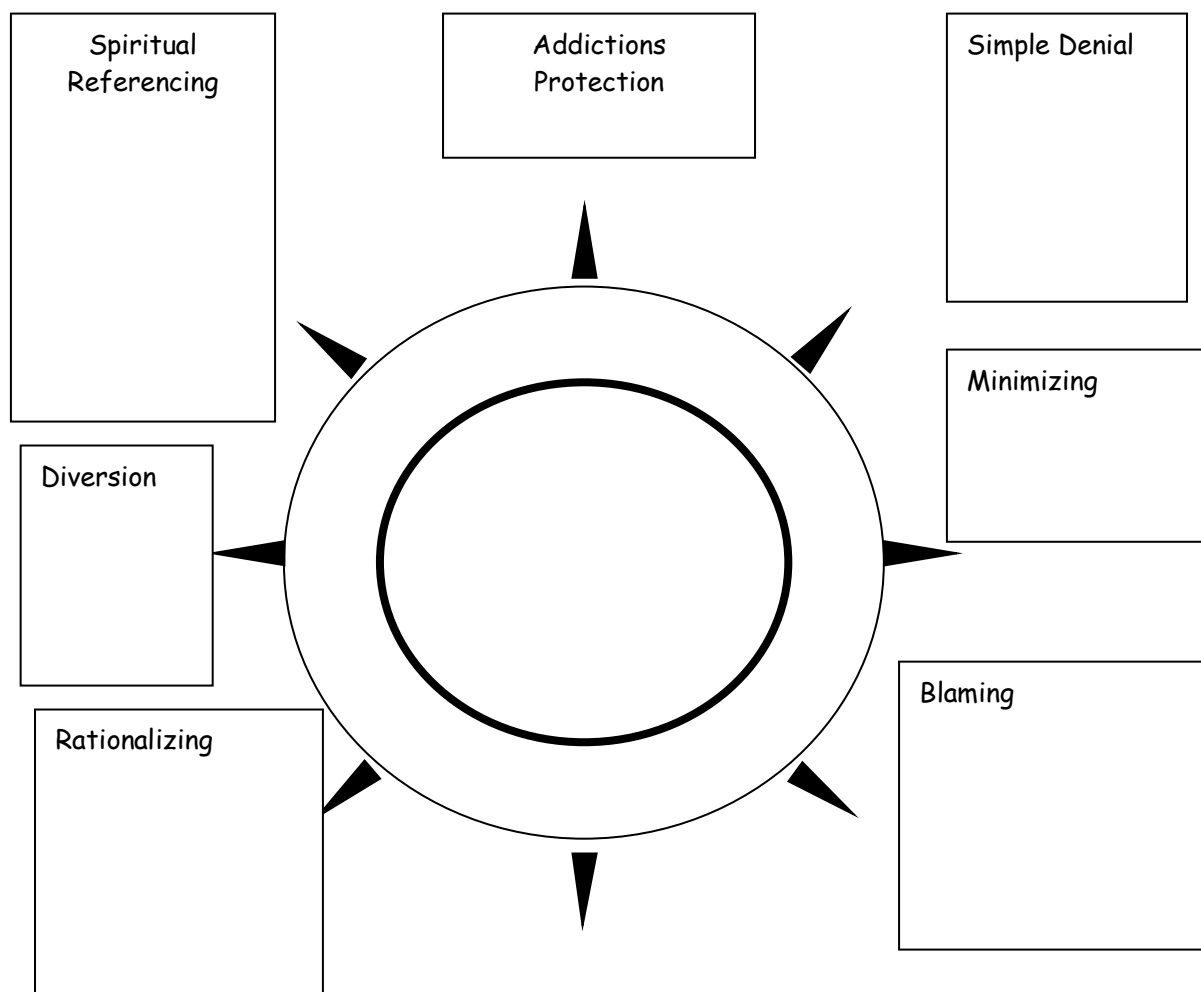
When a person, family, community, or nation cannot control their use of alcohol, drugs, food, sex or money they are addicted. The inner wheel shows why people use these things in an addictive way. The outer wheel shows different stages of addictions. Outside the circle are the different excuses or denial that people use to keep on with their addictions.



Taken from: Reflections. Teachings of the Medicine Wheel.  
The Aboriginal Health & Wellness Centre of Winnipeg

## Exercise #19

Complete the following addictions protection wheel. If you have an addiction, use your own denial statements.



## **Lesson #20**

### **The Vision Quest and Fasting**

The Vision Quest is the Aboriginal peoples' way to mark an important change in a person's life. The Vision can act as a renewal, soul healing, rebirth or to understand yourself and connect with Mother Earth.

A Vision Quest is about going on the land alone and fasting for up to four days. Fasting empties the body so that the soul may be fed. The Vision Quest is where you become Aone with Mother Earth.

Ceremonies to purify you are always performed before the Vision Quest. Ceremonies are also performed during the Quest to open up your inner self. After the Quest, you will return with a vision and have tasks to do.

It is okay to have a person go with you on a Vision Quest to support you and care for you. This person will not speak with you, but check with you every day to see if you are all right.

When a grandmother or grandfather visits you in a dream, it may mean that it is time for you to go on a Vision Quest. Sometimes your Elder will tell you it's time for a Vision Quest.

A Vision Quest is much more than giving up food and drink for up to four days. The fasting part of the Vision Quest is not for everyone. An Elder once said: ANot everybody can go lie down in the bush for four days, and there are people who have died trying.@"

When you return from the Vision Quest, it is time for the real Quest to begin. You will re-enter your every day life, following the vision you received in the Quest. As Black Elk said: AA person who has a vision is not able to use the power of it until after s/he has acted out the vision on earth for the people to see.@"

**Exercise #20**

Choose the right answer for the questions.

1. The Vision Quest can mark an \_\_\_\_\_ in your life.  
a) new image                      b) important change                      c) inner self
2. The Vision Quest is about going to the \_\_\_\_\_ and fasting for up to four days.  
a) bathtub                      b) Sweatlodge                      c) land
3. Fasting empties the \_\_\_\_\_ so the soul can be fed.  
a) mouth                      b) hands                      c) body
4. After you finish the Vision Quest, you will return with a \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) sickness                      b) vision                      c) bag of groceries
5. The Vision Quest can help you \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) do your homework    b) find healing and understanding    c) take a vacation
6. You will know when it is time for you to go on a Vision Quest when \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) you are hungry                      b) your T.V breaks                      c) your Elder tells you
7. The real quest begins? \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) when you return                      b) at midnight                      c) at a round table

## **Lesson #21**

### **Foods and Feasts**

Native foods in North America were berries, wild rice, and different meats such as buffalo, deer, beaver, moose, rabbit and fish. Meats were cooked, dried or smoked, and the Aboriginal people liked to roast the whole fish such as Walleye or Pike over an open fire. Pemmican (PEM-ma-kin) was a mix of dried powdered meat, buffalo fat and dried berries which hunters or warriors used. Birds, wild greens and dried leaves for tea were also part of the diet. A paste was made from dried chokecherries and used by the Plain Cree in the Sundance.

Aboriginal people are also well known for the bread they made which is called Bannock. Long ago, Aboriginal people made Bannock while they lived in camps during trapping season, picking berries or rice harvest. In the early days, some Bannock was made with wild rice flour and baked on a flat rock over an open fire. Aboriginal people still make Bannock today. It can be wrapped around a stick and baked over a fire.

After some ceremonies such as the Sweatlodge, Full moon or Sundance, there is a feast. The feast will include traditional Aboriginal foods. A plate with a small bit of each food is put aside. This is called a spirit plate. Tobacco is then



passed to this plate. The spirit plate is offered to the people of the spirit world so that they may also share in the feast. When the feast is over, the food on the spirit plate is sprinkled on the ground and returned to Mother Earth.

Aboriginal peoples believed that the Creator provided food for all and that each person had a duty to share their food. This belief was practiced in the Powwows and Potlatches. Because plants and animals were sacred, they were not wasted. Over-eating was not good for the spirit. Respect for the land and the food it gave led to the wise use of animals fish and plants.

Read this Wild Rice teaching from May Pitchenese, Elder of the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation:

AMy grandmother told me all the stories her grandfather told her a long time ago. One of her grandfathers was there when it happened. They were at Rice Lake. They never knew rice was growing in there. One day an old man paddling there saw someone on the shore. The man - or spirit - on the shore said to the Indian, ACome over here. You know what that is, that field?@ The Indian said, ANo.@ The man said, AThat=s **manomin**, or rice. If you pull me around in your canoe, I=ll show you how to do it.@ So the old Indian went to the shore and picked up the man, who told him to paddle around the lake without looking back. After making a silent round of the lake and returning to the shore, the man climbed out and disappeared into the bush. The old man looked back and saw that his canoe was full of rice. Later the man on the shore returned and said, AI=ll meet you at the landing where we=ll cook the rice.@ He showed them how to clean it, to cook it, and use it in many different ways. **Manomin** is not only for eating; it is medicine too. So they did it the way the spirit told them to.@

**Exercise #21**

Here is a recipe for bannock.

**Baked Bannock**

4 cups flour

2 teaspoons salt

1 tablespoon baking powder

3 cup lard

1 2 cups water (or enough to keep the flour together)

Preheat oven to 400<sup>B</sup>F (200<sup>B</sup>C)

Mix everything to form a stiff dough. Knead on a floured table. Add more flour if it is needed. Form into a round loaf about 1 inch high. Bake on a greased baking sheet for about 30 minutes or until top is a nice brown.

Use the recipe, without the lard for fried bannock. Fry the bannock in a little hot oil. Serve both fried, or baked bannock warm with butter, jam or honey.

Fill in the blanks to double the above recipe.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ cups of flour

2. \_\_\_\_\_ teaspoons of salt

3. \_\_\_\_\_ tablespoons of baking powder

4. \_\_\_\_\_ cups of lard

5. \_\_\_\_\_ cups of water

6. What would you leave out to make fried bannock: \_\_\_\_\_

## Aboriginal Movies

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### **LAST OF THE DOGMEN ...1996**

120 minutes

Starring: Tom Berenger  
Barbara Hershey

This is a picture about a bounty hunter and a historian who discover a secret tribe of Native Americans.

This film is good at re-creating Native American culture.

The tribe has managed to live happily well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century without losing any of their traditional ways.

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### **SQUANTO: A WARRIOR'S TALE ...1995**

101 minutes

Starring: Adam Beach  
Eric Schweig  
Michael Gambon

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a Native American Warrior is captured by the British and taken back to England to be displayed as an exotic curiosity.

Squanto escapes and finds refuge with a group of monks. This story follows Squanto as he tries to get away from his captors and return home to America.

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**THUNDERHEART ...1993**

188 minutes

Starring: Val Kilmer  
Sam Sheppard  
Graham Green

Set on a North Dakota Native American reservation in the 1970's, this film is loosely based on the real-life events that were shown in the documentary: Incident at Oglala.

Ray Lavoie (Val Kilmer) is a FBI agent who is sent to investigate a murder that occurred on the Oglala Reservation.

During his investigation, Lavoie becomes sensitive to Native issues and discovers his own Native spirituality. (Lavoie is 1/4 Sioux).

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**BLACK ROBE ...1992**

100 minutes

Starring: Lothaire Bluteau  
Aden Young  
Sandrine Holt  
August Schellenberg

This film is set in the 1600's. This film is about Europeans forcing Native peoples to adopt western culture.

The film portrays European culture as an evil invading force that killed Indian tribes, weakening them with liquor, guns, diseases, and a religion that didn't match their lives.

Black Robe (the name Aboriginal people gave to the Christian Priests) is honest in its picture of early Native culture and traditions.

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**DANCES WITH WOLVES ...1991**

183 minutes

Starring: Kevin Costner  
Mary McDonnell  
Graham Greene

This personal project of Kevin Costner, shocked the movie industry by becoming one of 1991's biggest hits. The Sioux Nation gave the film their own rave review by admitting Costner as a full tribal member.

The movie takes place during the American Civil War. A union officer abandons western living and becomes a member of the Sioux nation.

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**WINDWALKER ...1980**

108 minutes

Starring: Trevor Howard  
Nick Ramus  
James Remar

A Native medicine man returns to life to save his family from the revenge of his son, a twin who was stolen at birth and raised by an enemy tribe.

This film shows the Native American=s strong belief in the spirit world.

## **A message from the Elder**

It was an honour to be asked to help with the creation of this workbook and it is my prayer that it will awaken your spirit and inspire you to follow this unique path which demonstrates how being in tune and connected with Mother Earth and all Creation strengthens your faith in your own self and the Creator.

May it help you to know that living with an open mind and heart will allow you to be teachable, and become a role model to others and future generations.

When we learn to go within ourselves, and discover our past and our culture, we are better able to understand our potential in today=s society.

Larry Monkman  
Elder  
Milner Ridge Correctional Centre  
1999

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## What do you think of this Workbook?

What is the title of this workbook?

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Did you find this workbook useful? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Why or why not?

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Did you learn things that you wanted to know about? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think that you will use any of the ideas in your everyday life? Y\_\_\_N\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the reading too easy\_\_\_ just right\_\_\_ or too difficult\_\_\_?

Was the reading boring\_\_\_ or interesting\_\_\_?

I suggest: \_\_\_\_\_

Were the exercises too easy\_\_\_ just right\_\_\_ or too difficult\_\_\_?

Were the exercises boring\_\_\_ or interesting\_\_\_?

I suggest: \_\_\_\_\_

Which other workbooks, if any, have you completed?

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What other topics would you like to learn about in a workbook?

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Do you think the workbooks are a good way to learn about these topics?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Do you think there are other ways to learn about these topics? Do you have any suggestions for us? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.**

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The John Howard Society, 583 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7

Tel: (204) 775-1514 Fax: (204) 775-1670 e-mail: [office@johnhoward.mb.ca](mailto:office@johnhoward.mb.ca)