

SERMON STARTER

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY



These worship resources are part of the Native American Ministries Sunday pastor and leader kit. They may be adapted for your context and integrated into your worship service with the other material in the kit.

These resources are inspired by the primary text: Genesis 1:26–27 and supporting texts: Acts 17:26–28; Revelation 7:9–10; Micah 6:8; Luke 4:18–19; Luke 10:25–37; James 2:14–17

OPENING: SETTING THE SACRED MOMENT

Today, we worship together to honor and support our Indigenous siblings and communities. This is holy ground. We intentionally recognize the tremendous gifts, deep cultures, and significant contributions of Indigenous peoples and tribal nations throughout America and beyond.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' official list, published in the Federal Register, recognizes **574 Tribal nations**, including Cherokee, Lumbee, Navajo/Diné, Ojibwe, Lakota, and many others. These are not abstract names. These are living communities, real histories, sacred languages, and beloved people.

Your prayers and generosity today help equip and strengthen Native leadership and sustain transformative ministry across our connection.

IDENTITY: THE IMAGE OF GOD

Before we talk about giving, we start with God's gaze. God calls the people of God to love deeply. Yes, on this Sunday, we celebrate our Indigenous beloved siblings.

Genesis 1:26–27 reminds us that every human being is made in the image of God. *The "Image of God" is not a slogan, it's an identity.*

Every human is an image bearer of God. That means no one is better than another. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to imitate Jesus. Not culture, not society, not systems that rank human worth.

To be "closer to God" never means pushing others down. No people, culture, or community should ever be treated as less-than for any reason.

GOD'S FAMILY DESIGN: DIVERSITY IS NOT A FOOTNOTE

Scripture tells us that God formed nations and peoples with real histories and real places — and God is near to all of them (Acts 17:26–28). And God's future is revealed in Revelation 7:9–10: *Every nation, tribe, people, and language worshipping together.*

Seriously, we really are family. Diversity isn't a footnote. It's the reality of the Kingdom of God on earth. God's vision is not sameness. God's future honors difference without erasing it.

TELL THE TRUTH WITH HUMILITY: DISCIPLESHIP MEANS REPAIR

Micah 6:8 calls us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. Isaiah 1:17 tells us to seek justice and correct oppression.

Today is not about speaking for our Indigenous siblings. It is about listening, honoring, and acting with them.

This Sunday is not about defensiveness. Not about romanticizing the past. Not about centering ourselves.

It is about centering God by praying for, engaging with, and celebrating our Indigenous siblings with humility and truth.

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Humbling ourselves before God and God's people sounds like: "Teach us." God-sized justice sounds like: "We will act with you."

MAKE IT EVIDENT: JESUS MEASURES LOVE BY ACTION

Jesus never treats oppression as theoretical.

In Luke 4, Jesus proclaims good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed. In Luke 10, the Good Samaritan shows us neighbor-love that crosses boundaries and costs something. James reminds us plainly: "Faith without works is dead."

Love has a budget. Love has receipts.

Real love shows up. Real faith moves resources.

THE OFFERING: TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIP, NOT CHARITY

Today's offering strengthens Indigenous leadership with purpose and accountability. *(Check with your annual conference for local details.)*

- **50%** remains in the annual conference through CONAM (Committee on Native American Ministries) to support local Native American ministry
- **25%** funds scholarships for Native students pursuing ordained or licensed ministry
- **25%** supports new and emerging Native ministries — mentoring, economic empowerment, and leadership development

Today's gift to our Indigenous siblings is not charity. It is the power of our Connectional Spirit at its BEST.

CLOSING WORD

God does not ask us to speak for Indigenous peoples today. God asks us to walk humbly, tell the truth, honor our shared humanity, and support Indigenous siblings through transformative partnership.

We cannot undo yesterday. But we can choose to be part of God-sized transformation today with our prayers, our presence, and our resources.

Amen.

By the Rev. Dr. Stephanie Moore Hand,
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United in Impact: Our Generosity Supports Native Ministries,
Honors Native Voices, and Strengthens the Whole Church