

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

Preparation:

If possible, arrange with your church choir or a soloist to sing the first verse of "Amazing Grace" (United Methodist Hymnal, page 378) using the lyrics for each of the Native American languages printed at the bottom of the page. As an alternative, you may ask one or two persons to join you and the children to sing each verse, or you may sing them yourself.

Greet the children:

Good morning! How are you today?

We're going to sing a hymn for you this morning, and I'd like you to see if you know what it is.

[Have the choir or other singers sing the first verse of "Amazing Grace" in Cherokee.]

Did you recognize that one?

[Allow for responses. If none of the children guesses the correct answer, invite the congregation to respond. When someone answers correctly, say:]

That's right: "Amazing Grace." But the words didn't sound the way we usually sing them, did they?

They were being sung in Cherokee, the language spoken by a group of Native Americans.

OK, see if you can guess this one.

[Have the choir/singers begin singing "Amazing Grace" in Creek. When the children call out the correct answer, stop the singers.]

That's right: "Amazing Grace" again. But did you notice the words sounded a little different this time? That's because they were sung in Creek, another Native American language.

OK, how about now?

[Have the singers begin "Amazing Grace" in Choctaw and allow the children to call out the correct answer.]

Yes! That was "Amazing Grace" again — but this time in Choctaw.

Why do we sing this in so many languages?

[Allow for responses, while seeking this general answer: "Because not everybody speaks the same language."]

You know, there's a story about languages from the day the church began (not just our church right here but the people who were Jesus' followers 2,000 years ago). People from all over the world had come to Jerusalem, and they spoke many different languages. But God made it possible for each of them to hear the message in their own language. And just as



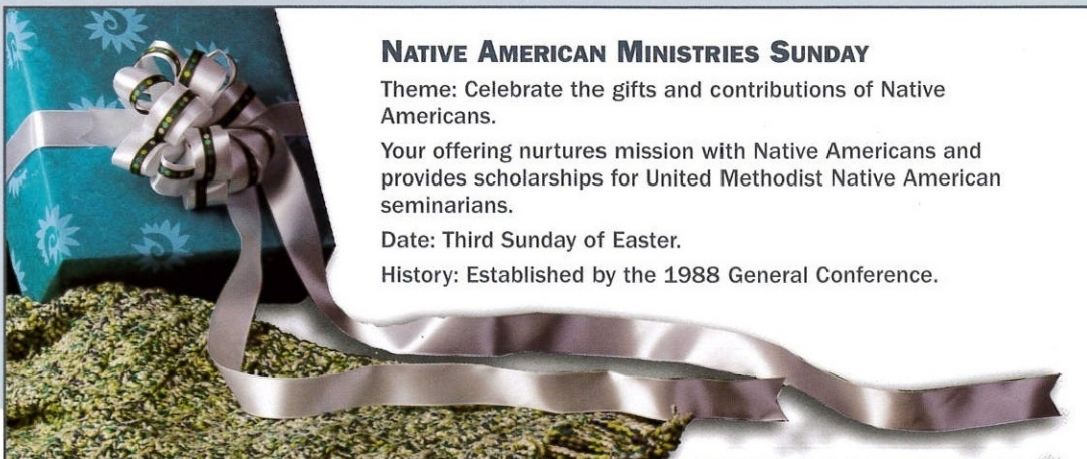
you heard "Amazing Grace" in different languages, the message is the same. As Christians, each of us is part of one body, even though we may have different languages and come from different places.

Do you know why we sang this hymn in Native American languages today? It is Native American Ministries Sunday. Today, United Methodist churches will receive a special offering. *[If your church is using a special envelope for this Sunday, hold it up for the children to see.]*

The money you give today will go for outreach to Native American communities and will help Native Americans go to school to become pastors like *[name your pastor]*. It's a reminder that, although we speak lots of different languages and have many ways of doing things, we really are all one people because we have the same parent. Do you know who that is?

God. God is our parent.

**Let's pray:
Caring God, no two of us are exactly alike, and sometimes we forget we all are your children. Help us to treat everyone equally and kindly. Help us to learn from the people around us. We love you. Amen.**



NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

Theme: Celebrate the gifts and contributions of Native Americans.

Your offering nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians.

Date: Third Sunday of Easter.

History: Established by the 1988 General Conference.