

Native American Ministries Sunday

YOUTH RESOURCE GUIDE

ORIGINAL PHOTO BY GINNY UNDERWOOD



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IDEAS FOR YOUTH TO CELEBRATE AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

Native American Ministries Sunday falls on the Third Sunday of Easter, a season of resurrection and renewal. Consider designing Native American Ministries Sunday events through a lens of renewal that leads to missional and systemic action.



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VIRTUAL WATCH PARTY

Host a watch party that explores the history of Native Americans.

Invite each youth to develop a conversation starter or question for discussion after the film.

Some suggested titles:

Smoke Signals

Dawnland

The Mayors of Shiprock

Gather

Basketball or Nothing

(This is a six episode docu-series. Watch the first episode as a group and encourage students to watch the rest on their own.)



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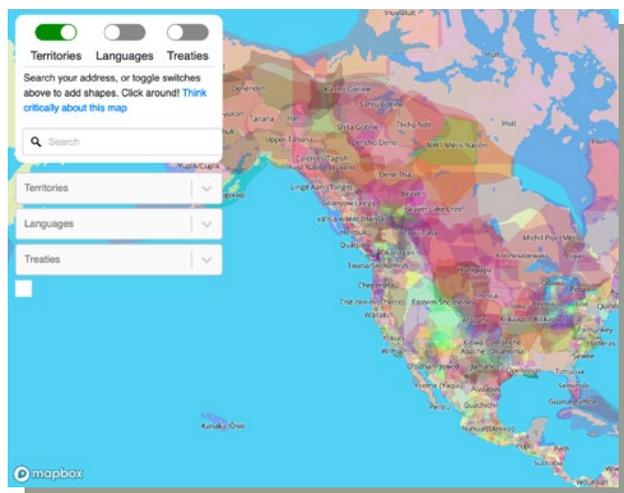
DAY OF SERVICE

Set up an interview.

Contact your annual conference's chair of the Committee on Native American Ministries and schedule a time for him or her to speak with your youth.

Put together a statement of land acknowledgment.

Use this map to determine the Native American people who were displaced by colonizers in the community where you live and worship: <https://native-land.ca/>. Develop a land acknowledgment that honors the indigenous history of your community. Discuss how to repair harm that was caused and how you might build relationships with local tribes.



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WORSHIP PLAYLIST

Hymns shared by Native American United Methodists

- ▶ Kiowa Hymn by the Rev. Julienne Judd and family, Caroline and Taloa Judd
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxaik5NYe04&feature=youtu.be>
- ▶ Choctaw Hymn 138 by Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puSe55B88PI&feature=youtu.be>
- ▶ Amazing Grace in Cherokee by Detra Kingfisher-Quinones
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8q7ZobEtKY&feature=youtu.be>
- ▶ Comanche Hymn #1 by the Rev. Donna Pewo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0p3aN273ql&feature=youtu.be>
- ▶ Cheyenne Hymn by the Rev. Donna Pewo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9xH3J0wNeo&feature=youtu.be>
- ▶ Native Hymns by Jason and Jariah Eyachabbe
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6FLtTu__jw&feature=youtu.be
- ▶ Native Hymns by Brent and Miwese Greenwood
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CNy5-uiLG4&feature=youtu.be
- ▶ Special Music by Miwese Greenwood
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nXd1pvmclA&feature=youtu.be>



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GROUP OPENING & ICEBREAKER

Welcome the youth as usual. In your welcome, include an introduction to Native American Ministries Sunday:

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. Today we join with other congregations to receive the Native American Ministries Sunday special offering.

Our gifts provide scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians, strengthen and develop Native American ministries and communities, both urban and rural, and support Native American outreach at the annual conference level.

Today we are going to play a game that was popular with Native American adults. A singer from each team sang a song encouraging her or his team and antagonizing her or his opponents.

The Moccasin Game originated from a story about how day and night became part of creation. According to the legend, because the game lasted until sunrise, day and night both prevailed. Because every living creature is said to have created at least one Moccasin Game song,



there are hundreds of songs that can be sung during the game.

The game is played by lining up a number of shoes in a row. One person hides a pebble or marble in one of the shoes while the other team members have their backs turned. The other team must guess which shoe is holding the pebble. For each shoe that the guesser shakes and is empty, the hiding team gets one point. (The game is intended to be noisy so encourage the youth to instigate the other team while vocally encouraging their own teammates.)



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SCRIPTURE: Matthew 23:1-12

MESSAGE: PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

Today's Gospel lesson could be considered the last straw for the Pharisees. Jesus publicly calls out their hypocrisy by pointing out all the ways that their leadership is inconsistent with the kingdom of God. He does it not only in front of his disciples but declares it to the crowd of people who are gathered.

This public condemnation of the Pharisees happens just days before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. The passage is preceded a few chapters earlier with Jesus cleansing the temple of the money changers and telling a lawyer that the greatest laws are to love God and love our neighbor.

The Pharisees were a lay movement that wanted to reform Israel. They were deeply concerned with following the letter of the law. But because some of the laws were unjust, the laws enforced by the Pharisees often harmed people who were more vulnerable.

Jesus knows that those in power are planning to kill him and perhaps that is why he ramps up his game and starts putting it all on the line.

What he has to say is interesting.

- He doesn't disregard their teaching.
- Jesus acknowledges their authority and their scholarship.
- He tells the crowd to practice what Pharisees preach but don't do as they do.

Jesus wants his followers to resist the temptations of this world. We are to avoid the power trips and instead focus on keeping the teachings of Moses and of Jesus in front of us. It's important to keep these teachings about being in right relationship with God in mind especially when they are in conflict with laws made by people.

I love that in our Wesleyan tradition as United Methodists, social holiness walks hand in hand with personal holiness.

As we celebrate the United Methodist Native American Ministries today, we remember the amazing ways that our church community is part of meeting the needs of those who have experienced injustice throughout US history.



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We are part of a church that so often practices what it preaches and is in ministry with people:

- supporting seminary students,
- offering relief in the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- encouraging contextual expressions of Christianity through Native American traditions and customs.

It is important to celebrate the church living out God's mission to be the hands and feet of Christ in a broken and hurting world.

At the same time, Jesus reminds us in today's message that we cannot rest on our laurels. Part of our discipleship must be to remain humble.

Friends, we cannot forget about the log in our own eye. We must acknowledge the ways that the church as an institution causes harm. We need to repent of our institutional sins so that we can be integrated as the body of Christ. And we need to acknowledge and deal with situations in our own church community when people are hurting so that we can begin to heal.

For example, in 1864 Methodist pastor and military leader John Chivington led what is known as the Sand Creek Massacre. Approximately 675 soldiers launched a surprise attack on a peaceful Cheyenne



and Arapaho encampment and killed about 230 people, many of them women, children and the elderly and even committed atrocities on the dead.

We can't forget this part of our history. We can't ignore when organizations, governments and churches act in ways that harm others.



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Following Jesus takes courage. Sometimes healing is painful.

But Jesus reminds us that when we stay humble, when we respond with the love of God and the love of our neighbor at the center, we will be exalted.

The good news is that Jesus gives us a model to speak truth to power.

He stands up to the abusive powers and principalities even though it brings him another step closer to the cross.

Jesus welcomes all to the table as equals. God's laws centered in love always win and are stronger than the

laws of society or the laws of the church. That is the promise and joy that is experienced in this Easter season. Out of death and violence, God's love emerges victorious. And we are invited to be cocreators of that love.

Today we celebrate our Native American siblings. We remember that even in the messiness of our humanity God still loves us. When we repent of our sins, we can begin to move forward repairing the harm and the pain. God's grace is freely given not because there is anything we have done but because that is how much God loves and cherishes each one of us.

May we find comfort in the complexity of our humanity even as we rejoice in the connection with all of our siblings in Christ. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed.

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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Download and print enough “Faith and Fact” cards for each student to review and to bring home: <https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/23>.



Watch “Know My Truth” by United Methodist Native American Alyssa Underwood: <https://youtu.be/EmTAg7j2eM>.



Break into teams for discussion:

1. What are some of the words Alyssa uses to describe herself?
2. What do you think she means when she says “know my truth”?
3. Did you find yourself reflecting on preconceptions or stereotypes you have of First Americans?
4. Share similarities and differences that you observed in Alyssa’s life and your life.
5. How do you describe your truth?

ABOUT ALYSSA UNDERWOOD

Alyssa Underwood is in her senior year as a visual performing arts major at Classen High School of Advanced Studies in Oklahoma City. In April 2020, she was inducted into the Oklahoma Indian Student Honor Society and the National Honor Society. Her art has received national awards including first place at the Red Earth Youth Art Show and a Gold Key in Scholastics. Alyssa is an active youth leader in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of The United Methodist Church. She has been a part of the mentorship program with Art Space Untitled for two years. She is a member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma.



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OFFERING

Today we offer back a portion of what God has given to us. Through our Native American Ministries Sunday offering, we are part of repairing brokenness and building up communities.

You are invited to give generously, trusting that your gifts will be a symbol of how you practice what you preach. The contribution you offer today will share Christ's love with people who are responding to their neighbors with educational support, medical assistance and faith resources that incorporate traditions and customs that are important to keeping Native culture alive.

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CLOSING PRAYER

Stand in a circle and invite a student to read the prayer.

By Rev. Delana Taylor, Cherokee, ordained deacon, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

*Creator God, as you have gathered us in generations past, lead and guide us
this day as we seek your wisdom and your vision for our people.*

*Give us eyes to see one another as you see us, people of one God,
connected to one another and to you in all our relations, and in your son Jesus.*

Give us ears to hear the wisdom of our elders and the laughter of our children.

Give us words of blessing and healing for a hurting world.

Open our hearts and lead us on the path of peace.

*We stand together on sacred ground with grateful hearts, knowing that the One
who promises is faithful and true.*

Amen.



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