

# Native American Legends

Waldorf Curriculum - Third Grade  
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### Appendices

- “The Coming of Corn” (Cherokee)
- “The Forgotten Ear of Corn” (Arikara)
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- “Homes for the Dine” (Navajo)
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- “How Coyote Stole Fire” (Plains Indian)
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- “Tiny Bat and the Ball Game” (Southeast)

# Native American Legends

## Introduction

Native American legends are, of course, an oral tradition handed down from generation to generation. Try as much as possible to share these stories orally with your children. If you aren't comfortable with storytelling, I recommend The Way of the Storyteller by Ruth Sawyer. There are tons of collections of Native American legends available at any library. It is best if you make sure the story is authentic to the region you are studying – and always read the story in advance to make sure it is suitable to the age of your child. In addition to the nonfiction area of the library, check the juvenile fiction section or ask your local librarian for assistance. Some sample stories are given in the booklist.

As an overall plan for the unit, try to cover each region of the country in a week's work. Consider two or three legends to represent the tribes of that region – more than this will mean that you don't have sufficient time for retelling and adding the story to your main lesson book. After opening the class session with your opening verse, do the story (telling or retelling) and then your activity session. Activities for follow-up can be

- **Writing and Composition**  
Your child can continue to learn how to compose sentences and/or poetry, using the story as material, and engage in writing practice. This would be an opportunity for cursive handwriting practice as well. This work is put in the main lesson book, which becomes an anthology of legends from around the country.
- **Color Illustrations in Crayon**  
In addition to the retelling of each legend (in story or poem form) your child can decorate his/her main lesson book with appropriate illustrations.
- **Dramatization**  
The teacher and the student retell the legend together and take the various parts, speaking lines from the stories.
- **Artistic Activities**  
Watercolor painting a scene from the story; making small models of an Indian village from beeswax, clay, and cloth materials; learning songs and verses, etc.

Use your afternoon handwork time to further explore the Native American cultures of that week's region. This is the time for recipes, pottery and weaving projects, and any other activity which helps your child to understand and experience the deep respect and connection between Native Americans and the earth. Use your imagination, your child's interests, and the materials you have on hand to inspire you. For example, it might be nice to dry felt an ear of corn for one of the legends. Look around you for connections. Take as many nature walks as you can. Some suggested activities for enjoying nature follow.

Things to collect in the fall for year-round crafts:

- Acorns
- Conkers
- Leaves
- Walnuts
- Milk weed pods
- Birch bark
- Shelf mushrooms
- Peach pits
- Flat stones
- Sheet moss or lichen
- Twigs
- Pine cones
- Poppy seed pods
- Corn husks

Find directions for making corn husk dolls in [The American Girl's Handy Book](#) or online.

Look up sunrise and sunset times for your area at <http://www.sunrisesunset.com/usa/>

## A Fall Time Scavenger Hunt

- A feather
- A thorn
- A pointed rock
- Something round and smooth
- A chewed leaf (not chewed by you)
- A piece of man made litter
- Something beautiful
- Two kinds of seeds
- A sun trap
- Something that reminds you of yourself
- Something dried out
- Something that surprised you
- Something green
- Something that crumbles in your hand
- Something that smells
- Something squishy
- Something you want to learn more about
- Something that lives underground
- Something that was once higher than your head

from Fun with Fall Fruit and Foods  
by Tonya Lemos

## An Indoor Autumn Game

You will need to collect and press about 50 Autumn leaves. It is best to collect a variety from many different trees. You can press them in a telephone book until you are ready to play with them.

Place all the leaves in a box. Sit on the floor in a circle. And pass the box around. Everyone should pick a leaf and look at it really carefully for 5 minutes. Then put it back into the box and gently mix up the leaves. Then pour the leaves out into the middle of the circle and everyone should try to find their leaf. You can also play this game with stones, pine cones and other natural things.

"If you love it enough  
Anything will talk to you."

George Washington Carver

from Fun with Fall Fruit and Foods  
by Tonya Lemos

## Acorn Muffins

California Native Americans used acorn as a staple food and still reverence it. The nuts are gathered during the fall from September to October. When processed properly, acorns have a pleasant nutty flavor. Acorns are an excellent source of energy, protein, carbohydrate, and calcium. When collecting acorns, do not be surprised if many of them must be discarded due to insects or mold. More should be collected than are needed. If you spread a sheet of plastic under the tree and use only those acorns that fall within a one-day period, this seems to reduce bug infestation, an especially important problem for acorns that are to be stored in their shell. The ripe tan-to-brown acorns, rather than the unripe green ones, should be gathered.

The bitterness in acorns is caused by tannic acid which is water soluble. To remove this unpleasant taste, shell the brown, ripe acorns and remove any corky skin layers, dice the meat, and boil the chunks in water from 15 to 30 minutes until the water turns brown. Then pour off the water and repeat the process until the water clears, indicating that the tannic acid has been removed. Periodically taste a bit of the acorns until you no longer detect any bitterness. (Native Americans would let the crushed acorn meat soak in a fast-moving, clean stream for several weeks to remove the bitterness.) During the last boiling, salt water can be added; then the acorns can be deep fried or mixed in a soup. Also, finely chopped acorn meats can be added to bread and muffins, or the soft acorn nut can be added as a protein booster to cooked greens. After the leaching process, acorn meat can be frozen.

To make flour, the boiled acorn meat can be split in two and dried by slowly baking in a 200 degree oven with the door cracked to allow moisture to escape. Or, they can be dried in the sun. They are then crushed or ground and used as a thickener or as flour. Another method is to roast the fresh acorns to work well in a grinder or blender. After grinding, the coarse flour is placed in a cloth bag and boiled to leach out the tannic acid.

Acorn flour can be used alone to make an acorn bread, but it is not very pleasing to most tastes. Acorn flour is more palatable when mixed with wheat flour or corn meal: one part acorn meal mixed with four parts corn meal for corn bread, or one to four parts wheat flour for bread. The acorn meal can also be heated in water to make a nutritious mush. Or add enough water to make a thick batter. Add a dash of salt and sweetener to improve the taste. Allow the batter to stand for an hour (or until thick) then pat into pancakes and cook or twist and bake on an open fire.

In their shell, the dried acorns will store for a time. Some Native Americans stored acorns for several years in bags buried in boggy areas.

*Acorn Muffins*

1 cup acorn flour  
1 cup cornmeal  
1 cup flour  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon garlic or onion salt  
1 egg, slightly beaten  
1½ cups milk  
2 tablespoons bacon drippings, melted

Preheat oven to 425 F. Sift together the dry ingredients. Beat egg and milk together; stir in bacon drippings. Add liquid to dry ingredients and stir until just moistened. Don't overmix. Pour into well-greased muffin tins and bake 15 minutes or until brown and crusty. Makes about 18 muffins.

from Fun with Fall Fruit and Foods  
by Tonya Lemos



# Native American Legends

## Book Suggestions

### **Storytelling, Story Collections**

The Way of the Storyteller. Ruth Sawyer.

Very Last First Time. Jan Andrews. Inuit.

Inuit Myths, Legends and Songs. Bernadette Driscoll. Inuit.

Clamshell Boy. Terri Cohlene. Northwest Coast.

Raven. Gerald McDermott. Northwest Coast.

When Clay Sings. Byrd Baylor. Southwest.

Arrow to the Sun. Gerald McDermott. Pueblo.

How the Stars Fell Into the Sky. Jerri Oughton. Navajo.

A Rainbow at Night. Bruce Hucko. Navajo.

Turquoise Boy. Terri Cohlene. Navajo.

The Goat in the Rug. Charles L. Blood. Navajo.

Owl Eyes. Frieda Gates. Mohawk.

Quillworker. Terri Cohlene. Cheyenne.

Where the Buffaloes Begin. Olaf Baker. Sioux.

The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush. Tomie de Paola. Southwest.

Indian Why Stories. Frank B. Linderman. Blackfoot, Chippewa, Cree.

Raccoon's Last Race. Joseph Bruchac. New England.

Little Firefly. Terri Cohlene. Algonquin.

The First Strawberries. Joseph Bruchac. Cherokee.

Dancing Drum. Terri Cohlene. Cherokee.

## **Native American Culture**

Native American Sign Language. Madeline Olsen. Tribes of the Great Plains.

The New England Indians. C. Keith Wilbur.

Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message. Jake Swamp.

Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back. Joseph Bruchac.

I'm in Charge of Celebrations. Byrd Baylor. Respect for the earth.

Poetry of Earth. selected and illustrated by Adrienne Adams.

Everybody Needs a Rock. Byrd Baylor. Respect for the earth.

The Dreamer. Cynthia Rylant. The Christian creation story – every culture has one.

The Way to Start a Day. Byrd Baylor. Respect for the earth.

Native American music recordings such as "Canyon Trilogy" by R. Carlos Nakai.

## **Art and Handwork Project Resources**

The American Girl's Handy Book. Lots of projects using natural materials.

Learning by Doing Northwest Coast Native Indian Art. Karin Clark.

Hand-Building Techniques. Joaquim Chavarria. Or other pottery book.

Spin It: Making Yarn from Scratch. Lee Raven.

Weaving Without a Loom. Veronica Burningham.

A Dyer's Garden. Rita Buchanan. Natural dye recipes.

Nature's Art Box. Laura C. Martin.

American Indian Games & Crafts. Charles L. Blood.

Native American Rock Art. Yvette la Pierre.

How to do Wet-on-Wet Watercolor Painting and Teach it to Children. Rauld Russell.  
(available from Marsha Johnson, through the waldorf-curriculum supplies Yahoo group)

## **Cumulative Project**

A Journey through Time in Verse and Rhyme. poems collected by Heather Thomas.

## **The Life of Man is a Circle**

Everything the Power of the World does is done in a Circle.

The Sky is round, and I have heard  
that the Earth is round like a ball, and so are the stars.

The Wind, in its greatest power, whirls.

Birds make their nests in circles,  
for theirs is the same religion as ours.

The sun comes forth and goes down in a circle.

The moon does the same, and both are round.

Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing,  
and always come back again to where they were.

The life of a man is a circle from childhood  
to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves.

Our teepees were round like the nests of birds,  
and these were always set in a circle,  
the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests,  
where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children.

BLACK ELK, LAKOTA SIOUX

# Native American Legends

## Lesson Plans: Week One

### Far North and Pacific Northwest

Far North: Inuit

Pacific Northwest: Tlingit

#### Activities

##### Science

- Make touch tray or bag of objects from the Northwest area.
- Build igloo of ice cubes.
- Study properties of water – frozen, liquid. Water cycle.
- Sort seashells. Study levels of sea life.

##### Music, Art, Drama

- Introduce American Indian dances and music and instruments.
- Play records of sea music.
- Make finger puppets of sea creatures.
- Make a plankhouse.
- Make a mosaic whale.
- Sponge paint an ocean.
- Make mountain of clay.
- Ladder out of sticks (“The Arrow Ladder”)
- Learn about bows and arrows.
- Dance to music of the Far North.
- Make collage of Northwest art and artifacts.
- Make totem pole.
- Dress up – act out legend.

##### Cognitive

- Find tribal regions on National Geographic Native American Heritage Wall Map: <http://www.maps.com/map.aspx?pid=3459>
- Introduce Far North and Northwest coast on wall.
- Name tribes, discuss.
- Describe Chinook tribe.
- Symbols on totems and carvings.

## Home

- Play with Eskimo dolls and northern toys – there's a knitting pattern for an Inuit doll in Knitting for Children: A Second Book
- Food study and cook a cultural meal of the Far North.
- Show chisel and mussel pan (real or in pictures).
- Cook fish from the Northwest.
- Learn to identify foods from the area.
- Bake salmon.
- Dress up in dance costumes. Learn about vocabulary: shawl, moccasins, chokers, roaches, etc. Have a mini powwow.

# Native American Legends

## Lesson Plans: Week Two

### Southwest

Southwest: Pueblo (Zuni, Hopi)

Southwest: Navajo

#### Activities

##### Science

- Make turtle shells, rattles out of clay.
- Make animal masks and do face painting.
- Study tracks – make some with your feet.
- Take a walk in local neighborhood. Identify sights, sounds, and smells.
- Study the porcupine and beaver.
- Discuss life cycle. Draw a circle that shows
  - Grass feeds animal
  - Animal feeds man & animal
  - Man/animal waste feeds the earth
  - Earth feeds grass
- Take a field trip to local farm with cows and pigs or chickens or a zoo. Talk to your child about what the animals eat, then go to a nursery. Talk to the owner or employees about what is used to help the plants grow: fertilizer from animal droppings and compost.
- Discuss how each part of the circle works with the other parts, the part we play as human beings, and how when one part doesn't work it affects the others.
- Make a cave out of clay.
- Study natural materials – what Navajo pottery, jewelry, and clothes are made of.
- Study insects, name and identify them.
- Explore insect life. Keep charts, collect and name insects
- Find other stories about insects, water, birds (compare with "Homes for the Dine")
- Visit museum to see artifacts of the Southwest.
- Build replicas of homes in legend ("Homes for the Dine").
- Go bird watching. Look at animal shelters.
- Water play (sink, float). New and ancient inventions around the world.
- Simple scientific experiments of natural properties.

## Music, Art, Drama

- Name rhythm instruments. Learn to make a drum.
- Play music from the Southwest, how is it different or alike?
- Learn dances of Native American cultures.
- Act out story "A Happy Day", tell story using large hide with pictographs.
- Ask your child to draw or paint a portrait of her grandmother.
- Learn Indian symbols ([Native American Sign Language](#)).
- Use symbols to draw murals, draw on small pieces of leather.
- Go to museum to see all of various cultures, compare differences/similarities
- Review different art forms of North American Indians.
- Draw a picture of your own home – or one you dream of.
- Natural dyes ([A Dyer's Garden](#)).
- Fingerweave a basket. Paperweave a rug.
- Act out the legend "Homes for the Dine"
- Look at differences and likenesses in Southwest art, clothes, food, music, and dances.
- Make hands-on objects like hogans, katchinas, jewelry, pottery.
- Learn clay coiling.

## Cognitive

- Name 5 Southwest tribes (examples: Navajo, Hopi, Pueblo, Zuni, Apache).
- Name the Bird people, Water people, Insect people from the legend "Homes for the Dine"
- Learn about the livelihoods of Southwest people (examples: jewelry, sheep, rugs, pottery).
- Find Southwest tribes on map.
- Work with present map of the USA. Study about life on the reservations.
- Learn about values and celebrations/ceremonies.

## Home

- Cook or prepare traditional foods of the Far West area, shellfish.
- Taste foods from story "A Happy Day", berries.
- Play with Indian dolls.
- Name 3 Southwestern foods, prepare some.
- Bring in artifacts, foods, clothes, etc. to study and use.
- Study corn, in how many ways is it used?
- Make a food collage.
- Review the food groups then and now.
- How is food preparation different now?

# Native American Legends

## Lesson Plans: Week Three

### Plains Indians

Northern Plains: Mohawk, Cheyenne

Southern Plains: Sioux

#### Activities

##### Science

- Study objects used in making dancing clothes (examples: feathers, bones, hide, beads, leather, wood, sinew, metals, old and modern objects).
- Discuss powwow posters and pictures. Discuss what you see.
- Study different ecology and life environments.
- Make a diorama of the Great Plains (read Where Buffaloes Begin for help).
- Natural herbs/healing.
- Nature walks.
- Study landforms, elements, weather.
- Study of the Sun and Moon and what they do.
- Learn about frog, coyote, chipmunk (“How Coyote Stole the Fire”)
- What do we use to make a fire? Rub rocks and sticks together.
- Fire needs air to live.
- Fire safety! First Aid.
- Using a water table and/or sand table, build an island. Also demonstrate floating, sinking, and the rise of air bubbles.
- At the water/sand table, demonstrate the shape of rivers, lakes, oceans, puddles, streams, ponds. Make word labels to be hung by the table with pictures.
- Why is water important?

##### Music, Art, Drama

- Make parfleche or Indian pouch.
- Learn new dances and songs. Learn Round Dance.
- Listen to powwow music, show videos of dancers. Listen to music of different tribes.
- Make beaded jewelry.
- Learn to weave a bracelet.
- Make a powwow mural – using any and all art media.
- Make bead and bone choker for dancing.
- Learn the names of Plains dancing clothes (examples: bustle, roach, leggings, breastplate, beadwork, etc.)



- Dress up in dancing clothes and have a mini powwow – class presentations of dancing and singing.
- Practice events and gift making for powwow – beading, painting.
- Watch someone “break” a horse.
- Act out story “A Little Boy’s Big Moment.” Make puppets for the story.
- Compare styles: Woodland, Coastal, Plains, Southwest, Southeast, etc. regarding beadwork, designs, dance outfits, accessories.
- Build a sweatlodge. Act out the fire story.
- Draw fire. How do we make it today in different places (examples: stove, heaters, barbeque, campfires, gas, electrics, candles)
- Music & Movement: fast, slow, be like a flame, move like it, reach out like fiery tongues.

### Cognitive

- Learn new singing and pictographs.
- Name the tribes of the Northern Plains. Study the moons (see [Thirteen Moons on Turtle’s Back](#))
- Review seasons – summer, fall, winter, spring. Review related temperature changes.
- Make shelters of different tribes.
- Study language of different tribes.
- Make comparative study of dances.
- Learn about name giving ceremonies, initiation ceremonies – what is a giveaway?
- Review ceremonies of four tribes (examples: Ute Bear Dance, Kiowa Gourd Dance, Sioux Sun Dance, Seminole Stomp Dance)
- Discuss giveaways. Agree to have one as a family to honor one, or all, members. Help children make items to give away. Have Giveaway.
- Field trip to museums to view artifacts and art of different tribes and nations.
- Have a “field day” for the family – let children compete individually and then as teams. Choose events in both fine and gross motor areas. Allow class practice time. Then hold the event and reward winner.
- Learn about respect for others.
- Learn terms: What is a clan, tribe, nation?
- A buffalo supplies many things for Native American Plains Indians. List them.

### Home

- Make foods that are served at a powwow – native foods, herbal teas.
- Compare foods using all five of your senses.
- Study about herbs and seasonings of Indian tribes of the past and today.
- Introduce medicine man practices for healing.
- Introduce four natural plants, medicines, or foods. Let your child touch, smell, and see each in natural form. Prepare as necessary and serve.
- Cooking can be done over an open fire. Indian people long ago prepared their food over open fires. Try this (campfire, firepit, fireplace). Watch safety.
- Taste pure clear water.

# Native American Legends

## Lesson Plans: Week Four

### Woodland Indians

Northeast: Algonquin (Abenaki)

Southeast: Cherokee

#### Activities

##### Science

- Study life cycles of plants, animals, people.
- Study food chain – make pictures or a collage of it.
- Collect seeds. Identify, categorize, match to pictures of full-grown plants.
- Visit zoos and farms to see different animal mothers and babies.
- Sequence cards for the life cycle of a plant.
- Fish were caught with spear (see [New England Indians](#)). Show pictures of spear and explain process.
- Study opposites verbally and with objects (examples: smooth/rough)
- Study the animals in "Tiny Bat and the Ball Game". Name and categorize as flying birds or animals with teeth. Where would you place the bat?
- Learn animal sounds. Match to pictures and name.

##### Music, Art, Drama

- Make a pinch pot.
- Learn songs about nature and animals.
- Learn differences of sounds nature makes, animals make, people make. Play an animal sound game.
- Review sign language.
- Learn dances and ceremonies of the Woodland Indian tribes.
- Pretend to be a growing tree or flower, be an animal of your choice.
- Bear, buffalo, deer, rabbit, bird dances.
- Wild flower collection.
- Use clay in making sculptures.
- Act out "How the Cherokees Learned to Make Pottery".
- Make flannel board story of legend.
- Make dwellings of the Southeast tribes (checkee).
- Musical instruments of the Southeast.
- Learn new songs and dances of the Southeast.
- Make wampum number necklace, false face mask, long house, dugout canoe
- Make clay prints

- Birch bark canoe
- Learn about drumbeats. Practice (slow/fast, stop/go).
- Make baskets. Cherokee double wall basket kit:  
[http://www.basketweaving.com/Basket\\_kits.htm](http://www.basketweaving.com/Basket_kits.htm)
- Play ball. Organize team games and activities for children both inside and outside (examples: hand games, kickball, freeze tag)

### Cognitive

- Name parts of the life cycle.
- Learn the names of the Southeast tribes (example: Seminole, Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, etc.)
- The elements.
- The seasons.
- Mother Earth and Father Sun.
- Study the four directions.
- Study the Iroquois and other tribes of the Northwest. Name them, find the region on the map.
- Study trees of the region (examples: maple trees, pine trees)
- All about Iroquois Confederacy.
- Show Iroquois and other Eastern artifacts (examples: Chippewa, Penobscot, Shawnee, etc.)
- Take some time to learn about the Native American tribes native to your region. Visit museums and other cultural sites.
- Research some of the contributions Native Americans have made to modern life (examples: sign language, canoe, snowshoe, corn, potato, kickball, etc.)

### Home

- Study the concept of hunger in animals and people.
- Study people food and animal food. Compare.
- Fix a meal using foods that are natural, unprocessed – as living from the land.
- Grow seeds and sprouts.
- What can you cook from your harvest?
- Learn about ancient food preservation techniques – drying. Make acorn muffins (see recipe at the beginning of this unit)
- Make clay utensils
- Make a beehive and study about honey and maple syrup, maple sugar.
- Make vegetable prints.
- Native dress doll.
- Make a dish with squash, corn, fowl.

# Native American Legends

## Cumulative Project: Main Lesson Book

Instead of spending weeks 1 through 3 on learning the material and then week 4 in a project to demonstrate what was learned, this cumulative project will run continuously throughout the unit. Main lesson books are used throughout Waldorf education and the main lesson book for this unit will serve as an anthology of the Native American legends your child has studied. In addition to simply retelling each legend in sentence form (with accompanying illustration), try to also use narrative poetry – use *Overheard on a Salt Marsh* on page 143 of *A Journey through Time in Verse and Rhyme* as an example – and other storytelling styles, such as the drawn story on deerhide.

It might be nice to set up a display of all the hands-on projects done in this unit (painting, weaving, pottery, models, etc.) in addition for the main lesson book for family and friends to see – a sort of Open House. Perhaps these can be held quarterly (or at holidays, such as Christmas and Easter) and all children can participate, explaining what they've learned. A display of this type can be documented with photographs or a video and will become part of the assessment for your child's work in the unit.

### Main Lesson Book Composition

The most important thing is that your child practice retelling the stories learned. For continued practice with developing language or composition skills, one or two sentences per daily lesson are usually sufficient. Most students between the ages of 7 and 9 can write a simple sentence in 10 to 20 minutes and also add some color or embellishment to the page. The accompanying illustration usually takes about 30 to 40 minutes if done with care. The sentence can be written in cursive writing using a stick crayon or thick color pencil (such as Lyra). It could also be written with a regular graphite pencil.

After reviewing the story presented on the previous day, the home teacher helps the child to choose an appropriate scenario from the story to illustrate and summarize with a sentence or two. Several pages can be created from one story, each telling a different scene. Alternating writing days with dramatization days is usually helpful for the child. You can also tell other Native American legends from that culture to continue your discussion but return to the story you are illustrating in your anthology for the writing portion of the main lesson block. In other words, you do not have to rewrite and illustrate every story you study – but for the story you choose to add to your anthology, take the time to do it well.

If your child struggles with composition, try to ask questions that will help her come up with her own ideas instead of giving her a sentence (composed by you) to write. For example, "What happened when Grandmother and Ada saw the bear?" might elicit a response "Grandmother shot the bear with her rifle because Ada was afraid of it. Then they were sorry they had killed the bear so they asked him if they could use his skin and

meat and he said it was okay.” Now the sentences used for today’s lesson came from her and not from you. As the teacher, you need to help your child either expand her response or shorten it, based on what you feel he/she can appropriately write in a day. You can also encourage her to make the vocabulary richer, or simplify it – again based on what is appropriate for her age and abilities. Write the chosen sentence(s) for today’s writing lesson on your chalkboard, if you have one, or on a drawing pad or separate sheet of paper *one word at a time* and allow Your child to copy it. Give her plenty of time. Since cursive handwriting is still new, you may need to demonstrate some words letter by letter. It is important to model careful writing. Children imitate all of your habits, good and bad! Once she is quite proficient in writing and spelling you can simply dictate the sentence. If you are doing spelling words based on the story (optional), you can write the sentence but leave some spaces blank, saying, “You know how to spell \_\_\_ so I will leave a blank there when I write the sentence and you can then write it from memory.”

### **Main Lesson Book Illustration**

Illustrations should be approached in steps. As the teacher, you need to guide your child through the stages of drawing so it helps to have dried some sample drawings for each story yourself in advance. When working on the main lesson book, have a paper of your own side by side with the student – your child can then imitate the steps.

Begin with the figure first, using a simple lightly drawn geometric shape to represent the animal. For example, for a snake, use a squiggle (form drawing style). Think of the essential form of that animal. **Do not** outline, for you will lose control of the shape if you begin that way. Then, add more details and colors to the animal, using the beeswax crayons to blend colors together and add spots of detail. Now, fill the entire page with color. It is usually easiest to begin with the ground on which the figure is standing and then, if there is a tree, draw the tree rising out of the ground (begin with the trunk then move upward). Place all main figures in the drawing. Add the sky. The color of the top half and the bottom half should be blended together along the horizon line. Take care to keep the central figure clear. Drawing in the sky portion of the illustration should be done with a light hand, so keep it “up in the air.” The ground should be colored more firmly. To create white, leave areas of the page uncolored. It is usually helpful for the teacher to retell the story as the illustration is being created.

# Native American Legends

## Skills/Concepts

- Understand that Native American people had great ties to the land, desired to show respect for the land in their ways of life, moved in rhythm with the seasons
- That they were not one culture but that many distinct peoples lived on this land
- Their ways of life differed primarily based on the different natural resources available in each region
- "Creation myths" – looking at the world around us to answer eternal human questions. How did things come to be the way they are?
- Organizing information into a chart
- Compare/contrast
- Drawing conclusions
- Fact vs. opinion
- Reading a map
- Music, art, and handwork components throughout

## *Appendices*

Note: It is best for you to read the following tales over a few times and then re-tell them in your own words. Have your child then go through the process of writing and illustrating each of the chosen stories and adding them to his/her main lesson book.



## **“The Coming of Corn” (Cherokee)**

Long ago, when the world was new, an old woman lived with her grandson in the shadow of the big mountain. They lived happily together until the boy was seven years old. Then his Grandmother gave him his first bow and arrow. He went out to hunt for game and brought back a small bird.

“Ah,” said Grandmother, “You are going to be a great hunter. We must have a feast.” She went out to the small storehouse behind their cabin. She came back with dried corn in her basket and made a fine tasting soup with the bird and the corn. From that point on the boy hunted. Each day he brought back something and each day the Grandmother took some corn from the storage house to make soup. One day though, the boy peeked into the storehouse. It was empty! But that evening, when he returned with game to cook, she went out again and brought back a basket filled with dry corn.

“This is strange,” the boy said to himself. “I must find out what is happening.”

The next day, when he brought back his game, he waited until his Grandmother had gone out for her basket of corn, and followed her. He watched her go into the storehouse with the empty basket. He looked through a crack between the logs and saw a very strange thing. The storehouse was empty, but his Grandmother was leaning over the basket. She rubbed her hands along the sides of her body, and dried corn poured out to fill the basket. Now the boy grew afraid. Perhaps she was a witch! He crept back to the house to wait. When his Grandmother returned, though, she saw the look on his face.

“Grandson,” she said, “You followed me to the shed and saw what I did there.”

“Yes, Grandmother,” the boy answered.

The old woman shook her head sadly. “Grandson,” she said, “then I must get ready to leave you. Now you know my secret I can no longer live with you as I did before. Before the sun rises tomorrow I shall be dead. You must do as I tell you, and you will be able to feed yourself and the people when I have gone.”

The old woman looked very weary and the boy started to move towards her, but she motioned him away. “You cannot help now, Grandson. Simply do as I tell you. When I have died, clear away a patch of ground, on the south side of our lodge, that place where the sun shines longest and brightest. The earth there must be made completely bare. Drag my body over that ground seven times and then bury me in that earth. Keep the ground clear. If you do as I say, you shall see me again and you will be able to feed the people.”

Then the old woman grew silent and closed her eyes. Before the morning came, she was dead.

Her grandson did as he was told. He cleared away the space at the south side of the cabin. It was hard work, for there were trees and tangled vines, but at least the earth was bare. He dragged his Grandmother's body, and wherever a drop of her blood fell, a small plant grew up. He kept the ground clear around the small plants, and as they grew taller it seemed he could hear his Grandmother's voice whispering in the leaves. Time passed and the plants grew very tall, as tall as a person, and the long tassels at the top of each plant reminded the boy of his Grandmother's long hair. At last, ears of corn formed on each plant and his Grandmother's promise had come true. Now, though she had gone from the earth as she had one been, she would be with the people forever as the corn plant, to feed them.

## **“The Forgotten Ear of Corn” (Arikara)**

An Arikara woman was once gathering corn from the field to store away for winter use. She passed from stalk to stalk, tearing off the ears and dropping them into her folded robe. When all was gathered she started to go, when she heard a faint voice, like a child's, weeping and calling:

“Oh, do not leave me! Do not go away without me.”

The woman was astonished. “What child can that be?” she asked herself. “What babe can be lost in the cornfield?”

She set down her robe in which she had tied up her corn, and went back to search; but she found nothing.

As she started away she heard the voice again:

“Oh, do not leave me. Do not go away without me.”

She searched for a long time. At last in one corner of the field, hidden under the leaves of the stalks, she found one little ear of corn. This it was that had been crying, and this is why all Indian women have since gathered their corn crop very carefully, so that the succulent food product should not even to the last small nubbin be neglected or wasted, and thus displease the Great Mystery.

## **“The Tale of Why Corn Husk Dolls Have No Face” (Seneca)**

Many, many years ago, the corn, one of the Three Sisters, wanted to make something different. She made the moccasin and the salt boxes, the mats, and the face. She wanted to do something different so the Great Spirit gave her permission. So she made the little people out of corn husk and they were to roam the earth so that they would bring brotherhood and contentment to the Iroquois tribe. But she made one that was very, very beautiful. This beautiful corn person, you might call her, went into the woods and saw herself in a pool. She saw how beautiful she was and she became very vain and naughty. That began to make the people very unhappy and so the Great Spirit decided that wasn't what she was to do. She didn't pay attention to his warning, so the last time the messenger came and told her that she was going to have her punishment. Her punishment would be that she'd have no face, she would not converse with the Senecas or the birds or the animals. She'd roam the earth forever, looking for something to do to gain her face back again. So that's why we don't put any faces on the husk dolls.

Activity Suggestion: make a corn husk doll

## **“The Arrow Ladder”** **(Tlingit)**

Long ago, two boys who were good friends lived in the same village. The boys played together every day. They liked to make arrows and shoot them in the forest.

Just behind the village was a grassy hill where the boys played. One day after they had made lots of arrows they started up the hill. In their arms they carried all their bows and arrows. The sky was dark and only the bright, shiny Moon lit their way.

As they walked along, the younger boy ran ahead of his friend and called, “Look at the Moon! It seems so small hanging in the sky. It looks no bigger than my fist!”

The older boy answered, “You must never talk about the Moon in that disrespectful way.”

Just then the moonlight faded and the whole earth and sky grew dark. The older boy saw a big ring of rainbow colors dancing around them. When the rainbow finally disappeared, he looked around. His friend was nowhere to be seen. The boy called and called, but no answer came.

So the boy thought to himself, “Maybe my friend ran to the top of the hill to get away from the rainbow.” He looked up at the sky. There he saw the moon shining as brightly as before. He climbed to the top of the hill, searching for his friend. But the boy was nowhere to be found. “That round rainbow must have been the moon,” he thought. “I have heard the elders say it can carry people up to the sky.”

The older boy stood along on the hilltop. He felt sad that his friend was gone. Then he got an idea. He began putting strings on all the bows, one after the other. But each one broke until there was only one left. “I’m afraid to shoot the Moon,” he thought, “but I’ll shoot the bright star right next to it.” So he shot the arrow into the sky and sat down to watch. Soon the light from the star went out. Then he began shooting all the arrows at the star. None of them fell back to earth.

After he had shot most of his arrows, he saw something hanging down through the night air. When he shot the next arrow it stuck fast. The next arrow stuck too, and each one after. Soon a whole chain of arrows hung from the sky. He added on more so that the chain of arrows touched the ground.

The boy was very tired and fell asleep. When he awoke in the morning, he looked up. Instead of the chain of arrows, there was a long ladder reaching down to him from the sky.

The boy decided to climb the ladder. But first he broke off twigs from different bushes and stuck them in his hair. After that he began to climb. All day he climbed and that night he slept. The next morning he woke up and pulled the twig of salmonberry bush from his hair. It was full of fruit. He ate every berry and felt stronger.

Soon he was hungry again and pulled another twig from his hair. This time it was filled with salal berries. The last twig was hanging heavy with sweet huckleberries. The berries tasted so good, he ate them all.

When the boy reached the top of the skyladder he was very tired. He gathered some moss and lay down to sleep. As he slept, a girl approached and shook him by the shoulder. He heard her say, "Get up! I've come for you. My grandmother the sky-woman has sent me to bring you to her lodge."

So the boy went with the girl. Finally they came to a small lodge where the old woman lived.

"Why did you come up here?" the sky-woman asked.

"Because my friend was taken from me by the Moon," the boy replied.

"Oh, he is close by," said the sky-woman. "Moon has him locked away. I often hear him crying."

The sky-woman fed the hungry boy. When he had eaten, she gave him a magic cone from a spruce tree, a rose bush, and a small piece of stone. She told him to use them when the time came. The boy thanked the sky-woman for her kindness and left her lodge with the things she had given him.

The boy went toward the Moon's lodge. He heard his friend crying. He reached through the smoke-hole and pulled the younger boy out. "Come, my friend," he said, "I am here to help you."

He put the spruce cone down where his friend had been lying and told it to cry just as the younger boy had done. Then the two boys ran away.

It wasn't long before Moon discovered the crying spruce cone and could see that the younger boy had escaped. Moon was angry and started after him. When the older boy saw the Moon chasing them, he threw the rose bush onto the path. A great thicket of thorns suddenly appeared. The thorns were sharp and the Moon had to go very slowly to keep from being pricked. This gave the boys time to run far ahead.

The next time the Moon nearly caught up with them, the older boy threw a piece of stone. It became a huge cliff. The Moon kept rolling farther and farther back. Finally, the Moon rolled out of sight.

When the boys reached the sky-woman's lodge, they were tired but very happy to be safe. The sky-woman said, "Take your friend and lie down at the place where the top of the ladder touches the sky. Both of you must think only of the hilltop where you used to play."

The boys did as the sky-woman had told them. Because they were still very tired from outrunning the Moon, they both fell asleep. When they awoke they were lying on the grassy hilltop.

The boys hurried back to their village. When the people saw them coming, they shouted for joy. That night the people thanked the spirits for the boys' safe return. The boys had come back from their visit to the sky world and had not been caught by the Moon.

Activity Suggestion: try shooting a bow and arrow

## **“A Happy Day” (Shoshone)**

Note: this is an opportunity to tell a story in the Native American tradition of illustration, ie. where the storyteller draws the story, as it is being told, on a large animal hide for all to see and follow along. You can try to reproduce this style in your main lesson books for at least one legend, if you wish. The story “A Happy Day” comes with a sample pattern which I will photocopy and mail to you. Use the pattern to help you illustrate this tale as it is told, using a large piece of thick paper. The gestures and verbal cues that help the child to follow along with the story are included. This story is transcribed from Dr. Leroy Condie, a storyteller in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

A long time ago, a white fur trader came to the Shoshone country of Wyoming and there he fell in love with an Indian girl and married her. I don't know what her name was, but he called her Margaret. Margaret soon learned to live like the white man. All her children and grandchildren say she was a wonderful housekeeper and mother and grandmother. But she never forgot her Indian ways. She remembered all the Indian medicines, the things to make people well. And all the Indian women and all the white women like Grandma Maggie to be there when their children were born. So Grandma Maggie brought many Indian children and many white children in to the world.

But Grandma Maggie never forgot her Indian ways. And in the spring and summer and fall she would saddle up a horse, pack a pack horse, and invite one of her little grandchildren to go with her on a trip to the mountains. This story was told to Dr. Condie by one of those grandchildren – a granddaughter named Ada. She was remembering when she was a little girl and it was her turn to go with grandma to the mountains.

Now let's look at the story.

1. This is the date. This is the month this story happened. The moon means “month.” It was the hunting moon.
2. This is grandmother.
3. She's saying, “Come here, Ada. Come with me. You can go to the mountain with me.”
4. Grandmother rode in the saddle, Ada rode behind the saddle.
5. This symbol means “It was a beautiful day.” Can you see the arch in the sky up there?
6. You can read this one. Up in the sky, the sun was shining.



7. And as grandma and Ada rode along (hold fingers in front of eyes and wiggle back and forth) they look all around.
8. They saw a deer!
9. They saw a bird, but really they saw (count them 1, 2 ... 9)
10. They saw a porcupine, yes.
11. And they saw a beaver in his pond.
12. And as they rode along (make "talk" motions with fingers) they talked together.
13. Soon they came to a place where there were berries (make motions of picking berries and tasting them).
14. They picked a basketful.
15. Oh, they were so happy. They were having such a good time that they sang little songs as they rode along.
16. But, before they knew it, (bring both arms overhead overlapped in umbrella-fashion) it was night. Can you see the darkness hanging down?
17. And so they went to a nearby mountain to a place where they made camp. (This is the Indian symbol of crossed sticks for a campfire that means making camp.)
18. They ate their suppers. You can see their suppers inside of them.
19. And now Ada was pleased because grandmother let her sleep with her, under the same blanket.
20. Ada couldn't go to sleep for a while, so she looked up into the sky where the stars were shining.
21. And before she knew it, it was morning. The sun was up.
22. Grandma Maggie said, "I need some plants for my Indian medicine."
23. So Ada helped her grandmother gather plants for Indian medicine.
24. By that time they were near another high mountain.
25. And Ada heard something. (Bring your fingers in, in short, jerking motions by ears to suggest something.)
26. And then Ada saw something!

27. It was a bear!
28. Ada screamed!
29. This one (put hands out in front of you, fingers hooked, and jerk it back towards you) is an old Indian sign meaning "afraid" or "retreat". Yes, Ada was afraid.
30. Grandmother went to the saddle, got the 30-30 rifle, and shot the bear.
31. This shows she shot the bear. When Indians killed an animal, they drew its track and put a hole in it to show they had shot that kind of animal.
32. By now, the little bear was sad. Can you see his heart hanging down? (hold your hands in front of you with fingers hanging down)
33. Then grandmother went to her saddle and got her tobacco pouch. She took a little bit of Indian tobacco and put it on Little Bear's tongue. And she said to him, "Little Bear, we are sorry to take your life, but we need your robe and we need your meat. Thank you Little Bear, for giving us your robe and your meat."
34. And now, Little Bear felt alright about things. He was happy again. Can you see his heart is right side up?
35. Grandmother and Ada lifted Little Bear up into the pack saddle and they began their journey home.
36. They reached home almost at sundown.
37. And had they had a happy time? Yes they had. Look at their hearts. Their hearts are right side up.

## **“Homes for the Dine” (Navajo)**

How the Bird People, the Water People, and the Insect People taught the Navajos how to build the Hogan. Dine means “the people” in the Navajo language.

This story is from the Navajo Social Studies Project, College of Education, University of New Mexico.

### Long Ago

Long ago the Navajo lived in caves. First Woman, First Man, and Little Boy lived in a cave.

The cave was dark. Sometimes it was damp. In the winter it was filled with campfire smoke.

Little Boy said, “I don’t like this cave. It’s too dark.”

First Man said, “I don’t like this cave. It’s too cold.”

First Woman said, “Let’s go and visit the Bird People. They know how to build good homes. Maybe they can help us.”

### Eagle’s Home

They saw Eagle.  
His home was up on a mountain.

Eagle said, “Look at my home.  
It is round like the sun. It is made of logs.”

“Your home is too high for us,” said First Woman, “But it has good, strong walls. We’ll remember your good, strong walls when we build our home.”

“Good-bye,” said First Woman, First Man, and Little Boy. “Here are some white shell beads for you.”

### Oriole’s Home

They saw Oriole.  
His home was in a tree. It was like a basket.

“It’s a good home,” said Oriole. “The wind can’t blow it away.”

First Woman said, "We can't live in the top of a tree. But you've taught us how to weave baskets."

Little Boy said, "Thank you, Oriole," and he gave him some orange beads.

They said good-bye and went on their way.

### Woodpecker's Home

Then they heard a sound. It was a drum sound. They saw Woodpecker. He was high in a tree.

"Where's your home?" asked Little Boy.

"In a hole! In a hole!" said Woodpecker.

"Navajos can't live in a tree," said Little Boy, "but please make that sound again."

Woodpecker made the drum sound again.

"Thank you, Woodpecker," said Little Boy. "You've taught us how to make the drum sound."

"Good-bye. Here are some red feathers for you."

### Cliff Swallow's Home

Cliff Swallow's home was high on a canyon wall. It was under a ledge.

First Woman said, "Hello, Cliff Swallow. Please show us how you made your home."

Cliff Swallow flew down to the river. He came back with some mud.

"This is how I did it," said Cliff Swallow. "I made it of mud."

"Thank you," said First Woman. "When we build our home we'll plaster it with mud. Here are some black beads for you."

### Beaver's Home

"Who is that?" said Little Boy.

It was Beaver. He was sitting on top of his home. His home was in the water.

It had a round roof. There was a hole in the top to let the sun shine in.

First Woman said, "Hello, Beaver. We like your home. It has a good roof. We'll remember your good roof when we build our home."

They gave Beaver some pretty white shells and said good-bye.

### Spider Woman's Home

Spider Woman's home was in the ground. She was doing something.

"What are you doing?" asked First Woman.

"I'm weaving," said Spider Woman. "Didn't you know I'm the best weaver in the world?"

She taught First Woman how to weave.

"Thank you," said First Woman. "Now I can weave a blanket for the door of our new home."

They said good-bye and gave Spider Woman some red berries to dye her yarn.

### Red Ant's Home

First Man said, "I see a little hill over there."

"Someone lives in the little hill," said Little Boy. "I think it's Red Ant."

"Come down! Come down the ladder," said Red Ant.

First Woman, First Man, and Little Boy liked Red Ant's home. It had an opening at the top, and a door on the side where the sun shines in the morning.

And from far away Red Ant's home looked just like the earth around it.

They gave Red Ant some pretty rocks to scatter on his roof, and said good-bye.

### The New Home

First Woman said, "Now let's go back to our own mountains and build our new home."

"We'll call our new home a hogan. It will have good, strong walls in a circle, like Eagle's home."

"It will have a roof like Beaver's roof. It will have an opening at the top, and a door at the side like Red Ant's home."

"It will have a blanket at the door to keep the cold out, as Spider Woman taught us."

"It will have plaster mud over the walls and roof, as Cliff Swallow taught us. It will be warm in winter and cool in summer."

So this is the way Navajo hogans are built to this day.

Activity Suggestion: make a model of a Navajo hogan. Try weaving.

## **“A Little Boy’s Big Moment” (Blackfeet)**

Note: “A Little Boy’s Big Moment” is a story about a small Blackfeet Indian boy’s first dance. It is traditional with the Blackfeet Indian people to have a giveaway ceremony to honor someone for something special. When a child or person makes their first public appearance as a dancer, this ceremony is done to honor the person. The person will then be recognized as a dancer in Blackfeet Indian society.

This ceremony is still carried out to a great degree among the traditional Blackfeet Indian people.

One cold, winter evening Young Rabbit’s father was sitting by the wood stove. He was singing a fast, grass dance song.

The little boy thought, “This song makes me want to dance.”

Young Rabbit began slowly tapping his foot to the beat of the drum. He then got up and began to dance very fast. At the end of the song, the father said to his son, “Young Rabbit, do you like to dance?”

“Yes, Father, it makes me feel good,” said Young Rabbit. “Teach me how to do fancy steps.”

“Young Rabbit,” said his father, “at the big dance this year we will have a giveaway in honor of the first time you dance at a celebration.

We will give away some fine presents, some blankets, Indian crafts, and some fine horses.”

The son listened to his father and felt very proud of this honor. How grown up he felt!

Young Rabbit’s mother and father began making a good, fancy dance outfit. Just the right colored feathers were chosen. A fine porcupine headdress was made. Bells were strung on rawhide.

After several months of work, Young Rabbit tried on his outfit. He felt great pride. “I feel like a great Blackfeet brave,” he said.

Many evenings Young Rabbit danced his new steps. His mother bought many blankets. She made some star quilts and put them away for the big dance. His father broke many horses for the giveaway.

Young Rabbit became more excited as each day passed. Finally the big day came!

Everyone was ready to move to the Indian Day campgrounds.

At the campgrounds, the tepee was pitched among the other tepees in a big circle. Everyone was happy to be together again after a long, cold winter.

After two days had passed, it was time for Young Rabbit's big moment.

Young Rabbit's mother and father brought all the blankets, moccasins and beadwork to the ring. Young Rabbit stood proudly beside them.

Each drum sounded loud and clear as the drummers sang the grass dance songs.

What nice Indian costumes the dancers had!

The bells tinkled happily and the feathers swayed as the dancers moved. The people laughed and joked. They were very happy.

Suddenly the announcer said, "The family of Young Rabbit will now have an honor dance. This will be the first time Young Rabbit will dance at a big celebration."

Young Rabbit's heart pounded as his father and mother walked with him to the center of the ring.

Young Rabbit danced proudly as he led the line. His mother and father followed behind him. Many relatives and friends joined in the dance. The drumbeat seemed to say to Young Rabbit,

"How proud we are of you! You are a strong, wonderful Indian boy. Someday you will lead our tribe to great honors."

Then the drums stopped. Young Rabbit's father and mother began and giveaway. He thought, "How lucky I am to be Blackfoot Indian! I'm so very proud.

And to think my ancestors have roamed this very land!"

When the giveaway was over, the family left the center of the dance ring. They were overjoyed to think that the Great Spirit had helped them obtain enough to give to others in honor of their son. They felt great satisfaction to know this task had been achieved.

Young Rabbit was now recognized as one of the dancers. When the drums began to beat and the dancers started to dance, Young Rabbit joined in.

The drums seemed to say, "Young Rabbit dances so proudly. Young Rabbit dances so lightly. Young Rabbit is truly a great Indian dancer."

Young Rabbit danced for many hours. He became, oh, so very tired. His eyes wanted to close. His legs would not move as fast as the drum beat. Even his headdress seemed to tire. It hung slightly to one side.



Young Rabbit's mother looked at the tired, little boy and smiled. She took his hand in hers. They walked slowly toward the tepee. Although very tired, Young Rabbit had completed a great event.

Young Rabbit's mother cooked a meal of boiled meat, berry soup and fried bread.

After Young Rabbit had eaten, he fell into a deep happy sleep inside the comfortable tepee. The next morning a happy family left for home.

Activity Suggestion: visit a Native American powwow

## **“How Coyote Stole Fire” (Plains Indian)**

Long ago, when man was newly come into the world, there were days when he was the happiest creature of all. Those were the days when spring brushed across the willow tails, or when his children ripened with the blueberries in the sun of summer, or when the goldenrod bloomed in the autumn haze.

But always the mists of autumn evenings grew more chill, and the sun's strokes grew shorter. Then man saw winter moving near and he became fearful and unhappy. He was afraid for his children, and for the grandfathers and grandmothers who carried in their heads the sacred tales of the tribe. Many of these, young and old, would die in the long, ice-bitter months of winter.

Coyote, like the rest of the People, had no need for fire. So he seldom concerned himself with it, until one spring day when he was passing a human village. There the women were singing a song of mourning for the babies and the old ones who had died in the winter. Their voices moaned like the west wind through a buffalo skull, prickling the hairs on Coyote's neck.

“Feel how the sun is now warm on our backs” one of the men was saying. “Feel how it warms the earth and makes these stones hot to the touch. If only we could have had a small piece of the sun in our teepees during the winter.”

Coyote, overhearing this, felt sorry for the men and women. He also felt there was something he could do to help them. He knew of a faraway mountain-top where the three Fire Beings lived. These Beings kept fire to themselves, guarding it carefully for fear that man might somehow acquire it and become as strong as they. Coyote saw that he could do a good turn for man at the expense of the selfish Fire Beings.

So Coyote went to the mountain of Fire Beings and crept to its top, to watch the way that the Beings guard their fire. As he came near, the Beings leaped to their feet and gazed searchingly round their camp. Their eyes glinted like bloodstones, and their hands were clawed like the talons of the great black vulture.

“What's that? What's that I hear?” hissed one of the Beings.

“A thief, skulking in the bushes!” screeched another.

The third looked more closely, and saw Coyote. But he had gone to the mountain-top on all fours, so the Being thought she saw only an ordinary coyote slinking among the trees.

“It is no one, it is nothing!” she cried, and the other two looked where she pointed and also saw only a grey coyote. They sat down again by their fire and paid Coyote no more attention.

So he watched all day and night as the Fire Beings guarded their fire. He saw how they fed it pine cones and dry branches from the sycamore trees. He saw how they stamped furiously on runaway rivulets of flame that sometimes nibbled outwards on edges of dry grass. He saw how, at night, the Beings took turns to sit by the fire. They would sleep while one was on guard; and at certain times the Beings by the fire would get up and go into their teepee, and another would come out to sit by the fire.

Coyote saw that the Beings were always jealously watchful of their fire except during one part of the day. That was in the earliest morning, when the first winds of dawn arose on the mountains. Then the Being by the fire would hurry, shivering, into the teepee calling, "Sister, sister, go out and watch the fire." But the next Being would always be slow to go out for her turn, her head spinning with sleep and the thin dreams of dawn.

Coyote, seeing all this, went down the mountain and spoke to some of his friends among the People. He told them of hairless men, fearing the cold and death of winter. And he told them of the Fire Beings, and the warmth and brightness of the flame. They all agreed that man should have fire, and they all promised to help Coyote's undertaking.

Then Coyote sped again to the mountain-top. Again the Fire Beings leaped up when he came close, and one cried out, "What that? A thief, a thief!"

But again the others looked closely, and saw only a grey coyote hunting among the bushes. So they sat down again and paid him no more attention.

Coyote waited through the day, and watched as night fell and two of the Beings went off to the teepees to sleep. He watched as they changed over at certain times all night long, until at last the dawn winds rose.

Then the Being on guard called, "Sister, sister, get up and watch the fire."

And the Being whose turn it was climbed slow and sleepy from her bed, saying, "Yes, yes, I am coming. Do not shout so."

But before she could come out of the teepee, Coyote lunged from the bushes, snatched up a glowing portion of fire, and sprang away down the mountainside.

Screaming, the Fire Beings flew after him. Swift as Coyote ran, they caught up with him, and one of them reached out a clutching hand. Her fingers touched only the tip of the tail, but the touch was enough to turn the hairs white, and coyote tail-tips are white still. Coyote shouted, and flung the fire away from him. But the others of the People had gathered at the mountain's foot, in case they were needed. Squirrel saw the fire falling, and caught it, putting it on her back and fleeing away through the treetops. The fire scorched her back so painfully that her tail curled up and back, as squirrels' tails still do today.

The Fire Beings then pursued Squirrel, who threw the fire to Chipmunk. Chattering with fear, Chipmunk stood still as if rooted until the Beings were almost upon her. Then, as she turned to run, one Being clawed at her, tearing down the length of her back, and leaving three stripes that are to be seen on chipmunks' backs even today. Chipmunk threw the fire to Frog, and the Beings turned towards him. One of the Beings grasped his tail, but Frog gave a mighty leap and tore himself free, leaving his tail behind in the Being's hand — which is why frogs have had no tails ever since.

As the Beings came after him again, Frog flung the fire on to Wood. And Wood swallowed it.

The Fire Beings gathered round, but they did not know how to get the fire out of Wood. They promised it gifts, sang to it and shouted at it. They twisted it and struck it and tore it with their knives. But Wood did not give up the fire. In the end, defeated, the Beings went back to their mountain-top and left the People alone.

But Coyote knew how to get fire out of Wood. And he went to the village of men and showed them how. He showed them the trick of rubbing two dry sticks together, and the trick of spinning a sharpened stick in a hole made in another piece of wood. So man was from then on warm and safe through the killing cold of winter.

Activity Suggestion: try rubbing two sticks together to make fire

## **“The Great Flood” (Ojibway)**

Once upon a time the people who lived on the earth used to fight, and quarrel, and were very mean to each other.

Their creator was very sad to see such behavior. One day he decided there was no hope left and he must purify the earth.

He sent the “Mush-Ko'-be-wun”, a flood, to the earth. The water rushed so fast, and so high that almost all living things were drowned immediately.

Some animals were saved because they could live in the water. Many birds were caught in the sky and had to keep flying in order to stay alive.

Soon the earth was all clean and life would begin again on Mother Earth. One of the heroes to help replenish the earth was “WAYNABOOZHOO”, who the Indian people believe was half man and half spirit.

Waynaboozhoo was able to save himself from the great flood by floating on a “chimitig”, a huge log. Some of the animals who kept swimming during the flood, also climbed on to Waynaboozhoo's chimitig so they could rest and be safe. The birds also took turns resting on the floating log. They floated on the chimitig for long days and nights – and they never saw land.

One day Waynaboozhoo told the animals that he was going to swim to the bottom of the water and grab a handful of earth. He told the animals, “I believe that a small bit of earth would create a new land to live on with the help of the Four Winds and the Creator, ‘Githchie Manito’.” So Waynaboozhoo dove into the water. He was gone for a long time. The animals feared he had drowned trying to reach the bottom. Then suddenly they caught sight of bubbles coming to the water – and up floated Waynaboozhoo.

“The water is too deep – I never touched the bottom!” All the animals were silent.

The loon, who was floating inside the chimitig said: “I can dive under water for a long way – I will go now and try to catch a bit of earth in my beak.”

The loon dove out of sight and was gone for a long time. All the animals thought he too would not return. Then the loon slowly floated to the top of the water – very weak and out of breath.

“I couldn't make it,” he gasped. “There appears to be no bottom to this water.”

Next the Helldiver came forth. “I will try to swim to the bottom,” he said. “I am known for diving to great depths.” Down he went and he was gone for a long time. He seemed to be gone forever! The animals and Waynaboozhoo were about to give up

hope when they saw Helldiver's body surface to the top. He was unconscious and Waynaboozhoo had to pull him onto the log and help him regain his breath. In a soft voice he said, "I, too, could not reach the bottom and I swam straight down."

All the animals offered to try, but not even the turtle could do the task. It seemed hopeless. The water was just too deep. Then quietly the little muskrat stepped forth. "I'll try," he said.

Some of the animals laughed... "If we couldn't do it – how can we expect him to do any better?"

Waynaboozhoo said: "Hold it everyone! If little Muskrat wants to try, we are not in a place to judge the merits of another!"

Muskrat dove off the log and went straight down into the deep, deep water. He made it to the bottom and became very weak from a lack of air. He grabbed a bit of Earth in his paw and with all the strength he had left he pushed up from the bottom.

Waynaboozhoo saw Muskrat's body float to the top. He reached over and pulled Muskrat on to the log. "Our little brother has tried to go without air for too long. He is dead." The animals watched in sadness as his spirit passed on to the next world.

Waynaboozhoo spoke again: "Look! Muskrat has something in his paw." Carefully Waynaboozhoo opened his paw and there in a little ball was a piece of the earth. All the animals cheered – life could begin anew.

The precious piece of earth was carefully laid on Turtle's shell. All of a sudden the winds began to blow from all four directions. The tiny piece of Earth on Turtle's back began to grow – larger and larger it became, until it formed an island in the water. It was a huge island in the middle of the great water. The animals sang and danced on the island and honored the Turtle for bearing the weight of this new earth.

Today the Muskrat builds his home, or weegiwahm, with an island that comes up above the water's surface, in remembrance of the way that the new Earth was created after the Great Flood.

Activity Suggestion: take a field trip to see a muskrat den

## **“How the Cherokees Learned to Make Pottery” (Cherokee)**

In ancient times, there lived a kindhearted girl who was good to all living creatures. She was especially kind to insects. She felt they needed protection since most of them were so small. If she found a butterfly caught in a stream, floating, unable to fly, she would take the butterfly out of the water and place it on the ground to dry. She was always helping insects who were in trouble.

One day she went to the spring to get some water. She was carrying her bark bucket. This was the kind of bucket the Cherokees used to carry water. These buckets were made of bark and put together with a sticky substance that held the bark together. They were good for carrying water. It took considerable time to make these buckets, so they were used with care. A hard jolt or dropping the bucket would surely break it. She was careful never to drop the bucket.

She went down to dip her bucket into the spring. She heard a strange buzzing sound. She stood up trying to locate the sound. It was coming from the spring. She saw a mud dauber wasp stuck in the water. It looked tired and exhausted from trying to get out of the water. It was going in circles. The dauber wasp could not get out of the water. The mud dauber's wings were wet and he couldn't fly. She wanted to help the dauber wasp, but she was afraid. She was afraid it would sting her.

She filled her bark bucket with water from the spring. She walked several steps and stopped. She felt bad about leaving the dauber wasp in the water. It would die. She returned to the spring. She decided to help the wasp even if it stung her. She took a long stick and put the stick down in the water near the wasp. She moved the stick nearer the wasp for him to climb down. The wasp climbed upon the stick. He looked very wet and tired. She knew his wings were too wet for him to fly. She decided to take the stick out of the water. She placed the stick with the wasp on some dry leaves in the sunshine. It could lie safely in the sun until its wings were dry enough to fly. She picked up her bark bucket and went home. Her mother was waiting for the water.

Sometime later she returned to the spring to get more water. She tripped on some rocks and fell. Her bark bucket flew through the air and shattered into many pieces as it hit the ground. She began picking up the pieces. She didn't know what to do with them. She had been told it took many hours to make a bark basket. She couldn't make one. She didn't know how, and besides she was told to hurry back with the water. She began to cry. She sat down on a log and sobbed so hard her tiny body shook.

There was a buzzing sound nearby. She couldn't hear the sound for her crying. It was the dauber wasp she had rescued several days earlier. The mud dauber buzzed near her ear. He wanted her to stop crying and hear what he had to say. She finally heard the buzzing sound. She looked down and next to her on a log was a dauber wasp. The dauber wasp wasted no time in speaking for fear she would begin crying again.

The dauber wasp said, "Don't feel so badly. I will teach you something very useful. I will teach you to make many things. You will be able to teach your people. You will be of great help to your people."

The dauber wasp told the girl to follow him to the creek. He flew ahead of her. He stopped and landed on the soft clay next to the creek. The girl sat down on a log and watched him. He began to take small lumps of clay from the creek bank. He took these lumps of clay to the log where the girl was sitting. The mud dauber wasp flew back and forth from the log to the creek bank. When he had enough clay to make a small pot, he stopped. He told the girl to watch closely. He began to mold and shape a small pot. The small pot was shaped like an acorn. The dauber wasp had a small wooden paddle. He used the paddle to make designs on the pot. When he had finished, it was a beautiful pot with many small designs on it. He told the girl to remember all he had done in making the pot. He told her to go to her people and share her knowledge with them.

The little girl went home. She took the small pot with her. She showed it to her people. She told them of the wise dauber wasp. The people in her village were surprised. They had never seen such a beautiful pot. It was a well-made pot. The designs on it were beautiful.

The girl's father listened carefully. He made her a wooden paddle. He carved beautiful designs on it. Next, he went to the creek and got some clay. He worked the clay as the mud dauber wasp had instructed. The girl helped her father. Together they worked all sticks and rocks out of the clay.

They let the pure clay set for a while before they shaped and molded it for a pot. They were careful not to forget anything the dauber wasp had said. When they had finished the pot, they patted designs on the outside with the wooden paddle. It was almost like the pot the dauber had made. However, it was much larger. It was large enough to hold water. It would hold as much water as her bark bucket. The girl and her father were happy. This was the beginning of pottery making for the Cherokees. It all began because a little girl was kind to a wise mud dauber wasp.

Activity Suggestion: make a birch bark basket. Try pottery.



## **“Tiny Bat and the Ball Game” (Southeast)**

Many moons ago when the world was young, birds and animals could talk and play together. They often played games in the great green woods of the South Land. They liked to play ball games best of all.

“Who, who, who is best?” hooted Owl.

“We don’t know; we don’t know,” croaked Frog.

“Choose sides,” said Owl. “Put up two goal poles and a crossbar. See who can carry the ball past the other side’s goal the greatest number of times. Then we shall know who is best.”

“I’ll be one chief,” said Alligator. “I choose all the animals with teeth and four legs to be on my side, for we are the best. We are the strongest. We are down-to-earth animals.”

“Yes,” growled Bear, “we can hold the ball in our teeth and run the fastest.”

“But,” chirped Robin, “birds are the lightest and can fly the highest and fastest. We are the best.”

“That’s right, that’s right,” whistled Quail.

“I’ll be the other chief,” said Eagle. “I choose all the birds and feathers and sharp beaks on my side.”

“I’m on your side,” said Duck.

Alligator and Eagle set a time for the game, nine days away. Then the teams began to practice. The animals practiced and practiced... but not Tiny Bat. He was asleep in his dark cave.

The birds practiced too... but not Tiny Bat. He was still sleeping. He was hanging his feet from a sharp-edged rock at the top of his cave. His leather wings covered his eyes.

All week long the birds and animals worked hard making the ball field. The moles dug the holes so that the goal posts could be set up. The beavers cut down trees to make the poles and to clear the field.

The turkeys brushed the leaves off the playing field with their large wings. The geese picked up the sticks and put them in a pile. Soon everything was ready for the game.

On game day, the animals came and lined up behind their chief, Alligator. The birds came and lined up behind their chief, Eagle.

Some animals and some birds were too old or too young to play. They came to watch and cheer. A few even made magic to help their team win.

Raccoon tossed the ball into the air. Both teams rushed to try to get it first. Those watching shouted and cheered.

The noise waked Tiny Bat, and he flew out of his cave. He darted down and caught a fat fly and a mosquito for his breakfast.

He followed the sound of the cheering and came to the ball field. He wanted to play, so he first asked to join the animals.

"You're not an animal; you have wings," barked Fox. "We don't want you; you are too little and too different."

"You're not an animal; you don't have four legs," growled Bear. "We don't want you; you are too little and too different."

Tiny Bat hung his head. Then he flew over to ask the birds to let him join their team.

"You're not a bird; you don't have feathers," hooted Owl, spreading his lovely wing feathers. "We don't want you; you're too different."

"You're not a bird; you have teeth. We don't want you," cawed Crow, opening his own yellow beak. "You must be an animal."

"No, you can't be on our side," said Humming Bird. "You don't build nests, and you can't lay eggs. You are just too different."

Poor Tiny Bat hung his head and flew over to the side line. He felt very sad. He didn't know what he was, and no one wanted him. He folded one leather wing over his eyes and cried six big bat tears.

Little Mouse saw Bat crying and felt very sorry for him. She didn't think he was too little and too different. "Why he is just my size, and his face looks like mine. Please let Bat play on our side," she squeaked. "He won't hurt anything."

"All right," growled Bear, looking down at his own big body. "But he will have to keep out of my way."

"All right," howled Wolf, waving his own pretty tail.

"All right," sniffed Skunk with her nose and tail held high. She was so proud of her own pretty black and white fur.

"All right, he can play," bellowed Alligator, standing on his four short legs. "But see that he stays out of our way."

And so Tiny Bat took his place with the animals on the very back row, far away from the ball. The game began again, and soon everyone could see that the birds were winning.

Crane took the ball in her long beak and flapped her strong wings. She carried the ball high in the sky. She was the best player.

Bear stood on his hind legs and tried to reach the ball, but couldn't.

Rabbit hopped high into the air and tried to reach the ball, but she couldn't.

Deer leaped into the air and tried to reach the ball, but couldn't.

Squirrel even climbed the goal pole and tried to reach the ball, but she couldn't.

All the animals felt so sad because none of them could fly.

Suddenly, Tiny Bat flew up from the back row. He was so little that he could fly right into Crane's long beak and take the ball right out of her mouth with his strong teeth.

He took the ball down to Deer, who leaped right over the goal with it.

Whenever the birds got the ball, Tiny Bat darted right up and knocked it down to the animals below. He played so well and so hard that the animals won the game by a big score.

Then the birds began to whisper to each other. Owl told Tiny Bat that they had decided that he really was a bird. They invited Bat to come over to their side... but he said, "No!"

Now the game was over, all the animals got together to thank Tiny Bat and to cheer him. They all agreed that even though he was so small and so different, he was very special.

They told him that he really was an animal with teeth. They agreed that he should always play with them on the front row.

"You can see," said Tiny Bat, "that I am different, but what I really am is a very special small animal."

"We do know, we do know," croaked Frog.

"That's right, that's right," whistled Quail.