

PHOTO TAKEN AT LAND TRANSFER CEREMONY, WYANDOTTE NATION
PHOTO BY ANTHONY TRUEHART, GLOBAL MINISTRIES

ALL IN GOD'S IMAGE

A STUDY IN THE HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

UNIT 1 **What is Indigenous Peoples' Day?** *A Family Guide for the East Ohio Conference of The UMC*



EAST OHIO CONFERENCE
MULTICULTURAL VITALITY

Developed by
Corinne R. Dunn, M.Ed., M.A.
Certified Diversity Professional
Diversity Learning Consultant/Trainer

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with branches in their hands . . . Revelation 7:9 (ESV)

Note to Families

This is the first in a series of guides to help adults and children learn more about specific days we observe as we grow together in our knowledge and respect for the Native American Tribal Nations in the United States. The first day, Indigenous Peoples' Day, is celebrated on the second Monday of October. While some people may observe this holiday as Columbus Day, others have decided to recognize it as Indigenous Peoples' Day in tandem with, or instead of, Columbus Day. This guide will give you more information about how this newer holiday has evolved and ways in which it can be celebrated by all ages. Activities and a wide variety of resources, including books and websites, are provided for additional help. In addition, specific information appropriate for adult participants is available on the last page.

Who are Indigenous Peoples?

Indigenous Peoples are the descendants of the original inhabitants of a geographic area anywhere in the world. In the United States, other commonly-used names are Native Americans, Native Nations, and American Indians. Most Indigenous Peoples prefer that we utilize their specific tribal name, for example, White Mountain Apache or Cherokee, when describing a group of individuals. That is because every tribe has its own unique traditions, language, government, and more.

Sometimes we forget that Indigenous Peoples did not just live in the past but also live in the present. As of the 2010 Census, there were approximately 5.2 million people who self-identified in some way as American Indians or Alaskan Natives. Some may live on reservations, others in urban areas, or perhaps some even in your own city or town. Investigate if you or individuals you might know have Native American ancestry!

How do people celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day around the world?

The first Native American Day, as it was then called, began in North Dakota in 1982. As of 2021, 34 states in the United States now observe the day and the District of Columbia, Maine, and New Mexico recognize it as a state holiday. <https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/indigenous-peoples-day>

In the United States some cities, school districts, and faith-based organizations also recognize it in some capacity. It is considered to be a day to show honor and respect for Indigenous Peoples, their culture and history, as well as to acknowledge the injustices and tragedies which they have been forced to endure. Celebrations, educational events, and parades may occur.

In addition, the United Nations created the International Day of the World's Indigenous People in 1994, now observed worldwide every August 9.

How has the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church begun to recognize the history and contributions of the Native Americans?

East Ohio Area Land Acknowledgement

“We, the people of the East Ohio Area of The United Methodist Church, wish to acknowledge that our communities have been built on lands that many Indigenous peoples once called home. We pay our respect to the Lenni-Lenape, Wyandotte, Shawnee, Seneca, Cayuga, Ojibwe, and Odawa peoples who lived in this area when settlers first arrived, and who were forced to relinquish their lands to the United States through a series of treaties, culminating in the Treaty of Greenville. We also honor those Lenni-Lenape who established the first Christian settlements in Ohio. We remember the 96 men, women, and children of their number who were martyred at Gnadenhutten by colonial militia during the American Revolution. Finally, we recognize the contributions of the Indigenous people, from many nations, who reside in Northeast Ohio. We acknowledge our responsibility to pursue mutually healing relationships.” Acknowledgment (2019)

An Observance of “Repentance and Reparation”

On September 21, 2019, The United Methodist Church formally returned land in the Upper Sandusky area of Ohio to the Wyandotte Nation. “The land, which includes the Mission Church and a burial ground, was entrusted to the Methodist Church and the Methodist Mission Society in 1843 when the Wyandotte People were forced by the government to leave the land.” East Ohio E-News (9/23/2019). Join together with your family and watch this brief video which was recorded on that day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZYUbB-nBY4>. After seeing the video, discuss these questions as a family: *What were your favorite sights and sounds? If you had been a member of the Wyandotte Nation at the ceremony, what emotions would you have experienced? Why was it important that The United Methodist Church returned this land to its owners?*

How can your church learn more about Native Americans in your own community, now and in the past?

- Examine a map of Indigenous Peoples who were present in Ohio prior to the mid-1800s. If you see a tribal nation who lived in your area, find out more about the group. (A good place to start would be your local library or area agencies such as the Lake Erie Native American Council, <https://www.facebook.com/LENACohio/>)
- Invite a guest speaker from a Native American nation to speak at your church service and/or give a separate presentation at which both children and adults could be present. Ask the individual to describe contemporary life and challenges which he or she has experienced as a Native American.
- Display an exhibit in your church of recommended children’s books and other resources which are written by Native individuals. (See suggested listings on pages 5 & 6)
- Incorporate an observance of Indigenous Peoples’ Day into a church service using Native musicians or intertribal song videos. Prayer songs should be conducted by Native people who can offer explanations.

Family Activities for All Ages: Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day

Note: Permission was given to use the following blogs in the development of some of the activities below:

- *Nine ways to observe Indigenous Peoples' Day with children.* Gienapp, Rebekah. The Barefoot Mommy, 17 September 2019, www.rebekahgienapp.com/indigenous-peoples-day/.
- *Five Ideas for Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day 2020.* Gokey, Renée. Smithsonian Magazine, 7 October 2020, www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-indian/2020/10/07/indigenous-peoples-day-2020/.

- Activity One:** Research the Taino Nation who Christopher Columbus encountered in 1492. Where do its citizens still live in the world? Renée Gokey, a citizen of the Eastern Shawnee Nation, describes several ideas for students in her blog, *Five Ideas for Incorporating Indigenous Peoples' Day*.
- Activity Two:** Attend a Native American pow-wow or festival. Many take place throughout the United States and are a good opportunity to learn about the traditions of different tribes within the same setting. You can also watch a virtual pow-wow online.
- Activity Three:** Using "A Message for Adults" on the last page of this guide, discuss with your older child a historically accurate look at Columbus and other explorers of that time. Each family member can take a different perspective and debate as to whether or not Indigenous Peoples' Day should take the place of Columbus Day on the calendar.
- Activity Four:** Choose a fiction book written by a contemporary Native person. (Some of these titles are included in the book listings in this guide on pages 5 & 6) Read a picture book together by a recent author, Traci Sorel, who is a member of the Cherokee Nation.
- Activity Five:** Locate the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, which is home to a number of tribal nations. Learn about the Dakota Access Pipeline which prompted major protests beginning in 2016. Adults may be interested in reading how the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church sent a group of Ohio Native Americans to visit the reservation and what they encountered in a piece entitled *Stand Up and Fight* by Kimberlee Medicine Horn Jackson. https://eocumc.com/multi-cultural/native-american_standupandfight.html
- Activity Six:** Plant wildflowers or other plant species in your yard which are native to your area. "Think of the impact you can have by planting native species and returning health to your yard and neighborhood. The U.S. Forest Service has all sorts of resources about gardening with native species on its website." (Renée Gokey, see above.)
- Activity Seven:** "Adopt" a particular tribal nation or nations as a family with each person learning five interesting facts to share with one another, i.e. geographic locations, language, stories, famous tribal member (past or present), and tribal music. Each night, during the second week of October, the sharing of information can occur.
- Activity Eight:** Take a field trip with your family. Natural history museums and other sites often have exhibits on Indigenous Peoples. (Don't forget to call in advance for information.) If you are fortunate enough to live near an area that was once inhabited by Native Americans, spend a few hours hiking or visiting the landmarks in that area or in other parts of the Ohio. See also <https://www.ohiohistory.org/learn/american-indian-relations/american-indian-sites>.
- Activity Nine:** Discuss why it is inappropriate for non-native children to wear Indian costumes for holidays.

Books and Websites to Explore Together

Printed material and electronic websites are great ways to learn more about Indigenous Peoples in the United States and other parts of the world. There are some important guidelines to take into consideration when choosing materials:

- *Who has written the book or contributed to the website?* It is always best that the author is a member of the tribal nation being described for accuracy.
- Look for materials which describe Native Americans not only in the past but also in the present. Characters should reflect varied personalities and geographic settings.
- Avoid books which depict non-Native children and even animals wearing headdresses and other types of regalia. These pictures do not reflect a respect for the significance of traditional apparel in the Indigenous culture.
- Watch out for materials which display stereotypes, both in language and in illustrations. This translates into visual media as well, i.e. streaming, animation, and cinema.
- Both fiction and nonfiction books are valuable, and don't forget Native American poetry as well!

General Book Listings:

- <https://coloursofus.com/32-native-american-childrens-books/> (Resources for young people, babies through high school age)
- <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/american-indians/> (Dr. Debbie Reese, noted children's literature authority)

Websites for All Ages:

- <https://americanindian.si.edu/> (The National Museum of the American Indian - Smithsonian Institution)
- <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360> (Native Knowledge portal for students and teachers)
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education>
- <https://www.eocumc.com/multi-cultural/native-american.html> (East Ohio Conference Native American Ministries)
- <https://www.umc.org/en/what-we-believe/umc-topics/our-people/native-people> (United Methodist Church)

Books and Websites to Explore Together, cont.

Fiction and Nonfiction Books

Do All Indians Live in Tipis? Questions and Answers from the National Museum of the American Indian-- Smithsonian Institution, Second Edition. (2018). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books.

Native Heritage: Personal Accounts by American Indians 1790 to the Present. Hirschfelder, Arlene. (1995). New York: Macmillan.

The Native American Story Book: Stories of the American Indians for Children. Mullins, G.W. and C.L. Hause. (2016). Light of the Moon Publishing.

Native American Spirit Beings. Nagle, Jeanne, ed. (2015). New York: Britannica Educational Publishing.

Voices in the Stones: Life Lessons from the Native Way. Nerburn, Kent. (2016). Novato: New World Library, 2016. (Spirituality)

Encyclopedia of American Indian History & Culture: Stories, Time Lines, Ma. O'Brien, Cynthia. (2019). Washington D.C.: National Geographic.

At the Mountain's Base. Sorell, Traci and Alvitre, Weshoyot. (2019). New York: Penguin Random House L.L.C. (Picture Book)

Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer. Sorell, Traci and Donovan, Natasha. (2021). Minneapolis: Millbrook Press. (Picture Book)

We Are Grateful/Otsaliheliga. Sorell, Traci and Lessac, Frané. (2018). Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, Inc. (Picture Book)

We Are Still Here! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know. Sorell, Traci and Lessac, Frané. (2021). Charlesbridge Publishing, Inc. (Picture Book)

Daw-Kee, Aim Daw-Tsi-Taw (Great Spirit, Now I Pray)

DAW-KEE, AIM DAW-TSI-TAW TO-AW-BAY TAW HAAL
DAW-KEE, AIM DAW-TSI-TAW TO-AW-BAY TAH HAAL
PBAY-GYA KEE AAL AI DAHM GYA DAW,
DAW-KEAH PBAY-GYA YAH TSAHN-DAY-TOAW.

Great Spirit, now I pray to you,
I pray now to you, Great Spirit, hear me;
my soul is weary, now I pray
that your spirit will dwell in me.

***Words: Kiowa prayer; para. By Libby Littlechief, 1981
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A Message for Adults: A Different View of Columbus Day

Though we may be parents or caregivers now, many of us remember hearing as children how explorer Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492. It has only been in more recent times that another version of those events has emerged, and as adults, it is important that we share this version with the children in our lives when we feel that it is developmentally appropriate. This explanation, as included in the book *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People*, shares an authentic picture of the Doctrine of Discovery which led many European settlers, including Columbus, to claim land and people in the Americas as their own property:

In the late fifteenth century, as European explorers sailed to unfamiliar places, their actions and beliefs were guided by the Doctrine of Discovery—the idea that European nations could claim the foreign land they “discovered.” The Doctrine of Discovery was laid out in a series of communications from the Pope, leader of the Catholic Church, who was extremely influential in European politics at the time. It asserted that Indigenous inhabitants lost their natural right to that land as soon as Europeans arrived and claimed it. People whose homelands were “discovered” were considered subjects of the Europeans and were expected to do what the “discoverers” wished. If they resisted, they were to be conquered by European military action. This enabled Columbus to claim the Taino people’s Caribbean home for Spain and to kidnap and enslave the Indigenous peoples. Similarly, the Pilgrims and the Puritans, the first groups from England to settle what became the United States, believed they had a covenant with God to take the land. The Doctrine of Discovery influenced the politics of the young United States and directly affected the lives and the very existence of Native peoples. However, history textbooks for young people rarely invite students to question or think critically about that part of the United States origin story. (Excerpts from *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, adapted by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese. Copyright © 2019 by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. Reprinted with special permission from Beacon Press.)

Whether or not we choose to continue to observe Columbus Day, it is crucial that we emphasize with children that Indigenous people were not “discovered” but had lived in the Americas for thousands of years prior to the arrival of the fleet from Spain. (Columbus chose to call the inhabitants “Indians” only because he believed that he had landed in India.) The inhabitants had already established complex governments, religion, tribal nations, trade, buildings, towns, farms, and many other aspects of civilization long before the explorers arrived from Europe. **It is for those reasons, and more, that Indigenous Peoples' Day should not only be celebrated on a designated calendar date, but the study of the Native American peoples, both now and in the past, should be a focus of any church curriculum which promotes true diversity.**

Resources for Parents

- *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People*. Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. (Adapted by Mendoza, Jean and Reese, Debbie). (2019). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*. Mann, Charles C. (2009). New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.