

Tips on Ministering to the Native American Population

- 1.) Invite Native American families to take part in the visible part of the church: leadership, liturgical ministers, bringing up the gifts, as well as prayer groups or bible studies.
- 2.) Let Native American teenagers wear their native dress if they want to, for special events and occasions. Allow the incorporation of elements of their culture into funerals, i.e. drumming if the family asks or a Native American blanket as a funeral pall.
- 3.) Have an older Native American come in and speak about the struggles of being Native American and the rejection they faced.
- 4.) Teach the young people the significance of the dream catcher and the medicine wheel, and how these are used in the culture, and their specific spirituality.
- 5.) Special Occasions of the Native Americans are as follows:
 - Thanksgiving (Last Thursday in November)
 - Green Corn Festival (Celebration of First Harvest, last for several days, ribbon dance, singing, tasting first corn.)
 - October 10-16 (Native American Awareness Week)
 - Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Feast Day July 14th
- 6.) Look at the recent Bishop's statement on Native American Catholics.
- 7.) Lastly publicize the existence of the Holy Family Kateri Circle (a support and prayer group for Native Americans).
- 8.) Some of their symbols or rituals are:
 - Smudging (blessing, purifying) with cedar, sage, sweet grass, and tobacco.
 - Eagle feather used in blessings.
 - Dance and drums used for liturgy.
 - Indian music in liturgy.
 - Indian naming ceremony in conjunction with baptism.
 - Native attire used in local and diocesan celebrations.
 - Four-Directional prayer.
 - Sweat lodge
 - Statues, relics of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha.
 - Medicine wheel.
 - Native crucifix and cross.
 - Sacred vessels, decorations, and vestments with native design.
 - Sacred pipe.
- 9.) Incorporating any of these traditional symbols or rituals would be something visible and affirming to their culture and presence in the community.