

National Longhouse Support Materials

# The Native American Indian Theme

of the Native Sons & Daughters Programs® &  
Keeping it Alive in Your Program



A guidebook of topics and ideas to provide understanding, as well as promote  
and uplift the use of the Native American Indian Theme  
within Native Sons and Daughters Programs®





## **Introduction:**

Greetings! This guidebook is intended to provide insight and guidance into the use of the Native American Indian Theme within Native Sons and Daughters Programs®. We hope this will be a useful resource for all membership and leadership. It is divided into 3 main sections as follows:

- 1. Overview: About the Native American Indian Theme**
- 2. Keeping the Native American Indian Theme Alive in Your Programs**
- 3. Responsible Use of the Native American Theme**

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## 1. Overview: About the Native American Indian Theme:

The **Native American (North American) Indian theme** of the Native Sons & Daughters Programs® is central to all aspects of the program. Northern Ontario Ojibwa Indian Joe Friday and his family were honored that their culture and its values provided the inspiration and basis for the program that started some 90+ years ago. The Friday family today still resides in the Temagami, Ontario area and is still honored and proud that Native Sons and Daughters Programs® wishes to continue that tradition. The Native Indian theme and its values serves as a platform for parent & child bonding, as well as a gentle approach to the general culture of the Native American Indian. The Six Aims, given to the program by the Friday family, are at the core of the Native Indian theme values.

**National Longhouse® does not attempt to control or mandate how much or how little that each individual Longhouse may use the Native American Indian theme in an outward visible form.** NLL does however, encourage the use of the core traditions such as the Tribal meetings, the Six Aims, rituals & ceremonies and stories to keep those values of the Native Indian theme alive and to capture the true essence and full potential and beauty of what the theme can bring. National Longhouse provides materials to enhance and uplift the use of the Native Indian theme. Beyond this guidebook, additional materials are written to emphasize the need to use and treat the Native Indian theme with all the dignity and respect that it deserves. Some of these materials include:

- ✚ **The National Longhouse Website:** About Our Programs/Basic Information/History & Symbolism. There are several documents that talk directly about the history and significance of the Native Indian Theme.
- ✚ **Ritual & Ceremonies:** A 2018 reborn collection of rituals, ceremonies, stories and devotions to uplift the use of the Native Indian theme. Rituals & Ceremonies are all written to present the theme with great respect and bring it alive in both the eyes of children and adult alike. Available on the NSD website under Resources.
- ✚ **Native Sons & Daughters Programs® Tribal Handbook:** Given to each family upon joining the program as a part of their New Member Packet. The handbook provides the tools and traditions to get started such as program overview & history, aims and ideals, suggested tribal meeting format, use of the Six Aims, etc.
- ✚ **NSD Program Manual:** A larger collection of materials, information and resources for the program. Available on the NSD website.

**Another core element** that is designed to uplift the Native American rooted aims and values of the NSD Programs is the Community Service Project (CSP). The primary purpose for the CSP is to carry out the portion of our Mission Statement that states: “Rendering relief to the poor, the distressed, or the underprivileged through the belief that you help yourself by helping others” Two of the Six Aims are directly realized through service to one’s community... “To Love My Neighbor As Myself”, and “To Seek and Preserve the Beauty of the Great Spirits Work in Forest, Field and Stream.”



## **2. Keeping the Native American Indian Theme Alive in Your Program:**

Presented here is information as well as an outline of topics and ideas to promote and uplift the use of the Native Indian Theme within Native Sons and Daughters Programs®. Many of these ideas are explained in further detail in the Native Sons & Daughters Members Handbook or Program Manual.

### **Rituals & Ceremonies for NSD Programs**

A great resource companion to this paper, intended fully to uplift the Native Indian Theme is this National Longhouse® Collection entitled Ritual & Ceremonies for NSD Programs. It is available on the NLL website.

This resource collection contains six groupings as follows:

- ▲ Induction Ceremonies
- ▲ End-of-Year and Graduation Ceremonies
- ▲ Ceremonial Openings and Closings
- ▲ General and Special Purpose Ceremonies
- ▲ Devotions, Inspirational and Services
- ▲ Legends & Stories

On the NLL website, the files for the four groupings of ceremonies are presented individually in Word form so that you may download the file(s) and customize them as necessary or as you like to fit into the traditions of your local program. The Devotions and Legends groupings are each in a static PDF form so that you may print pages as desired.

Also, the entire collection is presented in book form as a PDF file so that if you desire, you can print the entire book, or any portion of it. The book also contains a main introduction, table of contents and introductions for each section.

# The Native American Indian Theme of NSD Programs



## NSD Programs-Understanding How It All Began:

- ▲ Harold Keltner meets Joe Friday: Keltner meets Ojibwa Indian Joe Friday in Temagami, Ontario in the early 1920's. Their new formed friendship sparks an idea to connect a Native Indian Theme to a parent-child activity format. Original program starts in 1926 and lasts until 2002.
- ▲ March 2002, a decision is made among dedicated regional volunteers to form a new program.
- ▲ Late 2002 ,Native Indian theme heritage and legacy is gifted by the Keltner and Friday families to newly formed National Longhouse, for use in its Native Sons and Daughters Programs®.
- ▲ Talk about this history in Longhouse and Tribal gatherings.

## Respectful Use of the Indian Theme: (Section 3)

- ▲ The prime use of the Indian theme is a common medium and common interest for parent & child to develop bonds and memories together.
- ▲ The Indian theme is the use of a living culture.
- ▲ Use of the Indian Theme can be Fun, Teaching, Bonding and Respectful all at the same time.
- ▲ Plan ahead to use it respectfully in all ways.

## The Native American Indian Theme: Central to Many Program Activities:

### Native Indian Names:

- ▲ A key ritual for new members to choose an Indian Name. Stress the importance of this ritual and the honor associated with it. Explained in the NSD Tribal Members Handbook
- ▲ Use (call each other by) Indian Names whenever possible in Tribal and Longhouse functions.

### Tribe Meetings:

#### Rituals:

##### Six Aims:

- ▲ Derived from the parental teachings of the Ojibway culture. Gifted to NSD Programs by the Friday family.
- ▲ A foundation for many aspects of life.
- ▲ Reward the learning of the Aims.

##### Prayers:

- ▲ Simple non-denominational Native Indian prayers teach respect.
- ▲ Offer a focus to concentrate and contemplate.
- ▲ Prayers as a tribe or group can build spirit.

##### Opening & Closing Rituals & Misc:

- ▲ Opening & Closing rituals add to the pageantry of a meeting.
- ▲ Opening: Sets the tone for the body of the meeting
- ▲ Closing: Allow reflection on a special time shared together.
- ▲ Talking Stick ritual: When in a setting where only one person at a time is supposed to speak, use this ritual to encourage respect for the one person talking.

# The Native American Indian Theme of NSD Programs



## Tribe Meetings (continued)

### Native American Indian themed Crafts:

- ✧ A way in which to learn about specific tribes/cultures or a more general view of the Native Indian culture.
- ✧ Can be very simple to very complex.
- ✧ A great medium for parent-child interaction.
- ✧ Help children learn patience and achievement.

### Stories:

- ✧ An important part to a meeting that can teach a lesson.
- ✧ A good story-teller is a key to success.

### Tribal Invitations:

- ✧ Although originally meant to be created by hand, you can make invitations in a digital medium and still maintain the tradition.

## Ceremonies/ Council Fire Ceremonies:

- ✧ Honor the Great Spirit as an important part within ceremonies.
- ✧ Thank Mother Earth and Father Sky for all gifts.
- ✧ Honor the natural surroundings.
- ✧ Include children as an important part of ceremonies.
- ✧ Include Tribal recognition.
- ✧ Use feathers or other Native culture associated items as an honoring. Arrowheads, beads, etc...
- ✧ Create special and mystical fire lightings. The Great Spirit brings fire. The Flaming Arrow, etc.
- ✧ Memorize and call each other by Indian Names only.
- ✧ Go outdoors whenever possible. Nature adds to the mystery. A starry night is priceless.
- ✧ Include a little bit of "ceremony" at as many Longhouse events as possible.
- ✧ Honor the flag, the symbol of your country.
- ✧ The drumbeat is the heartbeat of Mother Earth. Use the drum in openings and closings.

## Regalia:

Research your Tribe or Longhouse name to spur ideas in creating/crafting regalia and as a method of respect toward the culture of that tribe or nation.

- ✧ Headdress: There are many styles and types and each have meaning.
- ✧ Vests & Costume: Simple vests to elaborate costumes. Constantly encourage the use whatever vest, apparel or regalia your program uses.
- ✧ Headbands & Feathers: Encourage the use of the NSD headband. Take pride in wearing it.
- ✧ Coup Sticks: A program unto itself. Awards that can be mounted to the stick.
- ✧ Tribal Totems: Each parent/child creates a piece. It is assembled at Tribe Meetings.
- ✧ Tribal Shields or Banners: A way to proudly display the name of your Tribe at Longhouse events, especially campouts and ceremonies.
- ✧ Personal or Family Shields.

## Stories

- ✧ Find that special person that has a talent to bring a story alive in front of a group. A good story-teller is a key to success.
- ✧ Use Native Indian Stories with a lesson when possible. Many resources area available.

# The Native American Indian Theme of NSD Programs



## Tribal Property

- ▲ Develop property as a tribe.
- ▲ Parent/child sharing in each project.
- ▲ The Talking Stick for meetings.
- ▲ Tribal Shields
- ▲ Tribal Totems

## Longhouse Property

A Longhouse may choose to maintain its own property to use during campouts, gatherings, main events & ceremonies. Each contains some element of the Indian Theme.

- ▲ Teepees
- ▲ Totems
- ▲ Drums
- ▲ Parade Banners

## Awards

Awards programs can easily center on the Native Indian theme. Aside from traditional patches, here are other suggestions:

- ▲ Feathers
- ▲ Beads
- ▲ Bear claws

## Tribe Events and Longhouse Events

- ▲ Bring at least a little bit of the Native Indian theme into each event just to keep it visible.
- ▲ Display Longhouse property when possible.

## Nature Studies

- ▲ Native Americans have lived in nature for many centuries. Nature is and was a central part to their culture and to their survival. Nature studies are an easy way to relate to the Indian Theme.
  - Trails walks & trail challenges
  - Animal tracking/plaster casting
  - Forest, Field and Stream

## Leadership Council Meetings

- ▲ Use a bit of ceremony to open and close meetings.
- ▲ You must set the example. If leadership is not serious and excited about the theme, membership will sense that.
- ▲ Honor the flag, the symbol of your country.
- ▲ The drumbeat is the heartbeat of mother Earth. Use the drum in openings and closings.
- ▲ Challenge adult leadership to learn and call each other by Indian name.

## Main Ingredients:

- ▲ ***You must be excited about the theme for others to be excited about it!***
- ▲ ***Make outward use of the theme in Tribal and Longhouse gatherings!***
- ▲ ***Do your research before implementing new rituals!***
- ▲ ***Avoid the typical stereotypes!***

The ideas are endless... your own creativity, curiosity and drive are your limits.



## **3. Responsible Use of the Theme**

*The use of the North American indigenous culture in the Native Sons and Daughters Programs® MUST be handled with respect and understanding.* It can be an effective means of not only helping parent and child appreciate the First Nation people of today, but to also help parent and child bond together and learn from each other.

- ✘ **The Native Indian (First Nation) Theme** of the Native Sons and Daughters Programs® is significant, but not simply because a North American Indian provided the inspiration for them. Deeply rooted in North American Indian culture is a profound appreciation for the Creator, or Great Spirit, as well as an understanding of the independence of the forces of nature. Also ingrained in North American Indian culture are honesty, dignity, and a feeling of responsibility for the well-being of others. Perhaps most important is the genuine concern among North American Indian parents to teach these ethics to their children and to guide them to an adulthood of integrity. The importance of these values is truly significant. Emphasis on family values, respecting your elders and respect for each other is desperately needed in today's society. These traits, which permeate the way of life for the North American Indian, are the essence of parenting and the foundation of this program.
- ✘ **Sensitivity to Native Indian Cultures** is a key element within the program. Ceremonies and rituals must be performed with honor and respect to the Creator, all things in nature, these are key elements of Native Indian cultures. Ceremonies shall be designed to further the bond between parent and child. Feathers are worn only to honor these things. The Native Sons and Daughters Programs® do not wish to perpetuate the stereotypes of Native Indian cultures that have existed for many years. Discourage "war-whooping" and the use of any demeaning words such as "ugh," "how," "squaw," "tom-tom," and all other conduct that is not respectful and sensitive to the positive aspects of Native Indian cultures, in which this program was designed to reflect and honor. Review your ceremonies often to insure that the content is in keeping with these guidelines.
- ✘ **Researching Tribal History:** When creating Native Indian themed property within your program, keep in mind that designs should honor the spirit and tradition of the Native peoples. For example, a way to do this within a tribe is to actually research the name of the tribe. If the tribe is named after a real North American Indian tribe, see what traditions, customs, and history can be applied. The children would also enjoy learning about the people for which their tribe is named after. Again, the intent is to learn about and honor the tribe namesake. Libraries are a great source for this information.





## Incorporate the "A" List

The First Nation (Native Indian) way of life can provide many exciting learning experiences. Each Native Sons and Daughters tribe will determine the extent to which it uses the program theme focus in its activities. However, it is essential for the tribe to remember the following "A"-List when borrowing from First Nation culture:

### **⚠ Be Appropriate**

Make sure that the artifact, regalia/attire, or project you are using is proper for your activity. Certain articles are intended for adults only as they are viewed as an honor for their position or as a rite of passage. Some examples include:

- ⚠ The wearing of headdresses is typically reserved (as an honor) for the adult leadership (Chiefs) of the program. Membership (adults and children) should mostly wear the NSD headband and any feathers they have been individually honored with.
- ⚠ The wearing of face-paint is also typically reserved for adult leadership only and should have purpose and meaning.
- ⚠ Avoid using religious items for games and other secular activities.
- ⚠ Avoid using secular or war items for Sunday Worship Services or other religious activities.

### **⚠ Be Authentic**

When practical, always try to be as genuine and realistic as possible when duplicating First Nation artifacts and attire.

### **⚠ Be Accurate**

Ensure that your theme articles or use of cultural references are correct and factual by verifying with books, scholars, or reliable Web sites.

### **⚠ Be an Asker**

When practical, seek the advice of First Nation people, scholars, or organizations to aid you in your projects. However, be sensitive as to how your request may potentially be positively or negatively received.

### **⚠ Be an Acknowledger**

Appreciate and ascribe to the fact that historical culture is only a small part of First Nation culture of today. Be able to differentiate between the past and the present and understand that First Nation culture is still very much alive and ongoing. Remember that each tribe, band, or clan of First Nation people had and still have their own distinct and unique culture within the First Nation community.

### **⚠ Be an Advocate**

"Help yourself by helping others." When appropriate, lend assistance and provide support to First Nation organizations and causes that benefit the basic needs and rights of our indigenous people.



## **Positive Practices to Employ in Your Program:**

1. Portray Native Americans as they are today as well as from a historical perspective. Children need to know First Nation people are alive and well and living in our communities.
2. Find a balance between the First Nation culture of the past and the present.
3. When adopting Indian names, do so with respect. Be authentic and sensitive, make sure names are selected that reflect strong character and set goals. Carefully read the section entitled “Choosing an Indian Name” in the Native Sons & Daughters Programs® Tribal Members Handbook.
4. Continually work toward a consensus in which all participants agree to be respectful, sensitive, and authentic in their use of the theme. Remember that no one model will work for everybody.
5. Regularly review current materials such as flyers, brochures, activities, and ceremonies. If an item seems questionable or inappropriate, review and rework it if necessary, or remove it.
6. Monitor your program. Make sure the theme continues to be used appropriately. Consider appointing one or more persons to this overarching task within your Longhouse.
7. Take Responsibility: Continuing from #6, someone in each tribe should also take responsibility for the tribes’ actions regarding use of the theme. Ensure that the tribes are respectful to the First Nation culture and monitor the authenticity of themes, stories, costumes, and ceremonies.
8. Be sensitive to what theme-related materials are made visible to the general public in your communities. For example, the use of regalia should be limited in the view of the general public as it may enhance negative stereotypes. Certain regalia (i.e. headdresses, face-paint, etc.) should be limited to the private ceremonies conducted within the activities of the program.
9. **Be Responsible:**
  - ✘ Use your own material: Do not borrow material that is copyrighted, trademarked, or the intellectual property rights of others. (We want you to be authentic with the theme, but not to the point of infringing on others!)
  - ✘ Do not imply affiliation: Ensure that your program and related material does not suggest or imply affiliation to any Native Indian group, unless it has given its express written consent.
  - ✘ Review, review, review: Periodically review your program to ensure that it’s being responsible and treating the Native American theme with the utmost respect that it deserves.
10. **Be Realistic:**
  - ✘ Have realistic goals when seeking a solution: There are varying levels of tolerance among Native American groups. What might be acceptable to one group might be offensive to another. Since it will be difficult to please all, we suggest you tailor your theme to fit the comfort level of the Native American tribe(s) or group(s) in your area.
  - ✘ Seek Native American advice: Attend Pow-Wows or help with Native American causes to find Native Americans living in your area. Like any segment of the population, some will be more cooperative or receptive than others. Again, most will be too busy to provide guidance in some official program capacity. However, most will be willing to answer your questions.



## 11. Responding to Complaints Regarding the Native Indian Theme:

- ▲ Never shelve a complaint. Follow through and be responsive: Not all complaints need a correspondence. But all complaints need to be quickly discussed with local leadership to see if they have merit.
- ▲ Use empathy. Try to see the issue from the other point of view: If changes are needed, make positive ones that both sides can live with. If the complaint doesn't have merit, see if the issue can at least be tweaked to be a little more subtle and not so "in your face." (e.g. Putting headdress pictures in your website's photo gallery rather than on your home page. More tips are given below.)
- ▲ In most instances, do not correspond to a complaint: Usually the disgruntled are the most vocal and smallest segment of an Indian group. Corresponding with them will be only be incendiary as they will likely be entrenched in ideology, and unwilling to engage in meaningful dialog. Like most people, Native Americans are too busy living their lives to take the time to comment negatively (or even positively) about a program they most likely never heard of.
- ▲ If you must respond by dialog, keep the correspondence to a minimum: There may be situations where you will need to communicate, such as with a legal response or to an official representing an Native Indian Nation. The tone of the complaint is a good indicator of whether or not a response should be given: a complaint that respectfully disagrees might be more fruitful than one that calls you a "racist."