Prayers and Reflections

OPENING PRAYER

O Great Spirit
Whose voice I hear in the winds,
and whose breath gives life to all the world,
hear me! I am small and weak. I need
your strength and wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes
behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hand respect the things you have made
and my ears sharp to hear your voice. Make me wise
so that I may understand the things you have
taught my people. Let me learn the lessons you have
hidden in every rock and leaf.
I seek strength not to be greater
than my brothers and sisters, but to fight my greatest
enemy—myself.

Make me always ready to come to you
with clean hands and straight eyes
So when life fades, as the fading sunset,
my spirit may come to you without shame.
From Kateri Mitchell and P. Michael Galvan’s The People

REFLECTIONS FROM
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Christian faith should celebrate and strengthen the
many diverse cultures which are the product of human
hope and aspiration . . . As individual Catholics and as a
Church, we must promote and defend the human rights and
dignity of all people. This means that we have a responsi-
bility to join with American Indians in their struggle to
secure justice. In dialogue with them, we must increase
our understanding of their needs, aspirations and values . . .
Government policy and legislation deserve our special
attention because American Indians are vitally affected by
them. We must examine these systems and policies in light
of the Gospel and the Church’s social teachings, and
advocate resolution of treaty questions, protection of
Indian land rights, better housing, education, and health
care, and increased assistance.
The U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Statement on American Indians, 1977

I encourage you as Native people to preserve and keep
alive your cultures, your languages, the values and customs
which have served you well in the past and which provide
a solid foundation for the future. [In regard to justice for
Native Americans] all consciences must be challenged.
There are real injustices to be addressed and biased
attitudes to be challenged.
Pope John Paul II’s address to Native Americans, 1988

CLOSING PRAYER

(To the East) is the rising sun, the dawn of a new day. As
we walk the sacred path of life today, help us, Creator
God, to grow in wisdom and strength.

To the South, where new and fresh rains come, we ask
your help, gracious God, to walk in the ways of goodness
and gentleness in heart and speech.

To the West, the place of the setting sun, we thank you,
good and generous God, for our day, ask forgiveness for
the times we caused disharmony today.

To the North we find courage to walk each day and ask
your help to overcome fears and anxieties.

(All form a circle and join hands facing the center)
For greater wisdom, gentleness, forgiveness and
courage, let us together pray to Our Father.
Activities

1) Begin with the opening prayer and reflections on page 1 of this unit.

2) Case Studies on Native American Culture and Spirituality: Copy and distribute pages 3, 4 and 5. In small groups, have participants read the material and discuss the questions presented. Have them report back to the main group and see what common responses emerged from their discussions.

3) Have participants take the quiz on the history and current facts and issues of Native Americans on pages 6 and 7. They can discuss possible answers in small groups. When finished, go over the answers on pages 8, 9 and 10. Have participants respond to these questions:

   1. What information you learned from the quiz was most surprising or striking to you?
   2. Can you share any experiences that you’ve had with Native American culture and people? Have you witnessed or heard of prejudices against Native Americans?

4) The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, on page 11 can be used for discussion about the rights of Native Americans and its relation to Catholic Social Teaching.

5) The Prayer of Relationship and Prayer of All Races can be used in planning a prayer service in the spirit of Native American culture and spirituality that can invite more in your greater community to celebrate Native American month. Also, the symbols on page 3 can be incorporated into the prayer service you develop, and you can also use the prayers and reflections on page 1 and any of the facts in the quiz.

6) Use the web site resources listed on page 14 to continue learning about the Native American people.

7) End with the closing prayer found on page 1 of this unit.
Native American Symbols

The Native American world is one of meaningful symbols which helps one to encounter God, Creator, Great Spirit and the sacredness of all Creation. Symbols and ceremonies express meaning in the lives of Native peoples and are an important part of their culture and spirituality.

The sacred drum and its beat symbolizes for many tribes the rhythmic beat of the human heart.

Sacred animals and birds are relatives, teachers and models that call forth further growth in life’s journey.

Sacred plants such as sweetgrass, tobacco, cedar, sage, juniper and others designated by tribes, are burned for purification, healing, strength, wholeness and greater harmony in one’s life.

The sacred circle is a symbol of wholeness and unity, establishing harmony and oneness with the earth, all of creation, humanity and the infinity of God. The circular design of some traditional dwellings, such as the tepee and sweatlodge, helps one to better understand life’s journey for greater harmony during various stages of human growth and development.

The medicine wheel, another circle image, helps one to visualize and understand ideas that cannot be seen. It shows the different ways all things of life are interconnected. This sacred wheel (circle) is a medicine for a whole and healthy life.

Dances use the circle as a sign of unity, strength, and wholeness. Dancing is also a way of praying with the total self and bonding with one’s community.

Read the poem below by the Native American poet, Joy Harjo. What traditional Native American symbols does she use in this poem? What spiritual attitudes towards Creation does she reveal in the poem?

The Eagle Poem
Joy Harjo

To pray you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon
To one whole voice that is you
And know there is more
That you can’t see, can’t hear
Can’t know except in moments
Steadily growing, and in languages,
That aren’t always sound but other
Circles of motion
Like eagle that Sunday morning
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky
In wind, swept our hearts clean
With sacred wings.
We see you, see ourselves and know
That we must take the utmost care
And kindness in all things.
Breathe in, knowing we are made of
All this, and breathe, knowing
We are truly blessed because we were born, and die soon, within a
True circle of motion,
Like eagle rounding out the morning
Inside us.
We pray that it will be done
In beauty.
In beauty.
Case Studies

Water: Lifeblood of Mother Earth
by Priscilla Solomon
Anishinabeque (an Ojibway woman) and a Sister of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

“In the testament of our Hebrew ancestors, water images appear like a life-giving stream throughout the history of God’s people. Water quenches both physical and spiritual thirst, cleansing, purifying, transforming, and bearing life. In Genesis, God’s creative word results in ‘every kind of living creature with which the waters teem’ (Gen. 1:21). ‘A flood was rising from the earth and watering all the surface of the soil.’ (Gen. 2:6) Out of this watered soil, life is brought forth. ‘A river flowed from Eden to water the garden and from there it divided into four streams.’ (Gen. 2:10)

For me as an Aboriginal person, the image of four streams is enriched by our teaching of the four sacred directions and the four symbolic races. If one faces the four cardinal directions consecutively one has completed a circle. It is immediately clear to me that water is meant for all of creation and for all humankind. But such is not the common understanding of our time. As water is threatened and becomes scarce in more parts of the earth, individuals and corporations are capitalizing on human need, commodifying water for their own profit.

What is water? It is a natural and essential element without which no one can long survive, and is the birthright of every living creature. Precious, sacred rivers flow through highlands and lowlands, bush lands, deserts and cities, cultures and spiritualities, quenching both physical and spiritual thirst. People of all cultures recognize the necessity and symbolic nature of water. Indigenous people, because of our holistic world views, have a rich relationship with water that is particularly needed in our contemporary world.”

Discussion Questions:

How does Sr. Solomon honor both her Catholic faith and her Native heritage in her reflection?

Read the box to the right. How is Sr. Solomon’s reflection an example of inculturation?

Why is water so important in spiritual as well as physical terms?

The shortage of usable, healthy water is a growing problem around the globe. The right to water is seen as a human right by Church teachings. How can we become more aware of the issues surrounding control and usage of water?

Inculturation

Inculturation refers to incorporating elements of a native or ethnic culture in the expressions of the faith. It is based on the understanding that the “best of the culture is enhanced by the truth of the Gospel” and that the church is enriched by respecting the culture which the Gospel embraces and which in turn embraces.”

US Catholic Bishops, 1992: Time for Remembering, Reconciling and Recommitting Ourselves as a People
Case Studies (continued)

The Legend of Wountie
This legend is from the Squamish Nation, Coast Salish, on the west coast of Canada. The Cheakamus River is north of the town of Squamish and flows into Howe Sound.

A long time ago, even before the time of the flood, the Cheakamus River provided food for the Squamish people. Each year, at the end of summer, when the salmon came home to spawn, the people would cast their cedar root nets into the water and get enough fish for the winter to come.

One day, a man came to fish for food for his family for the winter. He looked into the river and found that many fish were coming home this year. He said thanks to the spirit of the fish, for giving themselves as food for his family, and cast his net into the river and waited. In time, he drew his nets in, and they were full of fish, enough for his family for the whole year. He packed these away into cedar bark baskets, and prepared to go home.

But he looked into the river, and saw all those fish, and decided to cast his net again. And he did so, and it again filled with fish, which he threw onto the shore. A third time, he cast his net into the water and waited.

This time, when he pulled his net in, it was torn beyond repair by sticks, stumps and branches which filled the net. To his dismay, the fish on the shore and the fish in the cedar bark baskets were also sticks and branches. He had no fish, his nets were ruined.

It was then he looked up at the mountain, and saw Wountie, the spirit protecting the Cheakamus, who told him that he had broken the faith with the river and with nature, by taking more than he needed for himself and his family. And this was the consequence.

And to this day, high on the mountain overlooking the Cheakamus and Paradise Valley, is the image of Wountie, protecting the Cheakamus.

The fisherman? Well, his family went hungry and starved, a lesson for all the people in his family.

- Education World

Discussion Questions

What do we learn about the values of the Squamish by reading this tale? What would you guess is their view of relationship between:

a. human and earth and all that lives in it
b. creator and earth
c. individual and society
d. human and spirit world

What can we learn from this indigenous tale? How would our society be different if we lived by similar values?
Native American History and Culture - Quiz

1. Which European nations colonized North America and thus were the first nonnative contacts with Native Americans?
   a. England  
   b. France  
   c. Spain  
   d. Germany  
   e. Russia

2. What were the effects of European colonization efforts on Native Americans?
   a. loss of culture  
   b. loss of language  
   c. destruction of villages  
   d. extinction of tribes

3. As a result of European contact and missionary efforts, many Native Americans tribes:
   a. flourished because of technological and religious advances  
   b. lost their languages and traditions through the destruction of their villages  
   c. became extinct or continued with only a few survivors  
   d. adopted European cultures and languages.

4. In the past 200+ years, the relationship of the U.S. government with Native Americans can be characterized as:
   a. welcoming of the new ideas and traditions they could offer  
   b. distanced but supportive, and generally tolerant towards Native American culture  
   c. ambivalent  
   d. disrespectful and destructive

5. Today, about ________ indigenous people live in North America.
   a. 529,000  
   b. 928,500  
   c. 1.2 million  
   d. 2 million

6. These indigenous people are divided into _____ tribes in the lower forty-eight states.
   a. 24  
   b. 76  
   c. 122  
   d. 557

7. Currently, most Native Americans live on reservations, special land for their use that has been set aside by the government. True or False? _____

8. Presently, Native American culture is:
   a. still on a steady decline  
   b. experiencing a revival

9. Choose one:
   In Native American culture, the ________ word has a higher value than the ________ word.
   written/spoken  written/spoken
Native American History and Culture - Quiz (continued)

10. Other special elements of Native American culture involve their understanding of:
   a. time
   b. ritual
   c. history
   d. respect for elders
   e. the earth
   f. living creatures

11. Native American and Catholic Christian spiritualities are:
   a. compatible
   b. incompatible

12. The Native American cultures are ________.
   a. very similar to one another
   b. all very different

13. Native American nicknames, such as ________, are frequently used for athletic teams.
   a. Redskins
   b. Braves
   c. Indians
   d. Warriors

14. Reservations have served to:
   a. return to Native Americans the land that was once theirs
   b. reunite families and preserve the rich Native American culture
   c. act as a system of forced segregation

15. The average income of Native Americans is about ____ of that for whites, the lowest per capita income of any population group in the U.S.
   a. 66%
   b. 72%
   c. 79%
   d. 83%

16. On the existing 278 reservations, existing problems include:
   a. unemployment
   b. poverty
   c. alcoholism
   d. gambling dependency

17. True or False? The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is responsible for the administration and management of land held in trust by Native Americans tribes.

18. ______ percent of all Native Americans have gone to college.
   a. 1
   b. 2.5
   c. 5
   d. 10

19. How many countries in the world have been both founded and maintained by the original inhabitants of the land?
   a. 56
   b. 70
   c. 93
   d. 110
Native American History and Culture Quiz - Answers

1. a, b, c, and e
The English, French, Spanish, and Russians had the first contact with Native Americans. Each had varying approaches to colonization. Some Native Americans experienced this contact almost 500 years ago, while others had their first substantial contact only in the last 150 years. Of the latter group, a number of Native Americans had their primary European contact with Americans of European descent who no longer considered themselves to be immigrants.

2. a, b, c, and d
As an effect of European contact, a number of Native American tribes lost their cultures and languages through the destruction of their villages. Some tribes disappeared while others continued with a few survivors.

3. b, c, and d
Through the experiences of European contact and missionaries, some Native Americans lost their own culture and language and adopted European ones. Many Native Americans maintained two strictly divided cultural lives: one for the village or reservation and the other for the larger society and often for the church.

4. d
Government assimilation efforts caused Native Americans to lose their cultures and language. Between 1785 and 1866, over 400 treaties were made with Native Americans in the United States, and every treaty was broken. Until the mid-twentieth century, it was common practice for the government to remove Native American children from their cultures and relocate them in boarding-school type educational settings, where they were not allowed to speak their cultures’ languages, wear their cultures’ dress, or practice their cultures’ customs. Today, tension between the government and Native Americans continues, with conflict surrounding land use, casinos, and reparations. Additionally, there has been a long history of discrimination towards Native Americans by the U.S. government. One commonly cited example is that in order for a Native American to be recognized by law as part of that group, he or she must engage in an extensive officialization process and receive an identification card for a federally-recognized tribe. The card is necessary to access certain federal and states services. Some Native Americans see this process (they must apply to become a citizen of a tribe but a person becomes a U.S. citizen by virtue of having being born in the U.S.) as an example of unequal treatment.

5. d
The Native American population, once estimated to be as many as 20 million people at the time of European discovery, declined to 250 thousand in the 1890s and now number 2 million. Native Americans make up less than one percent of the U.S. population.

6. d
There are 557 tribes in the lower forty-eight states. Some of the more well known tribes and their populations include: Cherokee: 308,132; Navajo: 219,198; Chippewa: 103,826; Sioux: 103,255 (these numbers only reflect officially recognized tribe members, but there are many more people with kinship ties to these and other tribes).

7. False
Currently, twenty-five percent of Native Americans live on the 278 reservations that exist in the United States. Half of Native Americans live in an urban setting, away from government reservations, but many maintain some contact with their cultures through Native centers and/or visits to their reservations. In urban areas, there exist some Native Americans who are native to the area and others who have migrated there from other parts of North America. However, it is important to note that not all Native American tribes have reservations. Some urban Natives belong to landless tribes. Their primary community is the multicultural urban experience of North American society. This is in contrast to some other Native Americans who live among their own people on their own land (reservations). Others have grown up on their reservations and have migrated to an urban setting, which for most, is a real and dramatic experience of immigration.
Native American History and Culture Quiz - Answers
(continued)

8. b
Presently, a revival of Native cultures, traditions and languages is occurring. Many new forms of ties across tribes are being formed.

9. spoken/written
The spoken word has a higher value than the written word. The use of story has primary importance; through the telling of their tribe’s stories, the people are given, and sustained in, life. The speaker’s personal integrity gives credence and value to the words he or she speaks. The value of words lessens with their quantity. Silence is also seen as having an intrinsic value. It is important to spend time in silence with people.

10. a, b, c, d, e, and f
The primary understanding of time is how it relates to the days, months, and seasons of the world. Time is the expression of one’s unity and harmony with the world. While the understanding of time by hours and minutes used in the dominant society has importance, it is secondary to the Native understanding of time. Through the use of ritual, one can place oneself in greater harmony with the rhythm of the world. History is not seen as linear but rather as cyclical; it reflects the movement of the world, of the seasons. Through respect for one’s elders, this appreciation of one’s history is reflected. The elders carry in their bodies the traditions and values of the people. Native Americans view the world on which we live as mother earth, the giver and sustainer of our life. The land has a unique relationship with Native peoples. The sense of ownership differs from that of the dominant society. Native people do not “own” the land, but they and the land belong to one another. Native Americans view their relationship with the land as characterized by care, for our mother earth makes us who we are. All life is sacred and shared by all living creatures. No one form of life has a greater intrinsic value than any other since all creatures form one family and share one common life. By living in harmony with all creatures, humans can live the life for which the Creator made them.

11. a
Native spirituality and Catholic Christianity are compatible with one another. Native Americans have a diverse cultural experience that is deeply spiritual. In the faith expression of Native Americans, Catholic Christianity needs to be inculturated in the Native traditions and cultures. Otherwise, the adoption of Catholic Christianity would mean the loss of one’s culture.

12. b
The Native American cultures are all very different. The primary identification of Native Americans is with their village, tribe or nation, and they are diverse in their own cultures and traditions. The cultural differences among Native Americans are as diverse as among other cultural groups, such as Asians and Europeans. North of the Rio Grande, there are, in fact, over 300 extant Native languages and cultures.

13. a, b, c, and d
As an ethnic group, Native Americans were once America’s most visible minority. They were frequently seen in movies and on TV, and before that, on coins and in the form of wooden cigar store Indians. Their nicknames were also frequently used for athletic teams. Some Native Americans believe that this usage encourages racial stereotyping and racism.
Native American History and Culture Quiz - Answers (continued)

14. **c**
   Due to the experience of reservations, Native people have known the experience of forced segregation. The reservation system developed as a consequence of the Native people being a conquered people. As a result, some Native Americans have come to mistrust the institutions of the dominating culture (e.g. governmental agencies, church, etc.). They also continue to experience racism and racial stereotyping. The media has played a significant role in both dispersing and supporting stereotypes about Native Americans.

15. **a**
   Native American average income is 66% that of whites.

16. **a, b, c, and d**
   Unemployment, poverty, alcoholism, and gambling dependency are all problems on the reservations. Other unsettling facts, off and on the reservations, include that Native Americans make up 5 percent of the prison population, even while they are less than 1 percent of the U.S. population. Native Americans rarely live past the age of 70, and their suicide rates as well as infant mortality rates are double the national average.

17. **True.**
   The BIA is responsible for the administration and management of 55.7 million acres of land held in trust by the United States for American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives. The agency’s tasks include: developing forestlands, leasing assets on these lands, directing agricultural programs, protecting water and land rights, developing and maintaining infrastructure and economic development. Tension has existed, however, between Native Americans and the agency that manages their land. Many Native Americans consider their land as their main resource, and through the BIA, it is often leased out to corporations (for mining, waste dumping, ranching, farming, and gaming).

   Another function of the BIA is to provide educational services to Native American students. Currently, the BIA provides this service to 48,000 students, but their educational involvement has been very controversial. Issues involving “Americanization” and the discouragement of Native American culture, language, and dress, as mentioned earlier, has resulted in a damaged relationship between Native Americans and the BIA and accusations of government-promoted assimilation.

18. **a**
   Only one percent of Native Americans have attended college.

19. **b**
   Of the 115 nation-states on this planet, only about 70 of them were founded and are being maintained by the original inhabitants of that land. The rest, 45 nations or so, were built by outsiders who exterminated or tried to exterminate the indigenous, or original, population. The situation of Native Americans in the U.S. shares similarities with those of many others elsewhere.

Sources: Kateri Mitchel, SSA and P. Michael Galvan, The People
U.S. Census Bureau
Education World
The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was completed by a Working Group in 1993. Since 1995, nine more sessions on the document have been held and the group is expected to make a final report to the UN Commission on Human Rights before the end of 2004. More than 100 indigenous groups participate in the Working Group. Since some articles concerning the rights to self-determination and land rights are controversial to some, the draft Declaration has not yet been adopted. Highlights from the Draft Declaration are below.

Indigenous peoples are entitled to:

Article 1 - the right to all human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 2 - the right to be free from discrimination, since they are equal to all other people in dignity and personhood.

Article 3 - the right of self-determination and a nationality.

Article 4 - the right to develop their own political, economic, social, cultural, and legal systems, while retaining their rights to participate fully in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

Article 6 - the right to live in peace and security and to full guarantees against genocide or any other act of violence, including the removal of indigenous children from their families and communities.

Article 7 – the right to be protected against ethnocide and from any form of assimilation or integration.

Article 10 – the right to be protected from forcible removal from their lands or territories.

Article 11 – the right to special protection during armed conflicts and from being forcibly recruited into arms forces.

Article 12 – the right to practice and revitalize their cultural and customs, to practice, develop, and teach their spiritual and religious traditions to their children and others, and to have their indigenous sacred places, including burial sites, be preserved, respected and protected.

Article 18 – the right to be protected under international and national labor laws.

Article 22 – the right to special measures to improve their economic and social conditions, including the areas of employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

Article 24 – the right to practice their traditional medicines and health practices.

Article 26 – the right to own, develop, control and use, and conserve, the lands, territories and environments they have traditionally owned, occupied or used.

Article 27 – the right to restitution of the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, occupied, used or damaged without their consent.

Article 38 – the right to access to adequate financial and technical assistance from States.

Discussion Questions

Consider these tenets of Catholic Social Teaching (CST): participation, human dignity, option for the poor, rights and responsibilities. Where do you see concepts from CST in the Draft Declaration?

What do you know about past injustices against Indigenous People? How does the Draft Declaration respond to the quote from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on page 1?
Native American Prayer Services

Prayer of Relationship:

*Gather in a circle with a lighted candle in the center.*

**Opening:** Summer is a time of freshness, of color and of life; a time of growing, of nurturing and of maturing. As we live this summer season, let us share the past events of our lives, enjoy the present moments with friends and with family, and dream the tomorrow. Let us try to live this season to the fullest as we continue to be aware of ongoing personal development. Let us focus on relationships with self, others, the world and creation.

*Ask Reflection Questions on Relationships below and ask all to respond silently, or in verbal sharing.*

**Relationship with self.**
How can I embrace the different aspects of myself and see that I am loved by God in my totality?

**Relationship with others.** In strengthening our bonds with others, how open are we to widen our circle to allow for diversity?

**Relationship with the world.** How do I feel when I meet people of other cultures? Do I recognize beauty and the face of God in every person in the world?

**Relationship with creation.** As we observe many signs of life in nature, how do I develop connectedness with the earth, rivers, mountains, hills, sky, sun, winds, and all of God’s creation?

*After these reflections, join hands to say the prayer of Black Elk, below.*

**Prayer of Black Elk**
Hear me, four quarters of the world -- a relative I am!
Give me the strength to walk the soft earth,
   a relative to all that is!
Give me the eyes to see and the strength to understand
   that I may be like you . . .
Great Spirit, Great Spirit, my Grandfather,
all over the earth the faces of living things are all alike.
With tenderness have these come up out of the ground.
Look upon these faces of children without number
   and with children in their arms
that they may face the winds and walk the good road
to the day of quiet.

**Closing Prayer:** Through our relationships, let us help one another grow more fully and experience life with greater wholeness and holiness. Amen.
Native American Prayer Services (continued)

Prayer of All Races

As a sign of our baptism and symbol of our ongoing need for healing, we place four bowls of water, one in each direction and play a nature tape of running water. We pray:

Creator, giver of life, bring us to new birth in water and the Great Spirit. Teach us the ways of peace and forgiveness. Help us to respect the differences we see in one another and learn to appreciate them. As we become healers in our relationships, may we come to wholeness and holiness. Amen.

Each person moves clockwise to each direction/bowl and washes one of the senses as indicated below. Each asks forgiveness (in silence) for the times—by word, action, mannerism or silence—he or she has hurt a person from the different races.

Red Race
Hands
NORTH

WEST
White Race
Eyes

EAST
Yellow/Brown Race
Ears

SOUTH
Mouth
Black Race

One or all pray:
Help us, Creator, to walk straight the sacred path of life, hearing your voice and seeing your beauty in creation and creatures alike. Give us the strength and courage, our Creator, to preserve the sacredness of life, of mother earth, and of all creation. Give us the vision to see and admire your beautiful creation. Amen.
Other Native American Resources

The Tekakwitha Conference is a Catholic organization which promotes Native American culture, works with Native peoples and trains Catholic clergy and laity who seek to minister to Native Americans. They will host a conference in July 2005. See the Tekakwitha Conference website at http://www.tekconf.org/index.html

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops document, “Native American Catholics at the Millenium,” can be found at http://www.usccb.org/education/nativeam.pdf. This document, using data from the 2000 Census, profiles Native Americans in the U.S.


The website of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, which opened in September 2004 in Washington, DC, can be found at http://www.nmai.si.edu/

A long list of resources for learning and teaching about Native Americans can be found at: http://www.teacheroz.com/Native_Americans.htm

“First Nations Histories” offers short histories of the better known Native American tribes: http://www.tolatsga.org/Compacts.html

“Aadizookaanag” offers Native American stories, myths, and legends at: http://www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/stories.html