

Lakota toy buffalo, ca. 1870. 6/7936



FIND the toy buffalo

The Lakota believe that life is a sacred circle in which all things are connected—nature, animals, and humans. Lakota people feel a strong connection to the buffalo and refer to them as the Tatanka Oyate, or Buffalo Nation. They respect the buffalo because it provided food, clothing, and shelter. Its soft hair was once used to stuff things such as toy dolls.

All parts of the buffalo were used because they were—and still are—seen as a gift from the Creator. Having toys that were made from the animal helped Lakota kids understand the importance of the buffalo.

Look more closely. What other objects do you see that are made from buffalo?

What is your favorite toy to play with?

FIND the women's basket hats

The Hupa use plants to make both baskets and medicine. Ceremonial dancing is seen as a way of healing. These basket hats are worn during the Brush Dance, a ceremony to bring the blessing of good health to newborns.



Hupa women's basket hat, California, ca. 1900 22/2619



What hats might you wear during a special ceremony?

What are ways that you can celebrate the arrival of a new baby?



Yup'ik dog salmon-skin parka, ca. 1910. 9/7029



FIND the parka

Today many Yup'ik people fish, hunt, and gather food and clothing materials from the land. They wear both contemporary and traditional clothing, depending on the occasion. Some Yup'ik people still wear traditional animal-skin parkas, which provide much better protection against the cold, wet Alaskan environment than store-bought coats.

Many Yup'ik people rely on hunting and fishing for much of their families' food. It is expensive to ship manufactured foods to their remote communities in Alaska.

What are the benefits of using fish skin to make a parka?

What other kinds of items do the Yup'ik use animal hides for besides clothing?



Ed Archie NoiseCat (Salish), *Raven Steals the Moon*, 2003. Cast glass. 26/3228



FIND the sculpture of the moon

Native American histories are recounted as beginning before the arrival of humans, in a time when plants, animals, and nature were making the world ready for people. In many stories, the moon guides the behavior of plants, animals, and the weather. Native astronomers tracked the moon's phases and cycles, using them to serve as the basis for cultural and agricultural practices which continue today.

Look closely at the sculpture. Do you see the phases of the moon? How many are there?

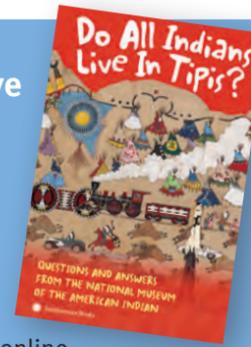
For many Northwest Coast tribes, like the Salish, the July moon is known as the Salmon Moon.

What do you think might happen during this time?



Do you have more questions about Native American cultures?

Check out the museum's book *Do All Indians Live in Tipis? Questions and Answers from the National Museum of the American Indian*. Available in the Roanoke Museum Store or online.



The museum's imagINATIONS Activity Center on the third level provides interactive, hands-on learning for curious visitors ages 12 and under. Open Tuesday through Sunday.



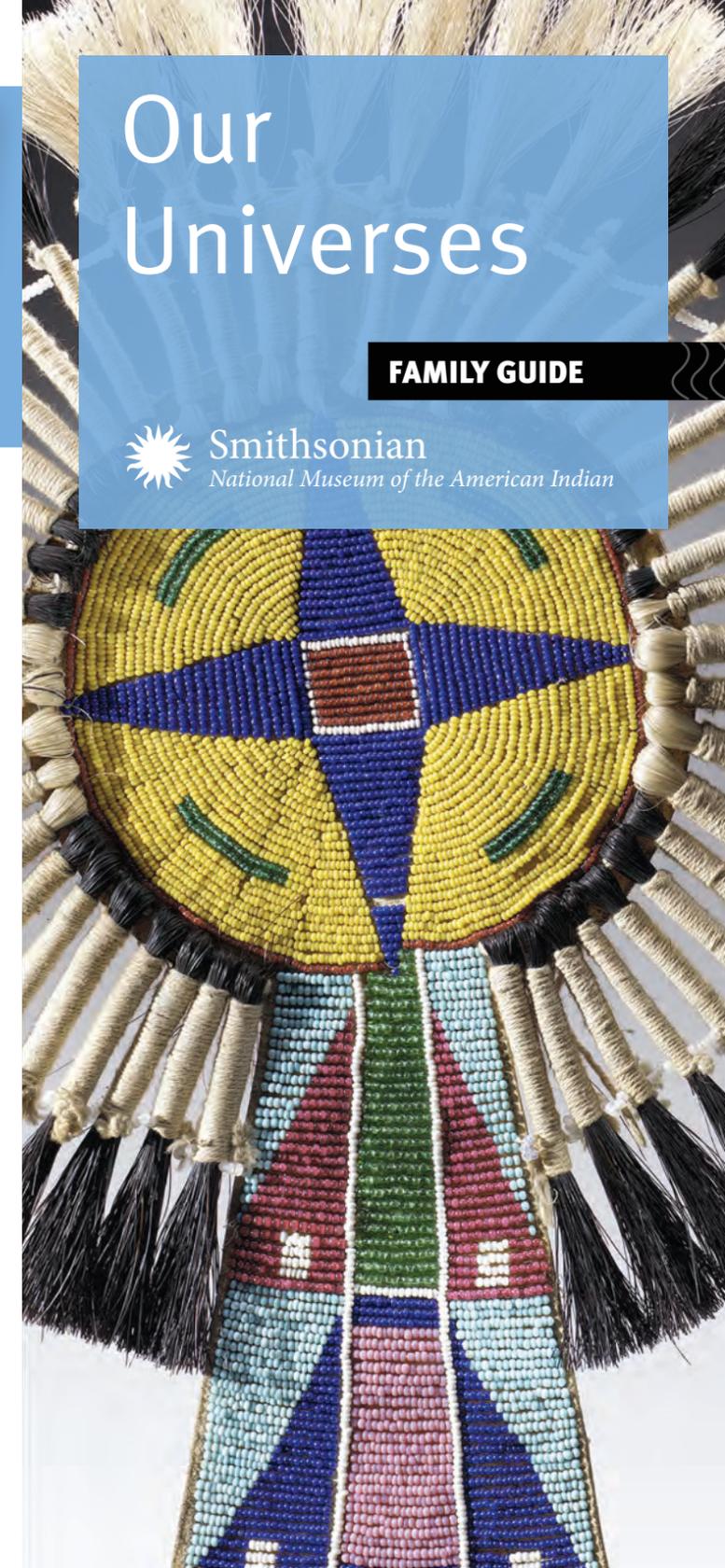
NATIONAL MUSEUM of the AMERICAN INDIAN

Cover: Crow horse ornament decorated with beadwork and horsehair, Montana, ca. 1890. 18/9240

Our Universes

FAMILY GUIDE

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian



Let's Look Together



The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian reflects the diversity of American Indian people in the Western Hemisphere. In this guide, we introduce seven different communities—Tlingit, Santa Clara, Anishinaabe, Lakota, Hupa, Yup'ik, and Salish—and learn about their cultures, languages, values, and beliefs. The communities represented are living modern lives while still maintaining strong bonds to long-held traditions.



We invite you to use this guide to explore the Our Universes gallery with the entire family. Use the prompts to find connections and similarities among you and your family and Native American families.

Do you ever wonder what it means to be Native American?

- Native peoples lived and continue to live throughout the Americas, which reaches from the Arctic in the north to the tip of Tierra del Fuego in South America. They were the first settlers of the Western Hemisphere, arriving long before Europeans; thus, the term Native American.
- Native Americans are citizens of tribes or nations based on the area they live in and their culture. There are hundreds of tribes in the United States and tens of millions of Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. Each community has its own language, religion, clothing, and culture.

What is culture?

Being Native American means belonging to a tribe or nation and participating in its distinct cultural traditions.



FIND the sculpture of Raven

Preston Singletary (Tlingit),
Raven Steals the Sun, 2003.
Blown glass. 26/3273



Creation stories tell the histories of Native cultures. They are the foundation on which Native peoples' identities are built. Each Native community has its own creation story. In the Tlingit oral histories, Raven symbolizes creation. His long, straight beak often holds a round image of the sun. Raven is known as a "trickster," a mischievous character. He steals the sun to end the realm of darkness.



Share a story that originated where you live or where you are from.

Name some animals that have been depicted as tricksters in stories.

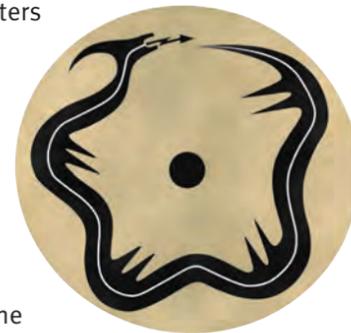


FIND the symbol of Avanyu



"The evil spirit of drought had come and stayed too long! All of the people, the animals, the birds and the plants were in abject misery! As the days came and passed, the birds sang only sad songs; the plants drooped lower and lower; the animals walked slower and the people were haunted with despair! The earth's rhythm was out of step!"

—"How and Why Stories: Why Rivers Never Run Straight." In *Indian Life*. Pablita Velarde (Santa Clara Pueblo), 1961



While Native people usually prefer to be called by their tribe's or nation's name, the museum uses the terms Native American, American Indian, and Indigenous to refer to Native people as a whole.

Water is important in New Mexico's hot, dry climate. Rain gives life to people, plants, and animals. It also provides the water, which is mixed with clay to make pottery and material for adobe houses.

Look at the different pieces of pottery and find the Avanyu symbol.

How many times can you find the Avanyu symbol in the exhibition?



Watch and listen to the *Seven Grandfathers and Little Boy* video. Since long ago, the Anishinaabe people have communicated to younger generations via an oral tradition. Oral tradition required listeners to open their minds and hearts in order to fully understand the lesson being taught. When elders share their stories, they teach us.

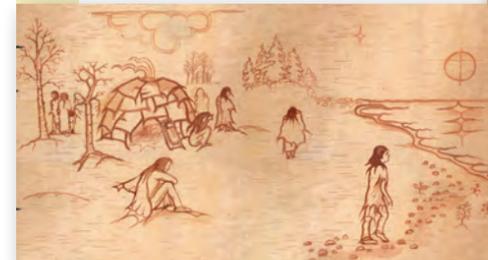
The retelling of the Seven Teachings is a way for the Anishinaabe to educate their children. The Seven Teachings remind the Anishinaabe of their responsibility to the world, to others around them, and to themselves.

How many of the Seven Teachings can you find in the birchbark illustration?

What values are you being taught in order to be a good person? Are these values similar to the Seven Teachings?



FIND the Seven Teachings



[more ▶](#)