

**Title**

Oral Tradition.

**Grade Level**

Girl Scouts, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Theme**

How storytelling impacts our life today.

**Duration**

2 hours.

**Goal**

- Students will learn the importance of story-telling in Lakota culture and how it continues to impact people.
- Students will read “The Trickster and the Troll” by Virginia Driving Hawk-Sneve prior to the session and together we will look at a few legends of each trickster.

**Objectives**

- Students will be able to understand the Lakota values and explain how Iktomi helped instill those values.
- Students will be able to draw parallels between the two tricksters and understand the loss and finally regaining of culture through storytelling.

**South Dakota Standards**

N/A.

**Cultural Concept**

Story-telling was the way Lakota people educated their children. They learned their place in society and the importance of their values through the misdeeds of Iktomi. The book demonstrates the importance of story-telling for both the Norwegian and Lakota cultures.

**Cultural Background**

Iktomi (Eek-toh-mee) is the Lakota trickster. According to legend, Iktomi was born out of an egg as a full-grown man. He is the first-born son of the Rock Iya. His name means Spider but is interchanged with Trickster as well. Iktomi has the ability to shape-shift in a lot of his stories. Sometimes he has the form of human and other times he can take the shape of a spider or a beautiful woman. He is very sly and cunning and he has supernatural powers that are both good and bad. His stories usually start with him being hungry and looking for food. Iktomi generally ends up trying to outsmart other creatures and getting himself in trouble, though there are several stories that explain why things are the way they are. His stories illustrate the way Lakotas should not act. They help the people sort out their roles in society and the values that all Lakotas should have. There are Lakota values for men: bravery, fortitude, generosity and wisdom. The women’s values are: bravery, generosity, truthfulness and child-bearing. Bravery is the virtue that is most respected amongst men and women. Since childhood, bravery was drilled into the minds of Lakotas. Fortitude could mean one of two things. The first is the endurance of physical discomfort or pain, and the second is the ability to show reserve during moments of emotional stress. The Sun Dance is one example of how the men would show fortitude by enduring physical pain. Generosity is a key part of Lakota culture. People would accumulate things simply to give them away. No Lakota would have a wealth of material

goods just for themselves. And wisdom was more than just intellectualism, it was the ability to make good decisions for the people, it was a power in and of itself. Women and men share the same first two virtues, so it was no different for a Lakota woman regarding generosity or bravery. She did need truthfulness however. Truthfulness was required of both sexes but women were particularly held to a degree of honesty. Bearing children was also a big thing for women. That was the role for a Lakota woman, she was first a mother. If you would like to know more, refer to *The Sioux* by Royal B. Hassrick or *Values in Dakota Society* by V.D. Malan and C.J. Jesser.

### **Student Activities**

Students will have the book read prior to the meeting. During the meeting we will discuss the values they picked up and we will go over Lakota values. Each student will have an opportunity to share their viewpoints.

### **Resources**

Enough copies of “The Trickster and the Troll” for all the students.

### **Assessment**

The students can be given an assignment of looking up a story about Iktomi or another Lakota legend and explain the significance of it.

### **References**

Brett, Jan.

Hassrick, R. B. (1960). *The Sioux: Life and customs of a warrior society*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Walker, J. R. (1983). *Lakota myth*. (E. A. Jahner, Ed.) Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

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