A LEADERS’ GUIDE FOR NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY BASED ON ACTS 9:1-19, NRSV
Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” 5 He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. 8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

10 Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” 11 The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” 13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” 15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; 16 I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” 17 So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”
Dear Church Leader,

Native American Ministries Sunday celebrates and supports the 157 Native American United Methodist churches that are part of the denomination. On May 5, our special offering directly supports Native American congregations that minister authentically with their communities and provides scholarships for Native American seminary students.

Did you know that more than 20,000 Native American people are part of The United Methodist Church? Through gifts shared on this Special Sunday, United Methodist Native American seminary students and congregations are empowered to develop new ministries that honor creative expression of their culture. They are equipped to form new ministry partnerships and coalitions, encouraging community reconciliation and restoration.

Please use and adapt the resources in this kit to promote the Special Sunday and to develop a worship experience that emphasizes the importance of Native American Ministries Sunday and encourages generous giving on May 5.

Thank you for being part of this Special Sunday that strengthens the United Methodist connection.
Worship Resource: Liturgy
Strengthen the Native American Ministries Sunday message throughout your worship service. This liturgy is designed to connect with the Scripture readings while reflecting themes of persecution, grace and redemption. You can print the prayers in the bulletin or project them on screens, depending on your church’s culture.

INVOCATION
Divine Creator,
Thank you for turning our mourning into dancing,
Our weeping into joy.
Open us to your Spirit
As we worship you.
Open our eyes to experience the risen Christ
in new ways that nourish us and make us instruments
to share your love and grace with everyone.
In the name of the One whose way we follow,
Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP
Christ the Lord is risen today!
Alleluia!
We gather in the name of the resurrected
Lord Jesus.
We sing praises to God and give thanks.
We gather in celebration of Native American
United Methodists recognizing that weeping
may linger for the night,
But joy comes with the morning.
Through our connections through Christ, God
is turning our mourning into dancing
and clothing us with joy.
God of joy, we give thanks to you forever!
Christ the Lord is risen today!
Alleluia!

HYMN: “Amazing Grace”
UMH 378 verse 1, Cherokee verse 2, Creek verse 3

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

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PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS
Worship Resource: Sermon Starter
What can we learn from the lives of the first Christians as we seek to follow “The Way” today? The first Christians preached, taught and shared, and invited others to “The Way” of repentance, healing, forgiveness and love.

How do people who are not Native American reconcile the harm done to the First Americans, while honoring the Native American ministries of The United Methodist Church?

This sermon starter offers direction to weave a message of repentance and celebration.
As you have heard, today we are celebrating Native American Ministries Sunday. Did you know that more than 20,000 Native Americans are part of The United Methodist Church? Our offering directly supports Native American congregations, equipping them to minister authentically with their communities, while honoring creative expressions of culture and heritage.

In the Dakotas Annual Conference for example, this offering has supported a culturally appropriate vacation Bible school experience that includes a food pantry and clothing closet and provides job opportunities for Native Americans to lead the camp.

Native American-led United Methodist ministries serve the people who worship on Sunday mornings and expand into the community to respond to trauma among indigenous people, such as domestic violence, alcoholism, and suicide.

The offering also supports scholarships for Native American students like the Rev. Stephanie Escher who now serves as a hospital chaplain. She is a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe. The Native American Seminary Award, funded by the United Methodist special offering, helped her manage the costs of studying for a Master of Divinity degree at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

(Worship Resource: Offering Talk)

Adapt this script to share encouraging stories of how Native American Ministries Sunday offerings have strengthened congregations and equipped leaders. If possible, invite someone from the Native American community to share a testimony.

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Visual Worship Resources
Incorporate the voices of Native American Christians with poetry, music and prayers. Visual slides provide a multimedia experience during the offering or a mission moment. They can be projected the week before Native American Ministries Sunday to prepare the congregation to give generously.

Posters and bulletin inserts introduce the theme and raise awareness about why we celebrate the ministries of United Methodist Native Americans.
Children’s Resource: Children’s Message

Invite the children to participate in an embodied Native American United Methodist prayer that celebrates a cultural tradition while being careful to avoid appropriation.

As we say this prayer, we will move toward the direction that is suggested in the prayer. We remember that Jesus Christ is the center of creation, of our lives, and of the world. We ask each direction to share a form of wisdom. Then, from each direction, we will return to the center, reminded that Christ brings healing and wholeness to every place on earth.

Point out which direction is north, south, east, and west.

Let us face South.
(All people face South.)
From the South come guidance and the beginning and end of life.
May we walk good paths, O God, living on the earth as sisters and brothers should, rejoicing in one another’s blessing and sympathizing in one another’s sorrows and, together, look to you, seeking the new heaven and earth.
(All people return facing center.)

Let us face East.
(All people face East.)
From the East, the direction of the rising sun, we glean wisdom and knowledge through desert silences and humble service.
Enable us, O God, to be wise in our actions and in our use of the resources of the earth, sharing them in justice, partaking of them in gratitude.
(All people return facing center.)

Let us face West.
(All people face West.)
From the West come purifying waters.
We pray that water might be pure and available to all, and that we, too, may be purified so that life may be sustained and nurtured over the entire face of the earth.
(All people return facing center.)

If we walked a path in each direction, the sacred paths would form a cross.
Returning to the center, we discover Christ, who calls us and challenges us. Amen.
Children’s Resource: Children’s Bulletin
Help the children in your congregation engage with the worship service through a coordinated coloring page, maze, word puzzles, prayer and Scriptural passage.
Children’s Resource: Activity
Explore the First Americans’ commitment to protecting water sources. Brainstorm ways in which we can be water protectors.

TODAY WE WILL TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER.

Where can we find water in our area? (Allow time for answers.)

Native American people remind us that water is life. According to a Lenape saying, “If there is no water, there is no tomorrow.” Some Native American people call themselves “Water Protectors.”

Why is this gift of water so important? What are the benefits? (Allow time for answers.)

If there is no water, there is no tomorrow. Water is life. Water is medicine. The waters that God gathered together were called seas. And God saw that it was good.

What are some ways in which we can be water protectors? (Allow time for answers.)

Do you have a prayer that we could offer for the water? For this medicine? For this good gift that God has given us? What do you think we should pray for it?

Now let’s stand in a circle. I will pass around this bowl of water and ask each of you to say a prayer for the water as you hold it.

Amen.

Now let’s pour the water outside in the garden (or whatever other outdoor space you have).

Pray:
Creator, thank you for water. Remind us to cherish and protect this gift from you. As the water returns to the earth, allow it to provide nourishment through its healing power. (List some of the other prayers that were named earlier.)

Thank you for the Native Americans who remind us to care for your creation. Help us to be water protectors. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Genesis 1:10, NRSV
“God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.”

The people of The United Methodist Church

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.
Small Group Resource: Discussion Questions

Using these conversation prompts, guide your small group through the lesson from Acts 9:1-20 and make connections with Native American Ministries Sunday and the world.

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” 5 He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. 8 Saul got up from the ground and joined his hands on him so that he might regain his sight. 9 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; 10 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” 11 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; 12 and I will show him how much more he must suffer for the sake of my name.” 13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard many of this fellow’s persecutions of your saints; 14 and he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” 15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; 16 and I will show him how much more he must suffer for the sake of my name.” 17 So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 Immediately something like a fishhook entered his mouth, and he began to speak. And when he could not stop speaking, he was filled with the Holy Spirit.
Social Media Resources
Prayer cards, testimonials and reminders have been formatted for you to post through your social media networks. For maximum impact, consider posting two to three messages a week in the month leading up to Native American Ministries Sunday.

To personalize, add your own message and hashtag and include information about your congregation’s relationship with Native American ministries.
Devotional Podcasts
These audio devotionals, prepared by Terry Wildman, a United Methodist Native American pastor, will deepen your congregation’s appreciation of Scripture. Listen to accounts from the creation to Jesus’ Resurrection through the lens of First Americans.
Resource Guides
Gather your leadership team and use these resources in small groups, including youth, to prepare for Native American Ministries Sunday. With presentations, book ideas and other resources, incorporate this celebration beyond worship and into the full life of the church.

Native American Ministries Sunday
Youth Resources for This Special Sunday
Videos
Hear from Native American United Methodists about their experiences and ministries. Provide a visual countdown in worship in the weeks leading up to the Special Sunday. Post informational videos on social media and your website.

Screen a video during a small-group discussion or host a larger conversation and strategically show multiple videos to tell the story. With dozens of videos from which to choose, we are confident you will find what you need to enhance your congregation’s Native American Ministries Sunday celebration.
Blog Copy
We developed copy, sourced images and provided a description, pull quotes and tweetable text. Promote Native American Ministries Sunday on the pastor’s or mission blog or on the church website. Add your own copy to customize for your context or just copy and paste the provided text.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Blog Title</th>
<th>What’s Your Response To Dr. Richard Twiss’ Questions?</th>
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<td>Kenny Jahng</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tweetable</td>
<td>Join me in supporting Native American Ministries Sunday. Learn more here (insert link)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulled Quote for Social Media</td>
<td>The United Methodist Church, Native and non-Native, are working together to create a new history.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

History can be a tricky thing.
Infographics
Some people learn best visually. Others just want the numbers. We’ve combined them both into attractive and informative infographics to share specific details about the impact of Native American Ministries Sunday.
Mobile Wallpapers
Do your congregants spend a lot of time looking at their smartphone screens? Give them something meaningful to see whenever they pick up the phone. These inspiring messages are designed to fit most smartphone screens and include a Scripture verse along with a reminder about Native American Ministries Sunday.

*Invite technologically savvy members to help others to install the image.*