“HACKS”
FOR THIS SERIES

• Consider working with your youth group to identify the indigenous habitants in their area. Contact the CONAM in your annual conference and find out ministries needs in the conference.

• Consider using this resource the week before or the Wednesday before so that students can understand what Native American Ministries Sunday is before they take up a special offering. On NAMS consider inviting students to worship with their families.

• The format of this youth worship service is in the form of a sermon. If you don’t do a “youth sermon” format, especially if you are in a smaller group context, feel free to break up the sermon with clarifying questions, and utilize the Small Group Guide.

• Learn about the tribes in your area and plan a work day with indigenous organizations. Connect with Native organizations in your area and dialogue about their needs.
Resources for the Weeks Prior to

Native American Ministries Sunday

To make the experience more meaningful for your youth group, we suggest leading up to Native American Ministries Sunday by giving a teaser for a few weeks beforehand. Depending on the emphasis in your church and your context, here are three weeks of materials you can use beforehand.

You can trade out any of the media by visiting the NAMS Pastor and Leader's Kit.
SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

In just two weeks, we are going to be taking a special offering, along with the rest of the church, for something called “Native American Ministries Sunday.” Be sure to provide details about the Native population in your area.
SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

Next week is one of our “Special Sundays” in the United Methodist Church, where we take a special offering. Next week’s emphasis is on Native American Ministries. Here’s what our money will help:

SHOW THIS VIDEO IN YOUR REGULAR ANNOUNCEMENT TIME.
Native American Ministries Sunday

ORDER OF SERVICE

WELCOME YOUR GROUP AS YOU NORMALLY DO! THEN SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

Each week I’ve been giving you a “teaser” about today, Native American Ministries Sunday. I’m excited about what we have planned for you!
SNATCHING PLACES:

**SUPPLIES:** Enough chairs for everyone, minus one

- This is a game that your students may have played before, but it’s also a game that the Dakota Sioux tribe’s children play too!
- Students form a circle, sitting in their chairs, which mark their “owanka,” or place.
- There is one player in the center of the ring. He or she will call out a descriptor—i.e., “Everyone wearing red.” / “Born in January.” / “Only child.” /”Junior in high school.”
- Everyone matching that description will get up and run around, trying to switch places (they can’t move to the seat next to them).
- The last person without a seat goes to the middle.
- The game repeats until your own designated end.
GAMES & ICEBREAKERS

VAPUTA:

**SUPPLIES:** One small pebble

- This is a variation of a game played by the Pima tribe.
- Students are divided into two teams.
- The team line up facing each other a few feet apart.
- One person from each team takes turns walking along behind his players, carrying a pebble or another small object. She/He pretends to place it in the hand of several players as she/he passes along, but actually does place it in one hand.
- The opposite team must decide who has the pebble. If they guess correctly, they get a person from the other’s team. If they are incorrect, the other team gets their player.

VARIATION: You can play with just one group, *Survivor*-style:

- As a group, people choose one individual and vote on if they have the pebble or not. If that person is voted on, whether or not they have the pebble, they are out of the group.
- This continues until the pebble person is found!

TURN TO A NEIGHBOR *(choose one)*:

- What is the worst job on the planet?
- Where do you come from? What do you know about your family history?
SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS

- God of This City
- Hosanna (Praise Is Rising)
- Build Your Kingdom Here
- You Are Good
- Amazing Grace (with a Cherokee verse added)
Today is Native American Ministries Sunday, and you might be confused about why we have a day like this in The United Methodist Church. Let’s watch this video to find out a little bit about this important ministry.

SHOW THIS VIDEO:

It’s no secret that Native Americans have been historically oppressed, but as I did some research for today, I realized that I didn’t even know the half of it! Most of us know that when Columbus arrived to America, he and the Spanish explorers used violence and slavery, brought over diseases, and even forced the Native Americans to convert to Christianity. More than 350 years later in 1838, the Federal Government forced Native Americans off their land because they wanted it. Native Americans were forced to Oklahoma, and on the way, thousands of Native Americans died. We know this as the “Trail of Tears.” When Oklahoma became a state in 1907, all the Native American territory was taken by the Federal Government. Even today, there are laws that
threaten Native Americans and their land. Against all odds, Native Americans have provided countless contributions to society. Did you know 2,200 words from Native American cultures are contained in the English language\(^1\), majority of the world’s food supply originated from Native American agricultural methods, and the concept of sign language was created by Native Americans and early traders.\(^2\) It is our responsibility to bring awareness to the Native American efforts and influences in U.S. history and culture.

It’s frustrating to process the fact that our ancestors could have been part of such oppression, right? It can be really tough to process and figure out what our role is today, especially when you realize that you may be contributing to that oppression without even meaning to.

But one thing we know is this: God hates oppression. God hates it when we treat people without thought or care. And God especially doesn’t like it when we treat others poorly in order to benefit ourselves. That’s what our government and ancestors did with the Native Americans: took from them, even killed them, in order to increase their own wealth and property. This didn’t just happen with the Native Americans—it has happened throughout history with other people groups and even is described in the Bible.

**READ JEREMIAH 22:1-5, 13-17**

Jeremiah was a prophet whose job was to go to the king of Judah, King Jehoiakim, and tell him to repent. Jehoiakim taxed the land heavily, making the poor poorer. He murdered men and then took their wives and their property. He made foreigners his slaves and mistreated orphans and widows.

Jeremiah’s job was to tell that dude that he was wrong. Can you imagine having that job? That sounds like the worst job on the planet. In fact, Jehoiakim already killed another prophet. Can you imagine being the next prophet selected after that?

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\(^1\) Native American Influences in U.S. History and Culture, Teaching Tolerance 
\(^2\) Native American Contributions to the U.S.
But Jeremiah warned Jehoiakim: If you don’t fix this, then you will die by the same systems that you have set up to oppress people. And Jeremiah told him: Your father was a righteous guy. He took care of people, and helped the poor and the needy. Everything went well for him. It’s not too late for you to do right, too. Things can go well for you, too.

Jeremiah asked Jehoiakim to repent.

We use that word a lot—*repent*. Most of us think of repentance as asking for forgiveness—and it is that, but also so much more: To repent is to quit doing what you’re doing, and to fix it. To begin doing the opposite. For example, to repent from cheating on a test is to stop doing it, but also to turn yourself in for cheating. To repent from bullying others would be to stop making fun of people, but also to then stand up for those who are being made fun of. Repentance requires action.

In 2012, The United Methodist Church started on a journey with the “Act of Repentance” to recognize injustices in the past and begin to restore relationships with indigenous peoples.

The United Methodist Church realized that because the oppression of Native Americans still happens today, it is necessary for us to act. United Methodists are, by nature, believers and enactors of social justice. It’s important to us. It is written into our doctrine of beliefs and social gospel. And Native Americans aren’t some far-off people group like we sometimes think—there are around 150 Native American United Methodist churches. Native Americans are our people. It is our responsibility to help.

When giving to correct our actions, we have to be careful. We don’t just want to give money, and think that we’re magically fixing things. We need to consider how the injustice to the Native American people happened in the first place. We want to make sure that not only do we ask for forgiveness, but that we do everything we can to prevent any injustice like it from happening again.
READ 1 JOHN 3:16-18

We are supposed to begin by modeling our lives after Jesus, who gave his life for other people. And while it’s unlikely you’ll ever have to give your life up, John gives us another solution: Help people with what you have. If you have enough to live comfortably, but you see someone in need, give to that person. Don’t just say you want to rid the world of hurt. Rid it yourself.

That’s what Native American Ministries Sunday is about—repentance. It’s about understanding what has been done and beginning to start a process to heal relationships. On Native American Ministries Sunday, we honor the important contributions Native Americans have made to The United Methodist Church and the world. When you give on Native American Ministries Sunday, you help support Native American congregations that are finding fresh new ways to minister to their communities with the love of Christ.
CLOSED ACTIVITY & SONG: OFFERING

PREP/SUPPLIES: Get enough stones for the people in your group, and place them in the front of your space. Arrange the stones like a “river.” Place the offering basket in the center of the stones.

SET-UP SCRIPT: Today we’re going to take an offering for Native American Ministries. But we’re also going to do something else. At the 2012 United Methodist General Conference, where we voted for the “Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples,” the people there were invited to take a stone from a “river of life.” The stone symbolizes their promise to commit to the repentance process with others; a covenant of correcting wrongs and committing to do the right thing.

I’m going to invite you, as you bring up your offering, to place it into our basket, and then take a stone back with you. Pray over this stone, and ask God how He can use you in this repentance process. Pray about where God may lead you—whether it’s fixing the oppression against Native Americans, and other people groups like African Americans or women or immigrants, or even those within your own school. Ask God how he can use you.

TAKE THE SPECIAL OFFERING
Place the offering basket at the front of the room on the altar or with you holding it. Play music and invite students to sing along.

SUGGESTED SONGS:
From the Inside Out
God of This City
Lord, I Need You

PRAY OVER THE OFFERING, AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS
QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

- Why do you think entire people groups become oppressed?
- The oppression of the Native Americans has lasted now for more than 500 years. Why do you think it’s hard to change?
- What ways do you see Native Americans oppressed today? Have you ever taken part in any of that? Do you think that naming teams “Indians,” “Braves,” or “Redskins” is inappropriate, or even racist?
- Do you think we have a role in changing the way Native Americans are treated? What can we do?
- Why do you think The United Methodist Church decided to issue an official act of repentance?
- What does it mean to repent?
- You were challenged to think of a group whom God might use you to fight oppression against. Whom did you choose? Why?
We are committed to making sure pastors and teams have everything they need for Special Sundays. We’ve created a variety of resources for this Special Sunday as well as the other five churchwide Special Sundays with offerings.

For more resources like this, visit www.umcgiving.org/NAMS.