

**Title**

Understanding the Importance of Relationships in Lakota Culture.

**Grade Level**

Adult learner workshop.

**Theme****Duration**

4 hours.

**Goal**

Participants will learn the importance of Lakota kinship.

**Objectives**

Participants will increase their understanding of Lakota spirituality by exploring Lakota kinship roles. Participants will be able to

1. Diagram Lakota kinship roles.
2. Explain kinship roles using Lakota terms.
3. Identify the attributes and characteristics of a good relative.
4. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the term *mitakuye oyasin*.

**South Dakota Standards****Cultural Concept**

Mitakuye oyasin [all my relatives] is a foundation of Lakota culture.

**Cultural Background**

Kinship is the cohesive societal bond of Lakotas and dictates all aspects of social life. Within the Lakota social structure of kinship, all people are related. The four types of kinship include blood—mother, father, siblings, etc; affinal—related to you by marriage; adoption—*hunka* relative; and social—friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. These relationships establish a foundation for respect and courtesy and provide a trust between people. In addition to these four types of relationships, the workshop will briefly explore the concept of *mitakuye oyasin*.

Ella Deloria writes that spiritual culture is the most difficult area to describe, as it is “what remains after the tangible and visible part is cleared away” (p. 18).

Narratives pertaining to this cultural background are contained in:

Deloria, E. (1998). A scheme of life that worked: Kinship’s role in Dakota life. In *Speaking of Indians* (pp. 24-38). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Powers, W. K. (1977). Ritual. In *Oglala religion* (pp. 100-101). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

White Hat, Sr., A. (1999). The third teaching. In *Reading and Writing the Lakota Language* (pp. 46-47). Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

White Hat, Sr., A. (1999). The eighth teaching. In *Reading and Writing the Lakota Language* (pp. 101-103). Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

**Student Activities**

Introductions—10 minutes  
Workshop overview—10 minutes  
Student activity—1 hour, 30 minutes

Participants will work in groups of 4-7.

1. Silent reading:

Deloria, E. (1998). A scheme of life that worked: Kinship's role in Dakota life. In *Speaking of Indians* (pp. 24-38). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Powers, W. K. (1977). Ritual. In *Oglala religion* (pp. 100-101). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

White Hat, Sr., A. (1999). The third teaching. In *Reading and Writing the Lakota Language* (pp. 46-47). Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

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2. Participants will:

- a. Create a diagram of kinship relationships using Lakota terms.
- b. Identify the attributes and characteristics of each kinship roles.
- c. Establish kinship roles within their group.

Break – 10 minutes

- d. Participant led discussion of kinship roles.

3. Presenter led presentation and discussion on relationships, *wacekiya*, and the pipe. The presentation and discussion will focus on the relationship between the federal government—The Great White Father—and Lakota tribes. Topics will include:

- a. What was the relationship?
- b. Who played what role?
- c. What were the expected attributes and characteristics of each role according to Lakota kinship?
- d. What happened?
- e. What are the ramifications today?

4. Wrap-up and evaluation—15 minutes

**Resources**

Visual aids:

Sphere of multi-colored play-dough to represent “marble cake” (Deloria, p.19). Photo of Old Man Afraid of His Horses smoking the pipe (DeMallie, p. 798). Copy of 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

Participant activity aids:

Large pad of newsprint paper, colored markers, ruler, scissors, tape, and glue.

**Assessment**

## References

- Deloria, E. (1998). A scheme of life that worked: Kinship's role in Dakota life. In *Speaking of Indians* (pp. 24-38). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Powers, W. K. (1977). Ritual. In *Oglala religion* (pp. 100-101). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- White Hat, Sr., A. (1999). The third teaching. In *reading and writing the Lakota language* (pp. 46-47). Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- White Hat, Sr., A. (1999). The eighth teaching. In *reading and writing the Lakota language* (pp. 101-103). Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Reference material for presenter led discussion:
- Deloria, E. (1998). Spiritual culture areas: This man called Indian. In *Speaking of Indians* (pp. 18-20). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- DeMallie, R. J. (2001). The Treaty of 1868: Teton. In R. J. DeMallie (Ed.), *Plains* (Vol. 13, Pt. 2 of W. Sturtevant (Ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians*, pp. 796-799). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Lone Man. (1972). The White Buffalo Calf pipe (Ptehincala canonpa). In F. Densmore, *Teton Sioux music* (pp. 63-67). New York: Da Capo Press.

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## Date

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