

**Title**

Values in Lakota Society–The Role of Kinship.

**Grade Level**

Adult civic group.

**Theme**

Lakota life was structured around seven behavioral values. These values provided clear, orderly guidelines for behavior and all social interactions.

**Duration**

30 minutes-40 minutes.

**Goal**

To provide the student with an insight and awareness to values and ideals which shaped beliefs and behavior in Lakota society and to specifically examine the role of kinship.

**Objectives**

- Attitude
  - a) Students will gain an appreciation of the core values of Lakota society.
  - b) Students will discover the lead role that kinship plays in the core values.
  - c) Students will develop an awareness and respect for the role of values in maintaining social stability and peace within and among the Lakota family units.
- Knowledge
  - a) Students will learn the seven behavioral values of Lakota society.
  - b) Students will learn about the Lakota family's view on items of property, social relationships within family and ceremonial relationships to extended family and which collectively, are labeled *kinship*.
  - c) Students will recognize that civility, good manners, and a sense of responsibility were paramount to being a good Lakota.
  - d) Students will realize that the group or family unit was unconditionally valued above that of any individual.
- Skill
  - a) Students will be able to identify three traits of Lakota kinship.
  - b) Students will be able to list the seven core behavioral values.
  - c) Students will be able to cite the most poignant tragedy that could befall Lakota parents.

**Cultural Concept**

For Lakota people, kinship is the umbrella and glue, which oversees and binds the other core values.

**Cultural Background**

According to Ella Deloria, kinship was the “all important matter.” It was the glue binding together the other six foundation Lakota values (generosity, integrity, courage, sociability, self control, and wisdom). Deloria states “...the ultimate aim of Dakota life, stripped of accessories, was quite simple: one must obey kinship rules and one must be a good relative”. She also notes proper attitudes and behaviors were ingrained in them from constant practice until they were automatic. It is not instinctive to be unselfish, kind,

sincere, and courteous toward others. Those are traits that have to be learned, but only by scrupulous repetition...”

### **Student Activities**

Provide a handout describing and summarizing the seven core values of Lakota Society.

### **References**

- Deloria, E. (1983). A scheme of life that worked: Kinship's role in Dakota life. In *Speaking of Indians* (pp.17-26). Vermillion: University of South Dakota Press.
- Malan, V. D. & Jesser, C. J. (1959, February). Values in Dakota society [excerpt from a study of Dakota values]. In *the Dakota Indian religion* (pp 23-29). Rural Sociology Department Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 473.
- Marshall, J. M. (2001). *The Lakota Way*. New York: The Penguin Group.
- Maynard, E. & Twiss, G. (1970). [Excerpt from Kinship system]. In *Hechel lena oyate kin nipi kte: That these people may live* (pp. 115-118). Community Mental Health Program, Pine Ridge Service Unit, Indian Health Service, U.S. Public Health Service, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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