

# AMVZE works



## Windows and Mirrors Resources Native American/Indigenous Identity For ages 3 - 12

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# AMAZE works

Dear Caregivers and Educators,

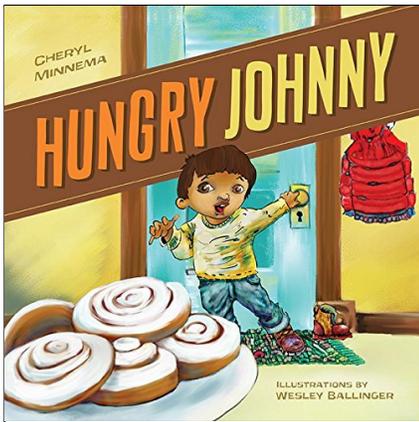
This collection of lessons on Native American/Indigenous identity and lived experiences serves as a resource to help guide conversations with children. The identities and lived experiences of Native peoples are often made invisible, erased, and relegated to the past in our school curriculums and communities. At AMAZEworks, we believe that building a healthy identity, learning to show respect across differences, and naming and taking action against instances of injustice all begin from honest, intentional conversations. We thank you for engaging in this difficult, yet invaluable work.

We also know the power of sharing stories. When we listen to each other's stories, we build empathy. This empathy is necessary if we want to shift our thinking from "them" to "us." When we take time to understand the impact of identity-based bias and discrimination, we are better equipped to stand up to it.

This work requires time and dedication. These books and lessons are a starting point. If you have additional questions or want more resources, we encourage you to visit our website:  
[www.amazeworks.org](http://www.amazeworks.org).

In solidarity with all who strive for equity and belonging,  
AMAZEworks

## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers and Educators



### Book Title

*Hungry Johnny* by Cheryl Minnema, illustrated by Wesley Ballinger

### Recommended Ages

3 and up

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*Johnny is hungry, and he is excited to eat with his community at a community feast. But Johnny has to wait longer than he wanted before he is able to eat. What are the different things he has to wait for, and why are they important to Johnny and his community?*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver/Educator

- When was a time growing up that you struggled with being patient and waiting for something that you really wanted? How did you feel during the wait?
- How might children in your life have a difficult time waiting for things? How can you empathize with them when they are showing impatience?
- What exposure to or knowledge do your children have about the history and culture of local or regional Indigenous groups? What might you need to teach before, while, or after reading this book to children? How can you foster an understanding of contemporary American Indian culture instead of just relegating Native American groups to the past?

### Reader's Note

The story includes important Anishinaabe/Ojibwe foods, such as wild rice and fry bread. Wild rice grows in the Great Lakes region, and it is a sacred food to the Ojibwe. Fry bread was created out of necessity, when Native people were moved to reservations and taken away from traditional food sources. They had to be frugal and creative with government rations. Today, fry bread has become another staple to many Native nations.

If you do not speak Ojibwe, be sure to familiarize yourself with the following words. Out of respect, you should know how to pronounce them and know their meanings before reading the book aloud to students, so you can share the pronunciations and meanings with them.

- Niwii - wife
- Miigwech - thank you
- Bekaa - hold on, slow down, wait
- Wiisinig - let's eat

Glossary of Ojibwe words: <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/>

Pronunciation Guide: <http://www.thudscave.com/petroglyphs/pdf/ojibwe-pronounce.pdf>

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## Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

### **SEL**

**Self-Awareness**

**Self-Management**

Social Awareness

Relationship Skills

Responsible Decision-Making

### **ABE**

**Empathy and Understanding**

**Healthy Complex Identities**

**Respect Across Differences**

Notice, Name, and Reject Bias

Responsiveness and Action

## Discussion Questions

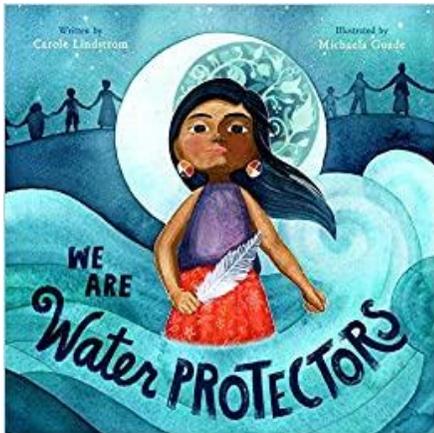
1. What do you like to eat, eat, eat?
2. When have you had to wait for something that you really wanted? How did that feel?
3. Why did Johnny and his grandma have to wait to eat at the community feast?
4. How are elders treated in Johnny's community?
  - a. Who do you consider an elder in your family or community?
  - b. How do you show respect for them?
5. What happened when it was finally Johnny's turn to eat?
  - a. Why do you think he gave up his seat to Katherine?
6. What lesson did Johnny learn about waiting?
  - a. What did he learn about respecting his elders?

## Journal Questions/Activities

- Draw or write about what you can do when you have to practice patience and wait.
- Interview an elder about their life: Define what an elder is and have children identify important elders in their lives. Brainstorm a list of elders that children could interview: grandparents, parents, aunts/uncles, neighbors, adults at school, religious/faith leaders. Brainstorm a list of questions that children can ask an elder. Have students draw a picture or write about an aspect of the elder's life they found interesting.
- 7 Generation Games is a Native-owned company that has created a website ([www.7generationgames.com](http://www.7generationgames.com)) with resources and video games for children to learn more about the Ojibwe people while also practicing math skills. (Games need to be downloaded.)

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## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers and Educators



### Book Title

*We are Water Protectors* written by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Michaela Goade

Link to a video of the author reading the book:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgWTouyaQ-8>

### Recommended Ages

3 - 12 years old

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*This book tells the story of an Anishinaabe/Ojibwe girl who stands up against a black snake that threatens to destroy the land and water. Listen to learn what the black snake really is and how the girl becomes a water protector for the water, land, and her people.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver/Educator

- What messages did you receive growing up about protecting the environment and environmental justice? How have these messages impacted your connection to and relationship with nature and the Earth?
- What exposure to or knowledge do your children have about the history and present culture of local Indigenous groups? What might you need to learn and teach before, while, or after reading this book to your child/children?

### Reader's Note

Read (or summarize) the “More on Water Protectors” author note at the back of the book to children **after** you read the story to help them better understand that the story is specifically referencing the Dakota Access Pipeline. You may need to learn more about the history of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests (see resources below) to answer children’s questions.

This book can be read at several levels. For young children, the beautiful illustrations help tell the story of how the girl and her people work to protect the water and land from the black snake. At this age, the discussion can center around the importance of water and protecting Earth’s resources. Older children can unpack the figurative language in the book and learn more about the history and conflict surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline.

### Upper Elementary/Middle School Resources

- [Teach Standing Rock with a Purpose](#) (Learning for Justice)
- [The Lowdown: Standing Rock Lesson](#) (KQED)
- [The Lowdown: The Youth of Standing Rock](#) (KQED)

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- [Dakota Access Pipeline](#) (PBS NewsHour)
- <https://www.beyondstandingrock.org/learn#overview>
- [Ln3 Film: Seven Teachings Of The Anishinaabe In Resistance](#) (Honor the Earth)

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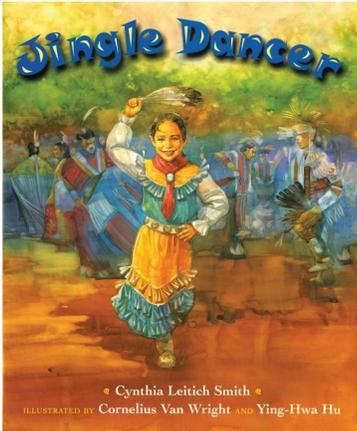
1. Why is water so important to the girl and her people?
  - a. In what ways is water important and necessary for you?
  - b. Why does water need protection? From whom or what?
2. What is the black snake? What clues in the illustrations make you think this?
  - a. What do you think the black snake's venom is?
  - b. What effect might the black snake have on animals, land, and water?
3. What do you think it means to be "stewards of the Earth"? Why does the girl say that "we are all related"?
4. What do you think it means to "rally people together"? How might rallying people together help keep the black snake away?
5. What does it mean to be a water protector? How can you be a water protector in your own community?

## Journal Questions/Activities

1. According to the author's note ("More on Water Protectors"), the author was unable to travel to North Dakota in 2016 to participate in the peaceful protest with the water protectors who were standing up against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Her way of supporting the movement was to write this book and share the story of water protectors to educate others about the problems with oil pipelines on Native land. This was her way of being a water protector and a steward of the Earth. Look at the Earth Steward and Water Protector Pledge at the back of the book. Will you take the pledge? In what ways can **you** be a water protector and a steward of the Earth? Draw or write about your ideas.
2. What is an issue or a problem that affects your family, school, neighborhood, or community that you think is important to address? What are some things that you can do to help address this problem? Who can support you in your efforts? Write or draw about your ideas.

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## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers and Educators



### Book Title

*Jingle Dancer* by Cynthia Leitich Smith

### Recommended Ages

5 - 10 years old

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*In this book, Jenna wanted a dress like her Grandma's, but there wasn't enough time to get all the parts she needed. Jenna found a way to get help from her friends and family so she could jingle dance at the Pow Wow. On the way, she found out she could help other people, too. Listen to how Jenna got help and gave help.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver/Educator

- What cultural traditions and celebrations are important to you? How do they make up important parts of your identity?
- What stereotypes or negative messages did you receive from home, school, society, and/or media about Indigenous peoples or Pow Wows? How does this book offer a different perspective?
- What exposure to or knowledge do your children have about the history and culture of local Native American groups? What might you need to teach before, while, or after reading this book to children?

### Reader's Note

Some children may not be familiar with the idea of jingle dancing. Jingle dancing originated with the Ojibwe people of the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada. Read more information in the Author's Note and find a glossary of words in the back of the book.

Share the Author's Note and Glossary in the back of the book with children after reading the story.

If your children want to see Jingle Dancing in action, watch this video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iArcG-S3\\_QM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iArcG-S3_QM)

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## Discussion Questions

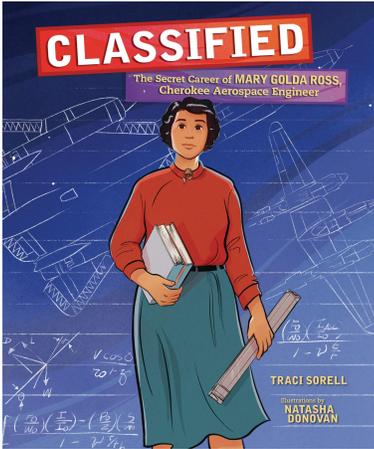
1. Why is it important for Jenna to have her own jingle dress?
2. Jenna wanted to be able to dance like her grandmother. Raise your hand if you've ever wanted to be able to do something like someone in your family.
3. Have you ever done something you needed special clothes for? (Family celebrations, sports, religious events ,etc.)
4. Before Jenna could dance like her grandmother she needed something. What did she need?
5. There wasn't enough time to get the jingles in the mail. How did Jenna get jingles in time for the Pow Wow?
6. How did she help her cousin, her aunt, her neighbor, and her grandmother? (Don't forget to point out that she helped them in many ways including dancing for them, rolling out fry bread, listening to stories, and carrying files.)
  - a. How did they help her?
7. Where did she go to dance with the jingle dress?
  - a. Has anyone here ever been to a Pow Wow?
  - b. What do you know about Pow Wows?
8. What kinds of things do you do to help other people? What kinds of things do people do to help you?

## Journal Questions/Activities

1. What are important family's celebrations that you look forward to having as you get older? Draw a picture of one of these celebrations.
2. Draw or write about a time when you wanted something so much but had to wait for it, earn it, or make it yourself like Jenna did with her jingle dress.

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## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers and Educators



### Book Title

*Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer* by Traci Sorell, illustrated by Natasha Donovan

### Recommended Ages

7 - 12 years old

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*This is a biography of Mary Golda Ross, a Cherokee educator, mathematician, and engineer who designed fighter airplanes and worked on top secret aerospace projects for the US space program. Let's read to find out more about Mary Golda Ross's life and how she used her Cherokee values to pave the way for women and American Indians in math and science fields.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver/Educator

- Growing up, what messages did you receive about male and female gender roles and expectations?
- What messages did you receive about the contributions of Native Americans to modern society?
- What messages are your children getting?
- How can counter rigid gender stereotypes and expectations as well provide more positive examples of the ways in which Indigenous peoples contribute to your community and the US as a whole?

### Reader's Note

Read the Author's Note at the back of the book to learn more about the author's journey and about Mary Golda Ross.

Also read about the four Cherokee values. Note the language and pronunciation guides for each word and practice saying the words out loud. Learning to pronounce names and words from another culture is a form of respect and can teach children to honor the languages and cultures of those who are different from them.

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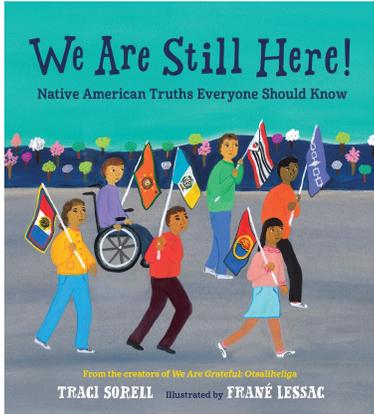
1. What are some of the ways that Mary Golda Ross contributed to her community and to the fields of math and science?
2. Why is Mary Golda Ross such an important role model for women and girls? And for Native Americans?
3. Mary was the first known Native American, female engineer in white, male-dominated fields. What might have been hard about that? How did her male co-workers treat her? What do you think gave her the drive and courage to pursue her dreams?
4. Review the four Cherokee values. What are some examples from the story of how Mary lived each value throughout her life?
  - a. Gaining skills in all areas of life
  - b. Working cooperatively with others
  - c. Remaining humble when others recognize your talents
  - d. Helping ensure equal education and opportunity for all
5. What are some examples of these values in your own life?
6. What more do you want to learn about Mary Golda Ross?

## Journal Questions/Activities

1. Four Cherokee Values:
  - a. Review the four Cherokee values in the back of the book and have children attempt to sound out the Cherokee pronunciations of each value. Practice with them and discuss the importance of making an effort to use the correct pronunciation of a different language as a form of respect for languages and cultures that are different from one's own. Make a connection to correctly pronouncing unfamiliar names as well.
  - b. Have children illustrate or write a story about one or all of the four Cherokee values in action.
  - c. Have children identify a value that is important to them (or family or community) and illustrate or write a story that shows that value in action.
2. Research other important Indigenous people who contributed to American culture and society. Draw a picture or write a story about someone you learn about.

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## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers and Educators



### Book Title

*We Are Still Here! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know* by Traci Sorell, illustrated by Frané Lessac

### Recommended Ages

9 - 12 years old

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*In celebration of Indigenous People's Day, the students in this book each give a presentation on important laws, policies, challenges, and triumphs that have affected Native Nations and peoples in the US since Europeans arrived on this continent centuries ago. This nonfiction book highlights the ways in which Indigenous people have struggled, resisted, and worked to preserve their languages, cultures, and rights.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver/Educator

- What did you learn in school about Native Americans growing up? How much of your education and understanding of Indigenous peoples may have been rooted in stereotypes, myths, and biases?
- Why might it be important to present vibrant, positive, contemporary Native stories and experiences to children in order to counter these negative portrayals of Native history and peoples that still exist today?

### Reader's Note

The back of the book provides **More Information** (page 32) on each of the twelve topics in the book, including information about each illustration. There is also a **Timeline** (page 34) starting from 1871 with important events between the United States and Native Nations that are rarely taught in school. "This timeline begins when the treaty making was officially ended by the U.S. government. This is when Indigenous people generally disappear from curriculum." **It is important to familiarize yourself with this history and additional information so you can answer children's questions.** Also read the **Author's Note** (page 39) for more context about the book and the author.

Here is a video of the author, Traci Sorrell, being interviewed and talking about the process of making the book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODxVnKx0faY>

### Vocabulary

It is important to introduce this vocabulary before reading the book. There is also a **Glossary of Terms** (page 38) in the back of the book.

- **Treaty** - a negotiated legal agreement made and signed by two or more sovereign states/governments

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- **Sovereignty** - authority over people, land, and resources. Native Nations are sovereign states, meaning that they each have independent authority over their own people, land, and resources that is separate from the United States government.

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### ABE

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#### **Responsiveness and Action**

## Discussion Questions

1. After reading about each topic, pause to let children look at the illustrations. Ask:
  - a. What questions do you have about this topic?
  - b. What additional information do the illustrations give you about this topic?
2. What surprised you in learning about these different laws, policies, and events that have affected Native peoples in the US?
3. Why do you think the author repeats the phrase, “We are still here!” at the end of each new Indigenous People’s Day “presentation”?
4. What are some examples of how Native Nations have fought for their rights as sovereign states and held on to their languages and cultures?
5. What are some examples of US government laws and policies that hurt Indigenous peoples? What are some examples of US government laws and policies that tried to support Native peoples or fix past laws that had been harmful?
6. Why is it important to learn about Native American history and hard topics like what is presented in this book?

## Journal Questions/Activities

1. Write or draw about any emotions that came up for you as you read the book. Why did you have those feelings? What support do you need to process and move through them?
2. Choose a topic from the book to learn more about (either from the original twelve topics or from the **Timeline** on page 34). Look at the list of **Sources** on page 38 to do some independent research. Draw your own illustration on the topic to show what else you’ve learned about this topic.

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