

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

CONTRIBUTOR NAME: REV. DR. CHAD JOHNSON

JUSTICE ISSUE: COLONIALISM, NEOCOLONIALISM, AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE/ LECTIONARY WEEK:

Matthew 17:1-9

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES/
BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS REFERENCES:

¶The Social Community, Other Social Issues, C. Colonialism, Neocolonialism and their Consequences;
Book of Resolutions #3337 “Resolution Toward and Anti-Colonial Church” and #4260 “Native People and the United Methodist Church”

OBJECTIVE:

Develop Appreciation of Divine Calling in All Persons and Address Past Harms.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Video/Audio Device

LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Say: As people of faith, we believe God calls us to love our neighbors. Part of that is remembering and respecting the Native people who have been here long before us, and who are still here today.

We give thanks that we gather today on the traditional land of the [Native name] people. We honor their care for this land through generations, and we recognize their ongoing presence in our community today.

Today for our centering moment we are going to watch a Native American Powwow. A powwow is a gathering for Native communities that includes dancing, drumming, singing, food, and fellowship. It's both spiritual and social. It's sacred and it's a way to honor the Creator and their community.

Watch: https://youtu.be/TodGZFke1VE?si=wlvZIC_uJU3MEyBJ

<https://youtu.be/5j1Vt1implE?si=awjqSP2lQYxraRDy>

NOTES

If you don't know the Native nations or tribes that are connected to your area, this website “Native Land Digital,” is a great resource
<https://native-land.ca>

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After the videos have students briefly reflect on what they felt while watching/listening.

SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

Read: Matthew 17:1-9.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think that Jesus is transfigured and becomes all white?
- What is God trying to teach/show the disciples?
- Why do you think is important for us to realize as followers of Jesus Christ?
- How is this important in today's time?

GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

Have one group of students read the following: Social Principles (Paragraph 162.C) and prepare a brief synopsis or key points of the reading to present to the larger group.

Have a second group of students read the following: Book of Resolutions (Paragraph 3337) and prepare a brief synopsis or key points of the reading to present to the larger group.

Have a third group of students read the following: Book of Resolutions (Paragraph 4260) and prepare a brief synopsis or key points of the reading to present to the larger group.

Have a fourth group of students read the following: Standing Bear v. Crook (link provided) and prepare a brief synopsis or key points of the reading to present to the larger group.

Have groups present their findings and then move into discussion. Also, reflect as a group on the definitions provided.

NOTES

The opening discussion on scripture should focus on the divine nature of Jesus Christ that is being revealed. This discussion will then segue into the nature of Christ that is within us all as creations of God. Even when we are as different as we are, this Sacred Worth can be found in everyone.

Resources on Transfiguration Sunday's Meaning:

[Reflections on Transfiguration • GBCS](#)

<https://um-insight.net/perspectives/transfiguration/>

https://youtu.be/LzXZfVouFiY?si=qI7X1xU7-_7MeR1o

NOTES

The activity begins to move from identity to diversity of Native American people as a misunderstood sacred people having sacred worth and knowing God in ways that were very different from early colonists understanding of God. The discussion will then move into justice and action as it prompts students to reflect on why colonialism happened, how it still exists today, and what we as the Body of Christ can do to eradicate colonialism and neocolonialism from our world.

The Standing Bear v. Crook link is below:

[Standing Bear v. Crook | Teaching American History](#)

It may be helpful to print this out for students to access this information.

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Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think The United Methodist Church has taken the time and effort to create a Social Principle that directly speaks against colonialism and neocolonialism?
- Why is it important that The United Methodist Church directly take a stance regarding the Sacred Value of Indigenous Peoples?
- Why do you think early colonists failed to see the spiritual nature of Native American peoples?
- It is said that early colonists said Native American singing, dancing, and Powwows were demonic and evil in nature. Why do you think this is?
- In what ways do you think colonialism and neocolonialism still exist in our world today?
- What do you make of Chief Standing Bears quote, “That hand is not the color of yours, but if I pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hands, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be of the same color as yours. I am a man. The same God made us both.”
- Why do you think we as Christians sometimes struggle to see God’s presence in other peoples when it is different than our own ways?
- In what ways can we be open to experiencing a fuller sense of God through other cultures?
- What is one way you can help to see God’s presence in a way that is different than you normally do?
- What would it be like to go as a group to a powwow to find God in that experience?

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CLOSING MOMENT (5 MIN.)

Conclude the lesson with the provided prayer and benediction.

Prayer:

Creator God, as you have gathered us in generations past, lead and guide us this day as we seek your wisdom and your vision for our people. Give us eyes to see one another as you see us, People of one God, Connected to one another and to you In all our relations, and in your son Jesus. Give us ears to hear the wisdom of our elders and the laughter of our children. Give us words of blessing and healing for a hurting world.

Open our hearts and lead us on the path of peace. We stand together on sacred ground with grateful hearts,

Knowing that the One who promises is faithful and true. Amen.

Benediction:

You have come from afar and waited, long and are wearied.

Let us sit side by side, sharing the same bread drawn from the same source;
to quiet the same hunger that makes us weak,

Then standing together let us share the same spirit, the same thoughts,

That once again draws us together in spirit and unity and peace.

AMEN!