



Native Spirituality

Other Common Ceremonies



Smudging Ceremony

- ✦ Purification of the mind and spirit plays an important role in Aboriginal spirituality.
- ✦ Tobacco is considered a sacred plant and the smoke is a spiritual way to clear one's thoughts, to wash away impurities, to help focus on the task with freshness and renewal.
- ✦ Burning sweet grass, or sage and tobacco in a smudge pot and drawing the smoke ritually over one's face, head, arms and torso, and inhaling the smoke is all part of a smudging ceremony of cleansing.



Continuing Native Spirituality

MILESTONES



The Vision Quest

- ✦ The rite of passage to adulthood.
- ✦ Common to most native cultural groups.
- ✦ The vision quest seeker is first purified, involving a confession, or at least a desire to atone (usually takes place at a sweat lodge).
- ✦ The shaman tells the youth to go to a place far from camp.
- ✦ The youth prays, fasts (food and water) and endures the elements while awaiting a “vision”.



Vision Quest (continued)

- ✦ By the end of this period, the seeker hopes to receive a message from a guardian spirit which could appear in an animal, object, or another natural form.
- ✦ If the person is unable to see the vision, they must try again.
- ✦ The shaman helps to interpret the vision and its message.



Sacred Writings



Oral Teachings

- ✦ In Aboriginal cultures, prayers are passed to new generations by the telling and retelling of events.
- ✦ Elders and shamans memorize the stories and become the keepers who pass on the words.
- ✦ They communicate their stories and lessons by speaking fluently, listening, and understanding which is known as **oracy**.
- ✦ Sometimes the speaker would use aids like a necklace of beads, or wampum, or even a totem pole to help retell the story.