

The Dreamer

Exclusive news for the St. Joseph's Indian School DreamMakers



August 2021

Spirituality and Smudging at St. Joseph's

In Native American culture, and particularly for the Lakota (Sioux), every plant has a purpose. Sage is one of the most important plants for different ceremonies and rituals. It is used by many tribes as an incense and purifying herb.

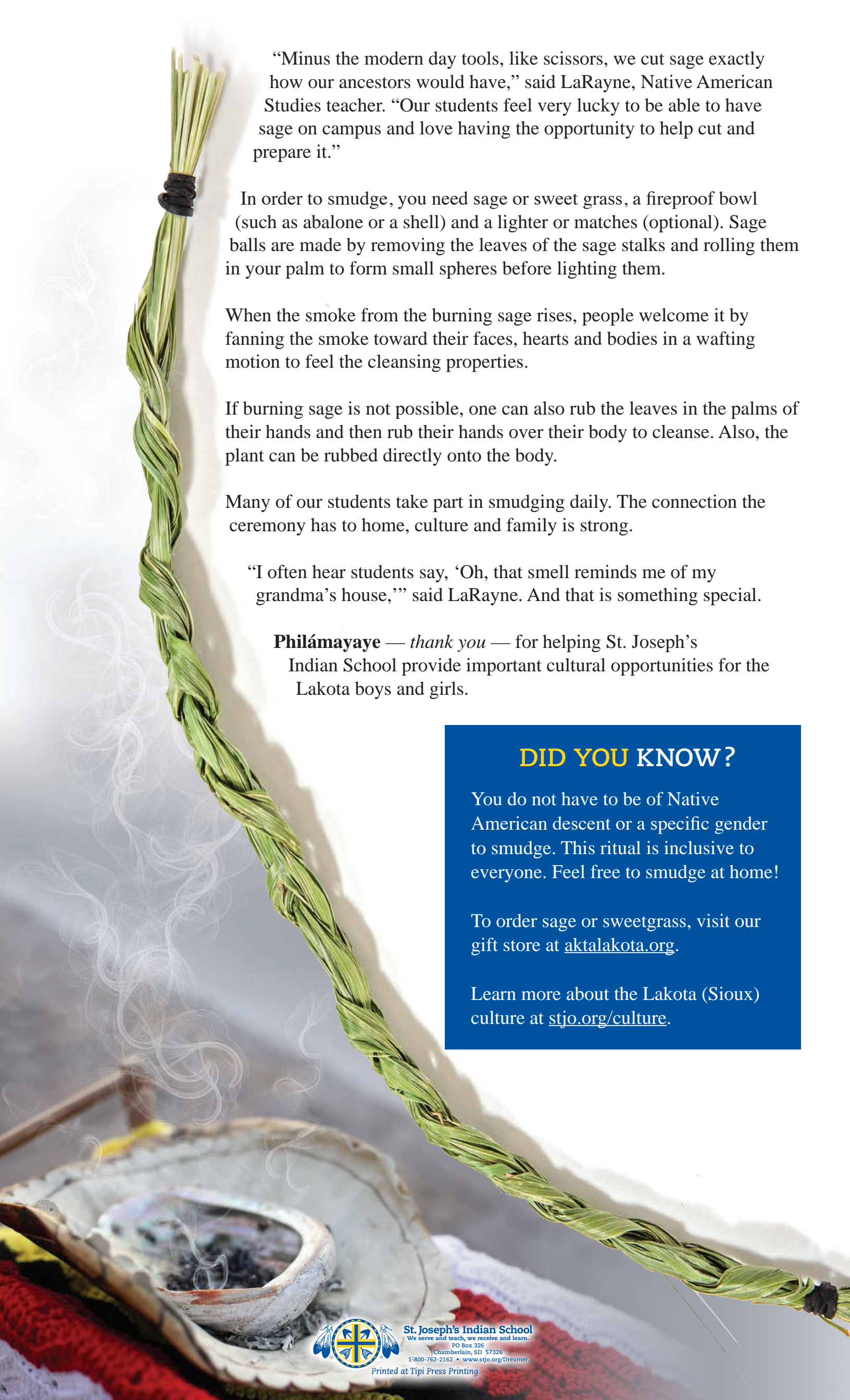
At St. Joseph's Indian School one of the primary uses of sage is for **azilya** — *smudging* or *purifying*. Smudging souls is something that has been done for generations. It is a cleansing ritual for bodies and minds — much like receiving a sprinkle of Holy Water upon entry to the Chapel. St. Joseph's is proud to offer both of these opportunities to students. It's an example of melding the Catholic faith and the Lakota culture together.

Smudging helps rid a person or area of unwanted energies that aren't helpful throughout the day, week or month. This makes it the perfect tradition to perform before school days, powwows and other events where a clear mind is crucial. Again, much like Holy Water, smudging is also used to bless new areas, items or places so a fresh start is felt in the heart. It can be very prayerful and medicinal.

Because of its popularity, sage can become costly to get your hands on, which is why St. Joseph's takes pride in growing sage right here on campus. From a seedling to adult plant, students can witness the lifespan of sage and take part in another ritual: the harvesting of sage.

(over, please)





“Minus the modern day tools, like scissors, we cut sage exactly how our ancestors would have,” said LaRayne, Native American Studies teacher. “Our students feel very lucky to be able to have sage on campus and love having the opportunity to help cut and prepare it.”

In order to smudge, you need sage or sweet grass, a fireproof bowl (such as abalone or a shell) and a lighter or matches (optional). Sage balls are made by removing the leaves of the sage stalks and rolling them in your palm to form small spheres before lighting them.

When the smoke from the burning sage rises, people welcome it by fanning the smoke toward their faces, hearts and bodies in a wafting motion to feel the cleansing properties.

If burning sage is not possible, one can also rub the leaves in the palms of their hands and then rub their hands over their body to cleanse. Also, the plant can be rubbed directly onto the body.

Many of our students take part in smudging daily. The connection the ceremony has to home, culture and family is strong.

“I often hear students say, ‘Oh, that smell reminds me of my grandma’s house,’” said LaRayne. And that is something special.

Philámayaye — *thank you* — for helping St. Joseph’s Indian School provide important cultural opportunities for the Lakota boys and girls.

DID YOU KNOW?

You do not have to be of Native American descent or a specific gender to smudge. This ritual is inclusive to everyone. Feel free to smudge at home!

To order sage or sweetgrass, visit our gift store at aktalakota.org.

Learn more about the Lakota (Sioux) culture at stjo.org/culture.



St. Joseph's Indian School
We serve and teach, we receive and learn.
PO Box 326
Chamberlain, SD 57326
1-800-762-2162 • www.stjo.org/Dreamer

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unique and

beautiful,

but together

we are a

masterpiece!

We are each

Dear Friend, Thanks for every thing that you do for us at st Joseph's Indian school. We have lots of stuff because of your help. My favrite classes are reading and PLS.* Here, I play on computers, for fun. I like it so much that I think I want to work on them when I grow up.

If I get a good job in computers when I grow up I will make lots of money and buy a house and car. Computers are cool in a lot of ways.

Well that's all, Thanks
again.

your friendly

J.C.

* PLS = Personal Living Skills