

The Dreamer

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



January 2023

Your Support Connects Students to Their Culture and Each Other

*The Lakota (Sioux) culture is rich with tradition and St. Joseph's Indian School looks for ways to honor and connect our students to their culture as much as possible. One of the ways we do this is by providing an **inípi**.*

Inípi, also known as a sweat lodge, is a basic purification ceremony of the Lakota (Sioux), as well as other Native Americans. It's a ceremony offered several times a year for students, and holds great depth of meaning.



The **inípi** lodge takes the shape of a dome and is constructed of 16 tree branches, preferably from the willow tree, and a canvas or hide cover. Due to its shape, some describe the lodge as a symbol of Mother Earth's womb.

Before the ceremony takes place, prayers are said and the lodge is purified with the burning smoke of sage and cedar. Participants also purify themselves by smudging with the smoke before entering the lodge.

During **inípi**, participants sit in a circle. Heated rocks, also referred to as "grandfathers" because they are the oldest entities on earth, are placed on a fireplace in the center. Water is poured over them to create steam and warm the lodge.

While participants sit in the darkness with steam from the grandfathers, they all pray and ask for guidance. Songs are sung and participants offer prayers to **Wakǵán Tháŋka** — *Great Spirit*.

The door to the lodge is opened four times. On the fourth time the door is opened, all participants emerge from the lodge, leaving behind all that is impure.

"It becomes very hot in the lodge. By the time you leave, you are soaking wet; however, you feel so refreshed and alive and cleansed!" said Amanda, a Family Service counselor who participated in a past **inípi**.

A few students recounted their feelings after participating:

*"At the **inípi**, I thought it was going to be a weak sweat (not very warm), but never judge the seven grandfathers. I enjoyed all of the four rounds and it was really good. I hadn't been in a sweat lodge in a while and enjoyed it very much."*

(over, please)

*“**Inípi** is a way for me to pray in my Lakota way. I learned about it in Native American Studies class. The ceremony was cool because I got to watch and help build the lodge. **Lila wóphila** — I am grateful — because when you give to our school, you are helping to make cultural events like the **inípi** happen.”*

Typically after **inípi**, the group moves to one of our campus homes for a meal, where once again they gather in a circle — only this time around a table. Conversation radiates around their recent experience, and drifts to the future when they can take part in another ceremony.

The feeling of connection following **inípi** is strong. On typical nights, our students eat quickly and rush off to other activities, but the time of prayer bonds them and they all stay longer and talk — more grounded in the moment.

Philámayaye — *thank you* — for your support to connect students to this rich tradition. Watching them grow spiritually stronger in their faith and connect to their culture is gratifying, and possible because of you.



DID YOU KNOW?

Who is the White Buffalo Calf Woman?

As legend states, the White Buffalo Calf Woman came to Earth and gave the Lakota people a Sacred Pipe and a small round stone. These gifts would be used for the Seven Lakota Rites. **Inípi** is one of those sacred rites.

Discover more about the other six rites by visiting stjo.org/7rites.



St. Joseph's Indian School
We serve and teach, we receive and learn.
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Rihannah

Dear Friend,
Hello,

Thank you for our presents
for christmas. What I Like about
St. Joes is recess. I Like to swim,
bike and run. I am Learning division. When
I grow up, I want to be a Cop!!

Sincerely
Lennex